



LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA EXTRANJERA INGLÉS

**The English Language Learning Experiences and Career Positioning of Teacher
Luz Marina.**

Research Field

The use of the English language and its contexts

Research sub-project

The voices of the LLEI realities: Life stories and experiences

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Abstract

This narrative research study presents an exploration of the experiences of Luz Marina; a middle school English teacher from Cúcuta, focusing on the impact suffered during the first years of her teaching, caused by struggles with her English language acquisition. Additionally, this narrative study discloses the emotional and ethical motivations this teacher had, in order to go in the to look out for extracurricular English proficiency instruction, which provided her with the needed language training to overcome her limited communicational abilities as well as nourished her with knowledge about international cultures, considering the importance of the sociolinguistic aspect in the English as a foreign language teaching practice.

This investigation aims at describing how the participant's limited confidence in her English language proficiency made her feel anxious and insecure about her professional performance during the inceptive years of her teaching practice.

This qualitative study was based on the discourse analysis of the narrated experiences, organized in a chronological set of events, and on the interpretation and description of the subsequent steps taken to overcome the language difficulties exposed by the participant.

The implemented instruments of investigation were developed over class observations, pictures, field notes, and semi-structured one on one interviews between the investigator and the participant. This narrative inquiry has been carried out in conformance with the Research Field: The study of the English Language and its Contexts providing foundation for the Research Subproject: The Voices of the LLEI Realities: Life Stories and Experiences at Universidad Santo Tomas, Distant Education Program.

Key words: Communicative abilities, Language acquisition, Narrative research, Life experience.

1. Contextualization

Embarking in the profession of teaching English as a foreign language in Colombia, is not an easy task during our current times, despite the massive surge of the internet and social media sites; and even more so thirty years ago, when the concepts of internationalization and globalization were practically unknown for the average citizens, especially lower income communities, including children at Colombian public educational institutions.

As Bonilla Carvajal and Tejada-Sanchez (2016) express, in Colombia, “language policy has constantly been altered due to political transitions disregarding education’s ultimate goal, namely to produce critical and resourceful citizens who might contribute to a global society”. (p.186).

This qualitative research presents the narrative and relevant early teaching career experiences of Luz Marina, a seventh-grade English teacher who according to her told story, right after graduating from university, experienced a rough start in her teaching practice, due to difficulties in her English language domain. The storytelling exercise developed in this narrative inquiry, sheds some light on the specific steps taken by the participant to be able to overcome the communicative challenges and how she managed to have a successful professional life working at Institución Educativa Presbítero Daniel Jordan for over twelve years and at Institución Educativa Club de Leones for over seventeen years, which are two well-known public schools in Cúcuta, Colombia.

This investigative work aimed at the exploration of the underlying meanings of the participant’s important human experiences, started with several class observations at Institución Educativa Club de Leones, which is the public school where the subject currently teaches seventh grade students. The class observations provided the perfect opportunity for taking field

notes to get to know about Luz Marina's teaching style, pictures, and sample worksheets were taken, but most importantly, these class observations set the ground for getting an appreciation of her classroom context and circumstances. The positive learning atmosphere was palpable despite it being a rather small classroom, crowded with more than 30 students tightly sitting next to each other, and adjacent to the basketball court, thus making this a loud lecture room. According to Jeong-Hee (2016), conducting observational fieldwork is yet another essential method for retrieving data, as well as visual data collection which this author considers especially important for the research process when analyzed in detail. Therefore, the above mentioned, were just some of the narrative data collection methods used to gather the needed information and supplemental details.

As it was foreseen in the preliminary planning for this research, a series of three semi-structured interviews, took place in the form of two face to face interviews held at the teacher's Club de Leones school job site, as well as one over the phone interview conducted in this matter due to physical distance circumstances between the researcher and the participant. These interviews provided the pivotal data, facts and particulars that constituted the backbone of this narrative inquiry.

This investigation relates to the voices of the LLEI realities: Life stories and experiences, by presenting a detailed description of the most significant moments in Luz Marina's initial teaching career and in her English as a foreign language classroom; account that, exhibits the facts over which this narrative inquiry is based on. The above mentioned was done according to the guidelines of qualitative research in the study of English and its contexts. "Without the use of accurate description to describe a character or set a scene, a story isn't grounded: It is like a research paper without facts". Ulrich (2006, p.112)

2. Research Statement

This qualitative narrative research paper is aimed to disclose the initial experiences in the professional life of Luz Marina; a Colombian middle school English teacher who encountered communicational confidence difficulties in her teaching performance, during the initial years of her career as an English educator.

After graduating from her local university, the participant began her teaching career feeling self-conscious due to her lack of English language domain, which hindered her teaching emotionality due to her self-perceived communicational limitations in the target language.

Despite having graduated with a professional degree in teaching English, the participant of this study encountered anxiety and mixed feelings related to her limited knowledge in foreign language and culture due in part to not having had enough exposure to this foreign language during her university years added to insufficient opportunities to actively practice and get better in her communicative competencies.

This situation had a negative effect on the participant's personal and professional ethics, taking into account she felt uncomfortable teaching a language over which she did not have ample knowledge. Researching about teacher's emotions is important because it helps on advocating teacher's lives as well as to guide teacher's lecturing process in class, which most likely directly affects student learning and overall teaching quality Frenzel & Jacob (2009)

In addition to the previously exposed set of circumstances, this narrative inquiry deepens on the subsequent steps and course of action taken by the participant of this study in order to improve her shortcomings in communicational abilities in the English language which

lead her to go in the look-out for additional training at a local English institute, considering she did not feel ready nor fully prepared to tackle the requisites and requirements the real job scenario demanded from her.

Teacher Luz Marina felt the urge to take additional English courses and found a one on one training course with an American English teacher who not only reinforced Luz Marina's English domain, polished her accent and pronunciation, but also gave her knowledge about core aspects of the American way of life, customs and traditions; so she could include intercultural communication and bring about foreign culture notions and awareness of globalization among her students and be able to present English as an international language worth being studied and learned. As stated in by (Bayyurt, 2006) the main focus in language teaching is to develop the intercultural communicative competence among students to provide them with the opportunity to deal with the issues related to a broader English usage around the globe.

Furthermore, this narrative inquiry justifies its investigative motivations with the desire to highlight and give recognition to Luz Marina, this encouraging Colombian English teacher who through her drive for improvement and excellence, was able to overcome her own professional challenges and pulled off a successful teaching career in which she not only taught English, opened her student's minds to other cultures, but also inspired some of her pupils to become English as a foreign language educators in Colombia.

By telling teacher Luz Marina's story and disclosing the particularities of her lived experiences, this qualitative narrative research gives resonance to the often-muted voices of the participants of the LLEI. Finally, this investigation contributes to expose a real self-improvement story that took place in a Colombian classroom and it is worth telling.

Throughout the development of this qualitative narrative inquiry that focuses on the experiences and stories lived by the participant, the following research question came to surface:

Research Question:

How does teacher Luz Marina describe her English learning experiences and her positioning as an English teacher throughout her career?

Main Objective:

- To describe Luz Marina's English learning experiences and her positioning as an English teacher throughout her career.

Specific Objectives:

- To identify the course of action taken by teacher Luz Marina to improve the limitations in her communicational abilities in the English language.
- To portray Luz Marina's positioning as an English teacher throughout her career.

3. Theoretical Framework

In order to give sound to the often-unheard voices and testimonies of the realities English language teachers experience in the English as a foreign classroom scenario, telling and re-telling these stories help give characterization to this form of qualitative research. Narrative provides the appropriate venue for conducting this practice of accounting for the sequence of events along with the inclusion of key details that bring stories and experiences to life in the ever-flowing foreign language teaching global stream. In this narrative inquiry study, a Colombian English teacher's story is exposed and brought to light, and through the temporal organization of her lived events and the inclusion of the most significant details in her initial years in teaching, a window into the realities of the English as a foreign language public school's classroom in Colombia, gets opened.

Narrative Inquiry

Although considered one of the most recent qualitative research methodologies, narrative inquiry analyzes people's experiences narratively to be able to tell and re-tell stories. Narrative is a word to which researchers have given many different meanings according to Polkinghorne (1995), nonetheless, narrative inquiry is guided by the use of details (data), chronology of key events and reflexive processes that go from one investigative theory to another that help bring the narrated story into a social context and places it in a conceptual framework. According to Creswell & Poth (2013) qualitative research starts with the interpretation and implementation of theoretical frameworks that feed the pursued study with the research questionings that relate to the meaning individuals or groups attribute to an existing human problem. In order to deepen into the found problem, qualitative investigator use collection of data in contextual settings.

Additionally, narrative researchers use inductive and deductive data analysis to construct themes and include the participant's voices.

However, in a more dynamic analysis by Daiute, (2014) on how narrative inquiry is understood, this form of narrative research constitutes an ageless sensitive human product that is ancient but continues to display the findings on new stories. Through the use of narrative inquiry, people can benefit from this collective process by exploring at the key events that occur in people's lives and by means of the collection of specific data; come to the construct of storytelling in order to create social connections and meaning of the diverse situations affecting people's lives and their contexts. Consequently, it is understood that narrative inquire is a qualitative research process that intervenes with knowledge, experiences and ultimately, social change.

Throughout the narrative inquiry process in this investigation, social connection was developed between the researcher and the participant in order to conduct one on one interviews and create conversation that would aide in the interpretation and organization of all the collected data.

Ultimately, Clandinin & Connelly (2000) state and confirm that the use of narrative inquiry provides a way of coming to the comprehension of experiences. This is achieved through the active collaboration between the investigator and the participants by the telling and the re-creation of the stories in people's lives.

Narrative of Experiences: Language Learning Histories (LLHs)

Narrative Inquiry, analyses people's stories through experiences. By considering the propositions of American philosopher John Dewey, in his theory of experience presented in his book *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938), considers that understanding the meaning of

human experiences is a starting point in the narrative research path; acknowledging that experience is understood as “part of the problem to be explored” (p.25).

Furthermore, the American philosopher highlights attention on the principles of continuity and integration, which he considers essential in the concept of constructing experience in the narrative inquiry exercise. In the case of the continuity of the experience, or as he called it “experiential continuum” Dewey (1938, p.28) the author explains that one experience is the consequence of a previous experience and that previous experiences can modify a future outcome. Thus, suggesting the need for chronological organization of the lived events. On the other hand, the second concept about the interaction of the experience explained by Dewey, consists of the relationship between the participant and the things, situations and people that surround the participant, in other words, the relationship between the participant and his or her surrounding environment and context. Additionally, as stated by Polkinghorne (1995) narrative creates its meaning by noting the contributions that actions and events make to a particular outcome and then configures this part into a whole episode. (p.6).

To complement the role the participant’s experiences play in narrative inquiry, Clandinin & Murphy (2009), consider that the nature of the experience help clarify the assumptions and points of view obtained through the narrative research. In this case, the understanding of the concept of experience is considered a “steroid phenomenon” Clandinin & Murphy (2009, p.598), and the practice of the narrative research is considered a methodology for investigating on lived experiences.

In direct relation to this study, during the conducted one on one interviews between the researcher and the participant, teacher Luz Marina re-lived and told her early English teaching experiences in public schools in Cúcuta, Colombia as the storytelling process of this narrative

inquiry took place. Therefore, this narrative research study is centered on teacher Luz Marina's lived experiences during her initial teaching practice, which came about as a consequence of her self-perceived insufficient English language domain and professional insecurities, and as a result, determined the course of action that followed and led to a very positive English teaching career in public schools that has lasted for years.

The above-mentioned set of events look back on Luz Marina's past English learning experiences, which contained some disappointment, since she considered her English classes during her university studies, had been insufficient. Therefore, her memories about her language learning experience were filled with emotionality. According to Barkhuizen et al. (2014), reflecting on temporal past experiences, whether positive or negative experiences, can be emotive and instructive. However, doing this kind of reflection on previous learning memoirs, definitely contributed to her ongoing English language process and determined her future course of action which was intended for professional development.

Emotionality and Insecurities of Non-Native Speaker English Teachers.

Paying attention to teacher's emotions is a matter of significant importance because the way teachers feel about their teaching performance, their positioning in their career and the way the students perceive them as educators, plays a crucial role in the quality of the teaching practice and ultimately it affects the students learning process.

Emotionality is profoundly embedded in communicative functioning, Andersen & Guerrero (1998). For this matter, teachers experiencing and expressing anxiety, may transmit a sense of inferiority, which can cause a strong negative effect and deter educators from performing their job with confidence, (Frenzel & Jacob, 2009). As English language teachers are expected to be knowledge transferors, they also are required to be excellent communicators and

care givers for students, Arnold (1999). Therefore, the combination of all the great expectations from the parents, students, educational institutions and the English as a foreign language teachers themselves pose a great burden to the point that all of these factors can affect these educators not only physically, emotionally but also, psychologically as well, Lee et al. (2017)

The way non-native speaker teachers (NNST) see themselves and the way they are seen by their students and work place contexts have been for a long time a very sensitive matter due to NNSTs being generally considered not to have the same level of knowledge in the language as native speakers do, according to Llorca (2005).

The reality on the English as a foreign language classroom has been in general that most NNSTs have at some point in time during their teaching career, experienced a sentiment of self-concern and perception of inferiority as opposed to the native speaker English teacher.

However, after deep analysis, Rajagopalan (2005) has found that what negatively affects Non-native English teacher's confidence in their teaching practice is their self-perception on their English proficiency, more than their actual English language skills. Moreover, in an study conducted in Thailand by Abe (2011), where several NNST were interviewed about their levels of confidence in their English language teaching, it was found that in this country, most of the interviewed teachers had a high level of confidence and considered that being bilingual actually placed them in a privileged position where they could relate and understand better their student's difficulties for learning the foreign language. In the same manner, English language students in Thailand, were asked their opinion about learning from a non-native speaker teacher. The answers given by the students at the beginning and at the end of the course illustrated that most of the students thought their teacher had a smooth accent and appreciated the fact that their teacher could speak their own language as well. Some other students manifested they liked that

their English teacher was easier to understand in class, because they could speak slowly and clear. Although in her studies, Abe, (2011) has also found that “native speaker teachers tend to focus on fluency, meaning, language in use, oral skills and colloquial registers, while non-native speaker teachers tend to place emphasis on accuracy, form, grammar rules, the printed word and formal registers”. (p.63).

Perspectives on English Teacher training in Colombia.

There has been a great deal of transformation in the linguistic educational policies in Colombia since its inception years early in the 19th century, when as stated by Gonzalez (2010) in 1826 studying English became a requirement in order to graduate from secondary school, and following this mandate in 1842, the teaching of foreign languages English and French were included as elective courses for the Literatures and Philosophy careers in local universities.

For the next several decades in Colombia, the English language continued to be taught, however, this was done without specifically determined academic objectives; there was no clear path to follow, nor an existing law in this regard from the Colombian National Ministry of Education, according to MEN (2014a).

However, as explained by Gomez (2017), by the time World War II was ending, most European countries were concentrated in rebuilding their economies, allowing for a strengthening in the relations between Colombia and the USA, highlighting the importance of the English language.

A few decades later, during the 1980's and 90's additional foreign language policies were adopted by the national government, such as *The English Syllabus*, *the COFE project*, *the General Law of Education and the Curricular Guidelines for Foreign Languages*, as stated by Usma (2009). Those educational plans had the intention to restore foreign language teaching and

learning, and offered materials and resources for a greater professional development of local teachers. However, the outcomes of these plans did not come up as expected mostly due to the majority of English school teachers not having the required oral proficiency, added to the lack of proper instruction from the official entities on the methodologies and approaches for conducting such educational projects and lastly because of the unfitted university structures to promote the needed educational research.

As stated by Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada-Sanchez (2016) it was not until 1991, when Colombia signed a reform of its political constitution, that the country's multiculturalism, multilingualism and its native indigenous languages were given some relevance and recognition. Moreover, during those times in Colombia, there was a significant economic expansion which brought a great increment of imports from USA and Europe. This time, with the collaboration of the Government of the United Kingdom through the British council established in Colombia, an approach was created for bringing changes in the bachelor programs for English teachers, known as *Licenciaturas*, which prompted an increment in the number of English hours and the inclusion of the research component in these professional programs Rubiano et al. (2000) cited in Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada-Sanchez (2016).

As a result of the economic opening in Colombia, in 1991 the Curricular Guidelines for Foreign Languages project was proposed by the Colombian National Government. These proposed guidelines had the intention to dig into the specific approaches and methods of the previous National Education Law, in terms of foreign languages. In his opinion, Ocampo (2002) cited in Usma (2009) the result of this intervention brought a channeling of the frameworks within which English teachers could exercise their professional practice, giving a stricter set of rules for the English Education parameters in Colombia, although limiting at the same time the

teacher's autonomy to exercise their educational labor. In spite of the high expectations of the two previous educational programs, according to Usma (2009) several studies came to the conclusion that Colombia's school system was not ready to introduce English in both primary school and high school and it evidenced the need to improve public school English teacher's working conditions.

Later on, in relation to the National Bilingual Program established in 2004 and with length until 2019, this was created to improve the communicative competencies in the English language at all educational levels. More specifically, this plan has incorporated for the first time the inclusion of the Common European Framework of reference as a national standard in Gomez (2017) explanation, as well as English immersion programs for teachers already working in the public sector and high standard quality accreditation for the various language programs in Colombian universities. The National Bilingual program is still an ongoing project that despite the great deal of criticism it has received from various scholars as stated by Bonilla Carvajal & Tejada-Sanchez (2016), it continues to evolve in trying to minimize the gap between the governmental intentions and the actual social conditions in educative sector in Colombia.

4. Research Design

The research design chosen for this investigation is the one that best addresses the main purpose to investigate and answers the proposed research question. This was achieved by following the set of procedures and research strategies that helped shape the structure of this study. In other words, as stated by Griffiee, Dale (2012), the chosen research design for this study provided the needed set of instructions for data collection and analysis.

Narrative as a Research Methodology

Narrative was the research methodology used as a contextual framework employed to collect relevant data and information for the purpose of this academic investigation. As Polkinghorne (1988) points out, narrative is what makes human experiences meaningful. Considering our field of teaching English as a foreign language, for Barkhuizen et al. (2014) narrative research comes handy when attempting to understand language teacher's and learner's ways of thought, in the context of a social or educational activity.

In the case of this particular study, performing research on Luz Marina's experiences about her English teaching practice was an opportunity for me as the researcher, to immerse into the participant's world and get to know and analyze her story told through interviews as a tool for data analysis when putting her particular case in context with a common situation that affects the Colombian English as a foreign language classrooms scenario. Furthermore, as Oxford (1995) explains, when language teachers or learners get asked to share their stories, they cannot avoid addressing contextual, situational, historical, and cultural factors that help give form to the experienced event.

Social Connection with the Participant for Research

Upon bringing this investigation into grounded context, it started as an academic

assignment where non-participant observations took place over the course of one school semester. Before these observations, the participant of this research was completely unknown for the researcher which implicated that a new cooperative and friendly relationship had to emerge. It all started with a process of identification and rapport building which led to a more complex coordination of the modality in which the research process including the field observation notes, the pictures to be taken and the interviews, would be performed. According to Allen (2017), “the amount of contact and the type of relationship is highly dependent on the approach of the researcher and the type of inquiry” (p.1). Therefore, the researcher and participant roles were clearly determined and a flexible commitment for the purpose of this qualitative investigation was established.

The Participant:

Narrative inquiry places the participant or participants of the investigation in a protagonist role according to Barkhuizen et al. (2014), where the exposed stories and experiences are told by the participant in their own words and then the story gets retold and presented to an audience by the researcher.

The participant of this narrative inquiry research project is a middle-aged female teacher who has worked for over 27 years as an English teacher in two public schools in Cúcuta, Colombia. Luz Marina, which is the authorized name used to identify the participant, currently teaches English in seventh grade at Institución Educativa Club de Leones, and has done so for the last 17 years. Enthusiastic and energetic, the teacher is a dedicated educator who many years ago, decided to pursue a teaching career in English as a foreign language despite the scarcity of resources in the linguistic and sociocultural contexts regarding the need for learning a foreign language in Colombia.

Trustworthiness of data Collection Sources.

Most of the data collected for the purpose of this narrative research was obtained on site at the participant's English as a foreign language classroom.

The first data collection instruments were multimodal visual elements, in this case pictures, that were taken at the specific classroom where the participant performs her teaching practice and that depicts with great detail the real characteristics of this English as a foreign language scenario in a Colombian public school. Additionally, the taken pictures show a face that represents the realities of the LLEI and give legitimacy to this investigation exercise.

In regards to the substance of this narrative research a series of three un-structured interviews took place, and were performed in the form of guided conversations between the researcher and the participant. Therefore, there were no third-party affiliations involved in the data collection process. Additionally, special consideration for conducting these interviews with the use of a voice-recording device was agreed upon, with the intention to avoid inaccuracies or misinterpretations during the data analysis process. "There is always a risk that the original storyteller's intentions and meanings will be distorted in the re-telling for the purposes of research". Barkhuizen et al, (2014, p.90)

This research project was guided following the research parameters of the Narrative Inquiry Subproject: The Voices of the LLEI Realities, Life Stories and Experiences. Conducted in conformance with the protocols of the B.A in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Additionally, this investigation project counted with the supervision of a regional tutor who provided her aid and guidance in the design of the implemented data collection instruments, as well as helped in the clarification of the subsequent steps to follow in order to contrast the obtained data against the existing theory, assess and analyze it.

Types of Data Collection Instruments.

In narrative research, there are several types of data collection instruments that can be implemented when gathering all the components of the story being told. However, as stated by Jeong-Hee (2016), narrative thinking and narrative principles need to be incorporated into the narrative inquiry methods (p.144). According to Barkhuizen et al. (2014), oral narratives, written narratives and multimodal narratives can help the researcher gather richer information that has a deeper insight into the biographical or autobiographical story being studied.

Oral narratives are usually presented in the form of individual or group interviews which can be structured, semi-structured or open interviews. Likewise, written narratives can be presented as narrative frames, diaries, reflective journals, and field notes, which whether reflective or descriptive, these record contextual evidence through observation incorporating the details and characteristics of a particular phenomenon being studied. Lastly, Multimodal narratives represent the visual elements that enhance written narrative texts. In Kress (2005) explanation, these types of graphical instruments can be different modes in which meaning can be made or shared with others.

Table 1.*Data Collection Instruments Defined.*

Oral Narratives	Written Narratives	Multimodal Narratives
<p><u>Interviews:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mainly used to elicit oral records of events and teaching experiences. -Involves asking questions, listening to and recording answers from an individual or group. -Best suitable for getting access into the language learning and teaching stories as expressed by Barkhuizen et al. (2014). 	<p><u>Narrative Frames:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -This written narrative is organized as the skeleton of a story. Barkhuizen et al. (2014). -They are sets of written story templates consisting in sentence starters followed by blank spaces and conjunctions that prompt participants to write down their ideas in narrative form. (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) 	<p><u>Multimodal Texts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -According to Barkhuizen et al. (2014): -These includes picture books, text books, graphic novels, comics and posters. -Multimodal narratives used as data are considered a growing trend in narrative inquiring.
<p><u>Structured Interviews:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It is a more rigid and objective interview style. -Considered “Oral questionnaires” by Richards (2003, p.69), here the researcher follows a set of organized questions without deviation of the topic. -Mostly used in narrative research projects with several participants, since it provides more uniform data. 	<p><u>Diaries:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Diaries are considered tools for reflection, Eton (2008). -The research diary acts as a repository of thoughts and reflections of the research experience and adds validity to the collected data. Engin (2011). -Diaries are a written report of the research journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Applying multimodal narratives creates a focus on the teaching practices rather than the content itself. -Multimodal narratives can be used as a subject, it being the end product and main source of data for narrative analysis.

Oral Narratives	Written Narratives	Multimodal Narratives
<p><u>Semi-Structured Interviews:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Is the most widely used data collection instrument due to the flexibility that it allows as the storytelling process takes place. -It initiates with a set of core questions, but it can extend allowing the interviewee to extend, clarify and elaborate. -It includes open-ended questions that facilitates moving from a general topic to a more specific one. 	<p><u>Field Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Field notes are detailed and accurate descriptions of what the researcher see, hears and experiences. -According to Bogdan & Biklen (2003), field notes usually consist of two broad kinds of writing: Descriptive and Reflective. -The notes serve as evidence that provide meaning and help with the understanding of the study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multimodal narratives being used as a tool, brings about relevant discussion about the image or comic or poster being used. -Photographs or videos can be use as prompts during interviews or discussions. -They can also be used as supplementary visual narratives for help in the analysis of research findings. Phal (2004).
<p><u>Unstructured Interviews:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It is considered an informal conversational interview. -Used in qualitative research, especially when the researcher wants to find out information the participant is likely to withhold. 	<p>-Field notes should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Date, time and place of observation. -Specific facts on what happened on the site of observation. 	<p>-In today’s world, multimodal narratives can also include videos, audios and websites, so it is important to have technological and critical understanding skills.</p>

Note: Information taken from Barkhuizen et al. (2014)

The table above summarized the set of data collection instruments usually applied from the perspective of narrative inquiry. The following section describes explicitly the selection of instruments to accomplish the research objectives of this study.

Data Collection Instruments Used

Semi-Structured Interviews:

For the development of this narrative research exercise, a series of three semi-structured

interviews were performed between the researcher and the participant. The first interview was an in-person one on one interview and it took place at Club de Leones School, in Cúcuta. This is the public school where teacher Luz Marina has worked for the last 17 years, as an English teacher and Homeroom teacher as well. The interview included seven questions that intended to comply with the main objective of this data collection instrument which was to find out about this teacher's narratives, stories and experiences in her labor as an educator. Due to the nature of the interview, this took place as a guided conversation in which the participant willingly answered all the questions in a relaxed and amicable way.

The second interview's main purpose was to find out more about the participant's current teaching style, teaching methodology and class didactic practices. The idea was to assert the successful development that Luz Marina's career had over the course of her 27 years teaching English. Additionally, interview three, was done with the intention to corroborate on previously gathered information such as specific dates of events in the participant's story and to clarify existing doubts. The last interview was done over the phone due to physical distance between the researcher and the participant. Questions and transcripts are available in appendix (A).

Field Notes:

The field notes were taken during the course of several visits to the participant's job site. These field notes represent the accounts of the non-participant observation role I played as the researcher.

The main purpose of these descriptive field notes was to get a detailed and accurate description of Luz Marina's English as a foreign language classroom and put this in context with Colombia's public-school circumstances. Additionally, these non-participant observation sessions gave me the opportunity to write reflective thoughts about her successful teaching

performance. In the included image of my field notes it is possible to read about the modality of the class, the class topic and the implemented activities by the teacher. See field notes in appendix (B).

Multimodal Instruments:

The multimodal instruments collected for the purpose of this narrative inquiry were pictures taken at the seventh-grade classroom where the participant teacher works. These pictures illustrate the realities of the LLEI and represent physical evidence not only of the existing circumstances but also of the teacher in action, her students and the overall atmosphere of active and collaborative English teaching and learning processes.

Additionally, pictures of the class materials such as the English text book “Way to Go 7th Grade” were also taken, as well as pictures of the teacher designed worksheets, which represent a tangible class component that aids in the process of this investigation. The teacher considers the book topics appropriate and she designs worksheets as complementary aid. See appendix (C).

It is pertinent to mention that the pictures were taken strictly for academic purpose and with the appropriate consent from the participants. The taken pictures do not clearly show nor focus on any underage student’s face. See appendix (C).

Lastly, the intention of this research was properly conveyed and informed through a written informed consent. The participant was given the choice to voluntarily, openly and willingly participate in this research study, knowing about the freedom to withdraw from the investigation process at any time if desired. The main intention was to secure the context of investigation and to comply with the ethical processes regarding the disclosure of true personal information to be used exclusively for academic research purposes. See appendix (D).

5. Data Analysis

The procedures for analyzing the collected narrative data start with the organization of the collected data into a comprehensive framework or categorization of the analysis approaches, as explained by Dörnyei (2007); the terms iterative, emergent and interpretive help in the organizing of the strategies for data analysis. In this regard, Dörnyei (2007), suggest the term iterative as the constant back and forth movement from the actual data collection and its interpretation, and points out on the importance to be aware of the moment when the analyzed data no longer provides additional room for interpretation, thus marking the need to start writing. Emergent, is the second term used by the author to indicate that data analysis in narrative research should be kept with an open-ended research question and a mind set for amplitude in the research objectives, thus allowing for a continuous flow of emergent new details and findings. Finally, interpretive is the third term proposed, which brings about the notion subjectiveness from the researcher, that can mold the obtained findings that come out of the performed qualitative research process.

The form of the collected data for this qualitative research, consider the obtained one on one semi-structured interviews, as a pool of narrative data because such interviews were performed with the intention to evoke a language learning experience and a professional life story from the participant teacher of this study.

Additional to the interviews, the performed observational field notes and the pictures that were taken during the observation sessions, constituted the supplemental ethnographic set of data collected for the enhancement of this investigation. These written and multimodal data are not in storytelling form, so are accounted as non-narrative by Polkinghorne (1995). The author

highlights on the differentiation of the two kinds of narrative studies that can be performed according to the nature of the collected data.

For the purpose of this qualitative narrative research, the one on one interviews, which tell the story of the participant's language learning experiences as well as the story of the participant's professional life story, are taken as the main source of information, thus determining the path and approaches for data analysis.

Therefore, thematic analysis is the approach used to breakdown and interpret the collected narrative data. In his explanations, Polkinghorne (1995) suggests a paradigmatic reasoning to describe and analyze the essence of the collected narrative data. This valuable information can be classified by themes or topics. This narrative inquiry displays the use of thematic analysis on the English language learning experiences and teaching life story of the participant Luz Marina. The major themes or categories for analysis, emerged throughout the investigative process and guided the researcher to identify the objectives and led to the formulation of the research question in this investigation. Furthermore, the emerged sub-themes came to surface throughout the examination of the supplemental pieces of data, such as the written field notes and pictures which helped to forge development of the research statement, and facilitated the theoretical framework; which represent the laid-out foundation and the pillars that support this qualitative narrative inquiry.


The table below synthesizes the main themes coherent with the research question and the objectives for describing evidences from the participant's narrative regarding the information obtained from data collection and analysis.

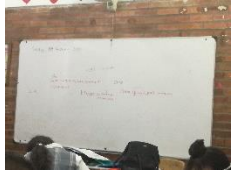
Table 2

Data Analysis in Conjunction with the research objectives.

Research Question: How does teacher Luz Marina describe her English learning experiences and her positioning as an English teacher throughout her career?			
Specific Objective 1	Main Theme	Participant's Narrative	Emerging Sub-themes
To identify the course of action taken by teacher Luz Marina to improve the limitations in her communicational abilities in the English language.	Limitations in her communicational abilities in the English Language right after graduating from local university.	<p><i>Luz Marina: Well, when I started to, started teaching English at school, I realized that umm, that the university was very bad. The teaching. No practice, ehh, just writing, bad pronunciation and I was big challenge for me, because I realized that I didn't pronounced very well and some things and I had to take some course in an institute; private institute, in order to improve my pronunciation, speaking, listening, because I think the university was bad for language.</i></p> <p><i>Excerpt taken from: Interview #1.</i></p>	Lack of oral and fluency skills at communicating in English, due to limited speaking practice exposure in her university years.
	Concerns about not doing things right.	<p><i>Luz Marina: Umm, I think my big challenge is to improve my teaching in order to the students can understand me.</i></p> <p><i>Excerpt taken from: Interview #1</i></p>	The teacher did not feel comfortable teaching English, thinking she did not have good English language domain.

	<p>Self-improvement decision to get better at core skills needed for English teaching practice.</p> <p>Communicational aspects that improved after the extra-curricular English course.</p>	<p><i>Luz Marina: I, I took, ehh ehh, took class with a foreign teacher. Ehh Ehh, Beth Ann Budde and I took many years class and Beth Budde is an International school of English. Very good institute. Excerpt taken from: Interview #1.</i></p> <p><i>Luz Marina: Yo recuerdo, yo estuve con Beth por bastante tiempo, como dos años, dos años y medio, ahh al final ella como que se encariño conmigo, y ella me dejaba practicar enseñando a los alumnos de las clases de ella. Alla en el” institute”, en “ISE”. Y era que ella se sentaba en la silla de atrás y ella me dejaba que yo hiciera la clase. Y es que como ella era tan buena, yo ya había mejorado mucho, había perfeccionado la parte de la pronunciación. Excerpt taken from: Interview #1.</i></p>	<p>Need for taking an extracurricular English course at an international language institute.</p> <p>Gained self-confidence about speaking in English.</p>
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Specific Objective 2	Main Theme	Multimodal and Written Narrative and Oral Narrative	Emerging Sub-themes.
<p>To portray Luz Marina's positioning as an English teacher throughout her career.</p>	<p>Positioning as an English teacher.</p> <p>I</p> <p>Instructional strategies used during class.</p>	<p><i>We guide ourselves with the DBAs. These provide content for listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are the communicative aspects of the language. In regards to the text book, we take guidance from it. I think it has very interesting topics for the children in 7th grade. In this text book, the Ministry of Education has included topics about health, best use of free time, and topics related to fostering good values.</i></p> <p><i>Excerpt taken from Interview #2.</i></p>  <p><i>Picture of a class worksheet with speaking exercise. Designed by the teacher.</i></p> <p><i>...When she talks to the students, she models and uses body language to better explain herself while talking to the students. Students follow teacher's instructions and practice pronunciation by doing repetitions. Excerpt taken from: Field notes.</i></p>	<p>The participant teacher acts in a very professional way, and is able to express herself in a technical and accurate way about the particulars of her field.</p> <p>Students become receptive and try to infer meaning from teacher's speech and assimilate English as a new language.</p>

	<p>Transcendent professional inspiration for others.</p>	<p><i>Teacher Luz marina struggles with her student's shyness and lack of confidence since many of them are immigrants from Venezuela. Excerpt taken from: Field notes.</i></p>  <p><i>Picture of students who lower their heads and are reluctant to class participation.</i></p> <p>Luz Marina: <i>Algunos exalumnos me han expresado que fueron motivados por me para estudiar idiomas (Inglés). Excerpt taken from interview #3.</i></p>	<p>English classrooms and teachers need to adjust, and should be prepared to fulfill immigrant student's needs.</p> <p>A rewarding outcome that highlights a successful teaching career.</p>
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Specific Objective 1:

Limitations in Her Communicational Abilities in The English Language

- *Limitations in her communicational abilities*

During the 1980's and 90's, the Colombian national government had launched some foreign language teaching policies such as *The English Syllabus* program or the *COFE* project, according to Usma (2009). However, despite the governmental good political intentions to reinstate foreign language teaching in the country, and to offer some resources to improve the conditions for professional development of local English teachers; the result expectations proved to be too high and did not coincide with the insufficient university programs of the time.

Throughout the decades several foreign language programs have been established in Colombia, however the existing programs back in the times when the participant of this study graduated from university and the current English as a foreign language plans coincide with disregarding the subjective and individual professional characterization of the local English teachers and instead promote a generalized system of prefabricated teaching, where the level of English proficiency and the native-like teacher identity are prioritized for benefiting marketing and economic intentions. According to Méndez et al., (2019) The ways in which conceptions of language policies in relation to bilingualism, served to produce a type of English language teacher who is a mere technician to fulfill practices of marketing.

As expressed by the participant in her own words, *Well, when I started to, started teaching English at school, I realized that umm, that the university was very bad. The teaching. No practice, ehh, just writing, bad pronunciation and I was big challenge for me, because I realized that I didn't pronounced very well and some things and I had to take some course in an*

institute; private institute, in order to improve my pronunciation, speaking, listening, because I think the university was bad for language. Excerpt taken from: Interview #1.

It is not surprising then, to find a teacher like Luz Marina, who finished her university studies as an English teacher in Colombia, only to be faced with the harsh reality that due to not having received enough linguistic English training, she considered herself simply not ready for teaching English as a Foreign language at a professional level.

With respect to the previously stated theme as main finding, the lack of oral and fluency skills at communicating in English, due to limited speaking practice exposure in her university years, emerged as a sub-theme in this research.

Giving analysis to the teacher's narrative I consider that English language pre-service teachers do need a deeper and thorough linguistic English training, in core topics that encompasses grammar, the four main communicational skills, vocabulary amplitude and sociocultural knowledge, that will provide the teacher in training a stronger sense of competence in their specific field of action and ultimately for us in the LLEI, within out teaching practice; an effective English language domain. These set of circumstances and facts were true for the participant of my study more than 30 years ago, and continue to be true now among many of the English as Foreign Language pre-service and active teachers in Colombia.

This idea gets reinforced by Méndez et al., (2019) who talks about the generalized concept in the nation of low language proficiency among Colombian English teachers. In this sense "News media and ads, in which statistics reports about the Colombian English teacher's low proficiency levels were exposed and promoted the idea of "Colombian English teachers do not speak English".

- *Concerns about not doing things right.*

Despite, knowing that she was not ready to tackle the demands posed by the trade, and with the help of her husband, she found her first job as an English teacher at a local school in Cúcuta. However, this early experience proved to her the fact that she did not have enough English language knowledge, thus resulting in feelings of professional insecurity, anxiety and contradictory thoughts about not doing things right. As manifested during the face-to-face interviews, Luz Marina felt very uncomfortable teaching English, thinking she did not have good English language domain or simply stated, a language she did not know how to speak. As explained by Andersen & Guerrero (1998), teacher's emotionality is deeply rooted in their communicative functioning.

The interviewed teacher expressed, *Umm, I think my big challenge is to improve my teaching in order to the students can understand me. Excerpt taken from: Interview #1*

The sentiment of concern expressed by the teacher and her emotionality with respect to her deficient level of English, and her self-perceived unreadiness for performing as an English teacher when she started to work at a professional level, is understandable and indeed a cause for in the job anxiety and insecurities, considering the generalized perception from the school directives, the peer pressure, the projected image towards the students and the high quality of education demanded by the student's parents within the educational context. Additionally, to these, it is pertinent to mention the categorization that non-native speaker teachers receive when they get constantly compared to native speakers, thanks to the commercialized and marketed notion that native speakers are better suited for the task. In her investigative paper about English teacher's subjectivities in Colombia, Méndez et al., (2019), explains how for years, the idea of being native-like, as a model for teaching English has been rooted in society.

- ***Self-improvement decision to get better at core skills needed for teaching practice***

This mix of undesirable feelings marked a significant moment, and faced Luz Marina with the decision to stop working and go in the look-out for a local but nonetheless high-quality English Institute, that would provide her with the much-needed English training in order to finally overcome her communicative impairments and achieve speaking improvement at core English skills along with a more natural speech fluency.

As expressed by the teacher participant: *I, I took, eh eh, took class with a foreign teacher. Eh eh, Beth Ann Budde and I took many years class and Beth Budde is an International school of English. Very good institute. Excerpt taken from: Interview #1.*

This teacher considers herself lucky to have found the help she was looking for because now she could finally acquire and reinforce the language communicative abilities in the English language that would allow her for a better and higher quality performance as an English teacher at the local public schools in Cúcuta, which was her professional goal at the time.

As Sierra, Piedrahíta. Ana, (2018) indicates, that career development programs offer educators the chance of getting better at their teaching practice, and help the teacher meet the demands the government and educative context demand from them.

I consider the teacher's decision to make a stop in her job and incipient career, a brave act of deep sincerity, and high professional ethics despite the economic sacrifice of no longer receiving a salary, a remarkable step that allowed her for a better training in English as well as a necessary measure in order to attain the high-quality teaching standards she sought.

- ***Communicational aspects that improved after the extra-curricular English course.***

During one-on-one interview with the participant teacher, the following input was mentioned by her: *Yo recuerdo, yo estuve con Beth por bastante tiempo, como dos años, dos*

años y medio, ahh al final ella como que se encariño conmigo, y ella me dejaba practicar enseñando a los alumnos de las clases de ella. Alla en el "institute", en "ISE". Y era que ella se sentaba en la silla de atrás y ella me dejaba que yo hiciera la clase. Y es que como ella era tan buena, yo ya había mejorado mucho, había perfeccionado la parte de la pronunciación. Excerpt taken from: Interview #1

At this institute, Luz Marina was able to take several English courses and improve not only her grammar understanding but most importantly for her, improve her language pronunciation and speech. After two and a half years of English training, she felt she had gained self-confidence about speaking in English and felt empowered to start for the second time, her career as an English teacher. This evidences that the participant's own driven decision to obtain additional English training, paid off with the teacher's regain of professional confidence and ultimately her ability to find a serious job as an Elementary School teacher which lasted for many years up to now.

Having performed several class observation sessions, I could appreciate how the teacher praises her memoirs about the moments in which she took the extracurricular English course and points out how much her speaking capabilities had improved as well as her vocabulary in the foreign language and her class management abilities.

Specific Objective 2:

To portray Luz Marina's positioning as an English teacher throughout her career.

Positioning as an English Teacher

English language teachers are expected to be knowledge transferors and are required to be excellent communicators, as stated by Arnold (1999), and Luz Marina with her high standards

of professionalism concurred with a similar thought. The difference this time, is that she was no longer insecure about her communicative skills and felt ready to work again as English teacher.

In 1991, Luz Marina starts working at Presbítero Daniel Jordan public school in Cúcuta, and set herself up for a prosperous career in English teaching considering she worked at this school for almost twelve years. Immediately after that, in year 2003, Luz Marina got hired and started working at Institución Educativa Club de Leones, which is the public school where she currently works and has done so, uninterruptedly for the last 17 years.

In one of the interviews the participant spoke about the class curriculum and planification strategies. *We guide ourselves with the DBAs. These provide content for listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are the communicative aspects of the language. In regards to the text book, we take guidance from it. I think it has very interesting topics for the children in 7th grade. In this text book, the Ministry of Education has included topics about health, best use of free time, and topics related to fostering good values. Excerpt taken from Interview #2.*

The above mentioned public educational venues, provided Luz Marina the appropriate grounds for professionally positioning herself as an English educator and besides providing her with the undisputable benefit of job security and stability, the fact that she managed to work for several years in a row at the two educative institutions, allows me think that she finally acquired the English knowledge and throughout the years of service, developed leverage as a professional educator, who is capable of preparing and carrying out classes that implement both the proposed guidelines by the Colombian Ministry of Education, as well as including her own ideas and style of teaching through her own designed worksheets, which make special emphasis on speaking practice.

Instructional strategies used during class.

Over the course of the years in teaching service, she had shaped and reshaped her teaching methodology and style, according to the observed needs and academic demands of the institutions and her students. One of those changes came after realizing that lesson plans and pedagogical guides should include more speaking and conversation activities, with the intention to give emphasis to oral communicative skills, which was what she lacked in the past. For this, the participant teacher, would work with the provided “Way to Go” for seventh grade text book, but also, in an effort to complement and enhance her teaching with her individual teaching style, she willingly makes the effort to design English worksheets with reading and pronunciation exercises encouraging her students to have a greater spoken interaction in English.

Additionally, due to the ongoing socio-economic and political adverse circumstances in Cúcuta, which is a small frontier city in the border with its sister country, Venezuela. The public educational institutions, Luz Marina and her students have not been oblivious to the constant joining of new foreign students that come from the neighboring country. The most notable situation directly affecting the teacher and her class, along with her teaching processes, is that most of the young students who come from Venezuela, have not received English classes, as claimed by the very students who arrive from that country. According to ShareAmerica (2019), approximately four million adult Venezuelans, and about one million children, have abandoned the country and moved to neighboring countries scaping from the president’s disastrous policies.

The class observation sessions and field notes written about Luz Marina’s classroom provide evidence of the fear, shyness and reluctance to participate in class of most of the immigrant students. The participant teacher in her own words described how one of her students

would tighten both his fists over the school chair board, lowered his head and avoided eye contact with the teacher, every time she would ask this student for class participation.

This difficult situation has imposed new challenges that Luz Marina has had to face and she has done so by adjusting her teaching methodology to accommodate the specific needs of all her students regardless of where they come from.

Therefore, with her ample experience in teaching and her pedagogical knowledge, Luz Marina has adopted changes in her teaching methodology, in order to motivate her students and ease the tension in her English classroom. The teacher expresses in her own words, “*I motivate them by giving them extra grade points, to get them to speak and participate in class. Excerpt taken from Interview #2.*

Transcendent professional inspiration for others.

With the pass of the years, and with the attentive care for her students, her unbreakable spirit for sharing knowledge about the English language in Colombia, and with the high level of professionalism that I observed in her, Luz Marina has also transcended into inspiring some of her students to become English teachers. As expressed in her own words, “*Algunos exalumnos me han expresado que fueron motivados por me para estudiar idiomas (Inglés)*”. *Excerpt taken from interview #3.* This has filled the teacher with satisfaction and represents a rewording outcome for a dedicated teacher who continues to work tirelessly for her students.

All the obtained data from the interviews, the field notes and the pictures gave me a clear view of the kind of teacher Luz Marina is, and the level of compromise she feels towards her students and her profession. It comes to no surprise to me, that some of her students got inspired by her, through her teaching style and language modeling, into becoming English teachers themselves. What a positive and remarkable contribution to our teaching English as a foreign

language profession, from a local educator from Cúcuta, Colombia who decided to do things in her own style but in the right way.

6. Conclusions and Implications

The collected information that resulted from the interviews presented the subject as an English teacher who had to work on her own in the construction of her career and her consolidation as an admirable and respectable professional. In her memoirs, she presents an account of her unsatisfactory experiences during her English teaching university studies. And these dissatisfying incidents had to do; in her own perception, with the inadequate linguistic English training she received during her professional training in her local university.

Not surprisingly, Luz Marina's experiences coincide in time with a period in Colombia in which governmental policies and regulations for the teaching of English in the nation were practically null, and lacked fundamental purpose and guidelines for its appropriate procedure. There was not guarantee from the governmental entities nor the private sector that would ensure a high standard of quality in the professional training being imparted.

As a consequence of the inadequate professional preparation mentioned by the teacher during the interviews, she encountered episodes during her very first job as an English teacher that proved to be disappointing because of her lack of good pronunciation and fluency in the target language and brought an array of mixed feelings of insecurity about her knowledge and domain of the English language in addition to feelings of professional anxiety that deeply shocked her sense of integrity and values, these encountered limitations this young teacher had to face while trying to give a jump start to her teaching job, made her feel obliged to put a halt in her career.

Noticing how she was unable to efficiently communicate in the very language she was set up to teach, convinced her that she needed to go in the lookout for additional English training that would help her overcome her weaknesses and help her gain professional confidence.

This is how the participant starts her search for the much-needed additional English training and came across International School of English, where she met Beth; an American English teacher who took this teacher under her wing and gave her the training she was longing for.

During the two and a half years that the participant diligently studied at this English school, she was trained in improving her grammar, and smoothing her pronunciation. This represented an opportunity that allowed Luz Marina to get better at core skills needed for her teaching practice.

After her lived experiences at the English school she attended, the teacher felt ready and empowered to re-start her career, and it didn't take her long before finding her first real and solid job as English teacher at Presbítero Daniel Jordan school, which is a public educational institution in Cúcuta. The participant teacher was able to manage the requirements of this teaching position, and acquired ample teaching experience considering she worked at this public school for twelve years.

Soon after, the teacher started working at Club de Leones school, which is the public educational institution where she has worked for the last 17 years, and where she has continued to establish and consolidate her teaching career. During the last five years, the participant has been assigned to teach seventh and eighth grades, providing her students with fun, interactive classes, that encompass the four communicative language skills, but also, take on a marked emphasis in speaking, taking into account her own lived experiences in the English language

learning process. In order to attain this objective in her teaching practice, the participant works not only with the provided text book, that she gets from the institution, but also, she designs her own worksheets as class material in which she includes oral communication exercises to foster student's English pronunciation and fluency.

Notwithstanding the many satisfactory career consolidation moments the participant has had during the course of her twenty-seven years in practice, some interesting challenges have arisen in the last few years, due to the massive immigration phenomenon that Cúcuta has endured, being a frontier city in the border with the troubled sister nation of Venezuela. These unforeseen challenges, have brought a constant joining of immigrant students, who struggled with English learning, due to not having received any English classes in their country, and most notably, due to the emotional toll the relocating exodus has brought upon them. This unfortunate situation, has required the teacher to make adaptations on her class, and on her teaching methodology, in order to accommodate the new student's necessities such as creating engaging communicative activities that would ease the tension among the students and make them feel comfortable and encouraged to participate in class.

These exceptional qualities the teacher has brought to her classes, have not gone by unnoticed, and in fact have transcended as inspiration for some of her students who have decided to pursue an English teaching career and have manifested to the teacher, of taking this decision out of the good examples and admiration they feel for her. Being this a rewarding outcome that highlights the participant teacher's successful teaching career.

Equally rewarding has been my personal experience writing this narrative inquiry paper, because it gave me the opportunity to meet this teacher, find out about her life story and portray

her career positioning, which surely serves as an example of personal and professional growth, to follow for future English teachers in Colombia.

According to the findings, and from a critical perspective it can be concluded that English language pre-service teachers do require a more thorough linguistic English training, making emphasis in grammar, the core main communicational skills that will provide the teacher in training a stronger English language domain.

Making these improvements in the teaching English training curriculum will allow for reducing the recurrence of professional insecurities, due to the fact of not being fluent in English.

This is an admirable case, in which this teacher individually looked for a solution to her professional obstacles, which costed her the sacrifice of time and money, however, a situation like this could have been avoided had she received the adequate professional preparation at the university from where she graduated.

Nevertheless, the teacher's decision to be pro-active and get better at what she considered was hindering her professional performance was a remarkable step, that gained her confidence, security and stability in her teaching practice along the more than 27 years of teaching.

This experience gave her the abilities to developed her own designed class materials emphasizing in speaking practice. Trying to offer her students with the English language skills that back in her time, she did not receive.

In the same way, this teacher has been able to accommodate and adjust her teaching style and methods to different circumstances such as lecturing her classes to the new international students that lack any previous English knowledge. Which demonstrates the teacher's exceptional pedagogical skills and empathy towards the vulnerable population coming to her classroom.

Her teaching style and the teacher's motivation has transcended and inspired some of her pupils to pursue a career in teaching English.

The above mentioned demonstrates that this is a self-improvement case to suffice a flaw originated during her incomplete professional training, with the purpose to better her English language skills and gain confidence in her teaching practice.

This research experience proves to be relevant to the Macroproject: Experiences and phenomena in the pre-service teacher's educational contexts, because it discloses the particular experiences of a teacher formed in a local university in Cúcuta, Colombia thirty years ago identifying the deficiencies in teaching training back then.

Likewise, this narrative research study contributes to the sub-project: The voices of the LLEI realities: Life stories and experiences since it highlights an outstanding story, through the exposition of the narrative of life experiences of the participant teacher, who participated in this context and after having graduated as English teacher, was able to admit her limitations in her communicative abilities in the target language.

This is an example of the obstacles that many other pre-service English teachers in local contexts, such as the one in Cúcuta, and that lead us to the reflection about the core language training being imparted.

In terms of further research studies, I suggest a continuity of investigative narrative projects that amplify on the local educational context's problematic regarding the English training aspect in the professional training of pre-service English teachers, thus the quality of the service offered to the students.

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8. Appendixes

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview 1, Questionary Format.

Universidad Santo Tomas

Date: Feb 28-19

Research Methodology 2019-1

Assignment 1: Unstructured interview to the English Teacher at *Institución Educativa Club de Leones*.

Instrument Objective: Interview to the 7th grade English Teacher at Club de Leones School with the intention to finding out the teacher's narratives, lite story and experiences in her labor as educator.

Teacher's Name: Luz Yonina Payona Quintana

Questionary:

1. How do you describe your experience with the English language since you started to study it? (When you were in school, at an English institute, or at University)
2. Did you always know that you wanted to teach English?
3. Where did you study to become an English Teacher?
4. How many years have you been working as an educator?
5. Where was your first job? And please tell me about your first Job experience as an English Teacher.
6. Could you mention a specific episode that marked an especially particular moment in your career during your experience as a teacher?
7. In the current context in which you are working now, how has your experience been and what challenges if any have you found?

INTERVIEW 1-TRANSCRIPT

Teacher Interview 1- Transcript:

Interview to the Middle School English teacher at Institución Educativa Club de Leones.

-Instrument Objective: Interview to the 7th grade English teacher at Club de Leones School with the Intention to find out the teacher's narrative, experiences and story of her professional live.

Introduction:

This interview was held on Thursday, February 28th, 2019 at the Club de Leones School, during the teacher's free hours. The main purpose of this interview was to get acquainted with the English teacher at this educational institution, and to get an inside view of the teacher's personal story, and relevant experiences in her work as an educator in the public schools of the city of Cúcuta, Norte de Santander. This, in concordance with the **Macro Project Field 2**, which is about the study of the English Language and its contexts. As well as with the **Research Sub-project 3:** Referring about the voices of the LLEI realities, life stories and experiences of the participants involved in this investigation project.

Interview Transcript: *Interviewer: Yazmin Sanchez/ Interviewee: Luz Marina B. Q.*

Yazmin: Hello and good morning teacher Luz Marina, we are here at Club de Leones School in Cúcuta, and we are about to start the interview for the Research and Methodology class for the first assignment of this semester, and well, Good Morning. How are you?

Luz Marina: Good Morning Yazmin, very good.

Yazmin: Thank you teacher; ahh, so we are going to proceed with the questions, and my first question about you as a teacher would be... How do you describe your experience with the English language since you started to study it?

Please tell me your experience when you started to study English when you were in school, or maybe when you studied English at an institute, after school hours, or maybe your experience when you were studying at university?

Luz Marina: About English I have been very happy because I like very much English. I enjoy English since I was in primary school and high school, at the university too.

I think that English is very important language around the world. People need a lot this language in any career.

Yazmin: Ok, thank you very much. I appreciate your answer. For the second question. Ahh, did you always know that you wanted to teach English?

Luz Marina: No, ahh, I thought I wanted to learn English for, *como se dice*, not teaching, for myself, but I started to study Law, but I didn't like this career. And then, I went to live in Pamplona, I got married and I decided to study English and French but is my... what I wanted to study.

Yazmin: Ok, thank you very much for your answer. Ok, Thank you.

Continuing with our interview, I would like to proceed to ask you where did you study to become an English Teacher?

Luz Marina: I became to study in the University of Pamplona, ehh, when I went to live there. I was married and my husband told me if I want to study some career, and I choose English for because I enjoy very much English. That's the reason.

Yazmin: Ok, thank you very much teacher Luz Marina, and how many years have you been working as an educator?

Luz Marina: I have been, I have been working as ahh, a teacher ah, for 27 years in just two schools. Official schools, in Daniel Jordan in Atalaya, and this school, Club de Leones.

Yazmin: OK, very good. 27 years is quite, quite a while, is an entire life, great! ha ha. And, where was your first job? And can you please tell me a little bit more about your experience during your first job as an English Teacher?

Luz Marina: My what, my first job? Was like a teacher, umm, my experience is that I have been working with poor children and they have many difficulties to learn English, because of social position, social status. I have to be very patience with them, and, but I think very *comprometido*, *iba a decir*.

Yazmin: Excuse me, just to clarify, what is the name of the first school where you worked?

Luz Marina: Daniel Jordan

Yazmin: Where is this school?

Luz Marina: In Atalaya, Doña Ceci, in Cúcuta.

Yazmin: Ok, thank you very much. Ok, teacher Luz Marina, continuing with our interview, umm, I would like to ask you the following.

Could you please mention a specific moment or episode during your career, during your job as an English Teacher, ahh, that marked an important experience? And also, can you tell us in the context that you are working right now, if you have found challenges, if any, in this school, where you are working at the moment?

Luz Marina: Well, when I started to, started teaching English at school, I realized that umm, that the university was very bad. The teaching. No practice, ehh, just writing, bad pronunciation and I was big challenge for me, because I realized that I didn't pronounced very well and some things and I had to take some course in an institute; private institute, in order to improve my pronunciation, speaking, listening, because I think the university was bad for language.

Yazmin: Ok, you mean the preparation that you received in the university?

Luz Marina: I, I took, ehh ehh, took class with a foreign teacher. Ehh Ehh, Beth Ann Budde and I took many years class and Beth Budde is an International school of English. Very good institute.

Yazmin: OK,

Luz Marina: I recommend.

Yazmin: Good.

Luz Marina: I started to improve, ehh, my English, my speaking, with my experience in working, not at university. Bad, bad, bad. University of Pamplona. Very bad.

Yazmin: Ok, so you consider that when you took this English course to improve your English and your pronunciation, this was like the important moment in your career, when you, when you, ahh, it marked an important event on your career?

Luz Marina: Yeah. Yo recuerdo, yo estuve con Beth por bastante tiempo, como dos años, dos años y medio, ahh al final ella como que se encariño conmigo, y ella me dejaba practicar enseñando a los alumnos de las clases de ella. Alla en el” institute”, en “ISE”. Y era que ella se sentaba en la silla de atrás y ella me dejaba que yo hiciera la clase. Y es que como ella era tan buena, yo ya había mejorado mucho, había perfeccionado la parte de la pronunciación.

Yazmin: OK, and in the current context, the place where you are working right now, here at Club de Leones School in Cúcuta. Have you found any challenges, or has it been any difficulties that you have found? Can you mention, if any?

Luz Marina: Umm, I think my big challenge is to improve my teaching in order to the students can understand me.

Yazmin: Ok, and in regards as to, we, we mentioned about challenges and difficulties that you have found here at the Club de Leones School. What have been positive things that you have found in your, you know, in the environment here in the school, and in the teaching itself?

Luz Marina: I think, I I have many changes in, because I change my methodology, ahh, ahh yeah. Before, I taught English eh, grammar, structures, but I realized that methodology must change only conversation, communication, interaction with students.

Yazmin: Ok, thank you very much, teacher Luz Marina. I really appreciate your help and your cooperation with this interview. Thank you.

Luz Marina: Thank you Yazmin.

Interview 2: Questionary Format**Universidad Santo Tomas****Date:** November 3rd, 2019.

Research in Action 2019-2

Assignment 3: Unstructured interview to the seventh-grade English teacher at *Institución Educativa Club de Leones*.**Instrument Objective:** Semi-structured interview to the seventh-grade English teacher at the above-mentioned school in order to find out about teaching methodologies and class approaches implemented throughout her professional practice.Teacher's name: Luz Marina Bayona Quintana**Questionary:**

1. Which are the school's curriculum objectives for the English classes? (For 7th grade, specifically).
2. How is this 7th grade course's educational plan organized? Do you follow along with the topics in the text book?
3. Which is your teaching methodology for these provided topics?
4. Which would be the academic needs, for the seventh-grade students in the English class?
5. What teaching approach would you like to try with your 7th grade students in order to reach their academic needs? (Which specific activities are you implementing to address these necessities?).

Interview 2-Transcript.

-Interview to the middle school English teacher at Institución Educativa Club de Leones in the city of Cúcuta, Colombia.

Instrument Objective: Semi-structured interview to the 7th grade English teacher at the above-mentioned school in order to find out about teaching methodologies and class approaches implemented by this teacher throughout her professional practice.

Introduction: This interview took place on November 3rd, 2019 at the premises of the educational Institution where the teacher works. This interview was aimed to collect information about the teacher's class conduction, her teaching techniques and teaching instruments implemented during her lectures in an effort to gather valuable information that can provide us with an understanding and provides punctual evidence of the realities in an English teaching context.

Interview 2 Questionary Transcript: Interviewer: Yazmin Sanchez Wheeler/ Interviewee: Luz Marina.

Yazmin: Good morning teacher Luz Marina. We are at the Colegio Club de Leones, eh, to perform an interview to the 7th grade English teacher. Once again, good morning. How are you?

Luz Marina: Good morning, I 'm very well. Thank you.

Yazmin: Teacher Luz Marina, to start our interview today, I would like to ask you: Which are the school's curriculum objectives for the English classes? For 7th grade, specifically.

Luz Marina: Well Yazmin, the school's curriculum objectives are based in the guidelines given by Colombian National Ministry of Education. There are some standardized patterns, which are given at the national level, taken from the Common European Frame. Also, there are the DBAs, which we have organized according to each grade. These DBAs must be complied with by the

school. These are the topics to cover, the contents, and the activities. So, complying with the DBAs is the school's curriculum objective.

The DBAs are the Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje.

Yazmin: Good, continuing with our interview, how is this 7th grade course's educational plan organized? Do you follow along with the topics in the text book?

Luz Marina: We guide ourselves with the DBAs. These provide content for listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are the communicative aspects of the language. In regards to the text book, we take guidance from it. I think it has very interesting topics for the children in 7th grade. In this text book, the Ministry of Education has included topics about health, best use of free time, and topics related to fostering good values.

All these topics which are relevant to our current way of life, get integrated with the English grammar topics. Therefore, there are four very nice modules, which I consider very beautiful for each school grade.

Yazmin: Ok, very well and thank you, teacher Luz Marina. Moving to the next question, -Which is your teaching methodology for these provided topics?

Luz Marina: Well, right now we are with learning worksheets. These learning worksheets have pre-set structures that we must fulfill. Therefore, I first explore the student's knowledge, according to the topic. Then introduce the vocabulary that will be seen. Which previous knowledge the students have. This is how I start my lectures and my teaching.

For example, today we are seeing the verb To Be, in order to study the topic that comes next.

I follow the grammar structures in the book's readings. This is where we take the readings from, and practice reading comprehension. The questions and assessment for these readings are done

sometimes with open questions, sometimes with closed questions or sometimes with questions in the ICFES style.

After this, we start with the grammar topics. Nowadays, it is said that we (the teachers) don't have to teach the grammar, but I still think that it is important to teach the grammar, because grammar is included in the ICFES types of questions. So, grammar need to be included and taught. I also apply the work in groups as well as individual, along with class reinforcement. These are the parameters that the school has given us, the English teachers, and of course, this includes the communicative aspect of the English language; writing, speaking, listening and reading.

Yazmin: Ok, teacher Luz Marina. Thank you very much. And, could you tell me; out of what you have identified so far among the 7th grade students -Which one would be their academic needs, for the English class?

Luz Marina: Well, the first thing I see, is how these children are afraid to speak. In that regard, I have to make them face the need to talk. Their fear to speak is due to the bullying. That, if they may have a mistake, and then the other classmates would laugh at them. There are some very shy kids.

For example, there is a kid that finally participated in my class today. Because he would get so frightened every time, I asked him something. He would even tighten his hands, and clenched his fists. This is why I have to work out on the self-confidence aspect for every student.

On the other hand, there is the motivation aspect. Because, they are from lower income families, some are very poor, and they have lots of difficulties. They know, that they would never have the chance to travel anywhere when they finish their school, or ever.

I mean, for now they think like that. Another aspect is the parents support at home, which is very important. If there is the support from home, then they are able to advance in their learning process between the house and school.

Yazmin: Of course, you are totally right. Ok, teacher Luz Marina. To finish our interview- What teaching approach would you like to try with your 7th grade students in order to reach their academic needs?

Luz Marina: Which approach?

Yazmin: I mean, which specific activities are you implementing to address these necessities?

Luz Marina: I like the speaking aspect. The oral practice I think is very important for the students, but sometimes, the lack of time and the large number of students, I can't fully do this. They (the students) are still very slow, so I have to be patient. They take their time.

So then, we have to hurry up in class, we have to finish the worksheets, prepare for the midterm, there is the hurry here in the school. I not always get to do things the way I want to.

Therefore, it is mostly write and write and maybe I ask oral questions to the ones that like to speak. The ones that don't like to speak, I don't ask.

I motivate them by giving them extra grade points, to get them to speak and participate in class. Therefore, yes, I would like more oral practice in class, but it is difficult because of the time and the assignments we need to complete here.

Yazmin: Ok, thank you very much for your time and disposition to answer my questions. You are very kind. Until next time.

Luz Marina: My pleasure, any time.

Interview 3-Questionary Format

Universidad Santo Tomas

Date: August 10th, 2020.

Research Development 2020-2

Assignment: Unstructured interview to the English teacher at Institución Educativa Club de Leones.

Interview Modality: Over the phone via WhatsApp.

Instrument Objective: To corroborate previously obtained information and existing doubts clarification.

Teacher's name: Luz Marina Bayona Quintana.

Questionary:

1) What is the title of the professional degree you obtained at university?

¿Cuál título profesional obtuvo usted en la universidad?

2) Can you tell me a positive and a negative anecdote during your professional training at your university?

¿Podría contarme una anécdota positiva y una negativa durante su preparación profesional en la universidad?

3) In what year did you graduate, and when did you started to work as English Teacher?

¿En qué año se graduó y cuando empezó a trabajar como profesora de Inglés?

4) Which school grades have you taught in the last three years?

¿A qué grados ha enseñado durante los últimos 3 años?

5) Can you share a positive teaching/learning experience you have had with any of your students, or with a group of students in the last few years?

¿Podría compartir una experiencia de enseñanza o aprendizaje positiva con algún o algunos de sus estudiantes?

Interview 3- Transcript

Research Development: Interview to the English teacher at Institució n Educativa Club de Leones.

Date: August 10th, 2020

Interview Modality: Over the phone via WhatsApp.

Teacher's Name: Luz Marina Bayona.

Interview's Objective: To corroborate previously obtained information and existing doubts clarification.

Interview 3- Questionary Transcript.

Yazmin: What is the title of the professional degree you obtained at university?

Luz Marina: Bachelor's Degree in English and French.

Yazmin: Can you tell me a positive and a negative anecdote during your professional training at your university?

Luz Marina: A positive anecdote during my professional preparation was that, foreign students from Spanish Language career, would come to my university, for practice. So, then I would take advantage of this to practice my English with them. Foreign French students would also come to my university, so I took those chances to practice the language.

I also remember that, in fourth semester, my French professor would make us speak by yelling. This was scary for me and the other students, and when presenting oral reports, which should be done in private; we would hear this teacher's yelling. However, now I can consider this as a positive anecdote, because this obligated us to improve our speech.

I also consider this as a negative episode, because it made me feel uncomfortable the fact that he applied that methodology.

Another negative anecdote was that the English Literature teacher, would give us a 60-question test, in which he would evaluate us by memorizing the answers to the questions. Is wasn't a contextualized test, he used old fashioned methods.

Yazmin: In what year did you graduate, and when did you started to work as English Teacher?

Luz Marina: I graduated in 1989, and started working in 1991 under the 10-month contract modality. I worked like this for four years. Then, I was hired under payroll in 1995.

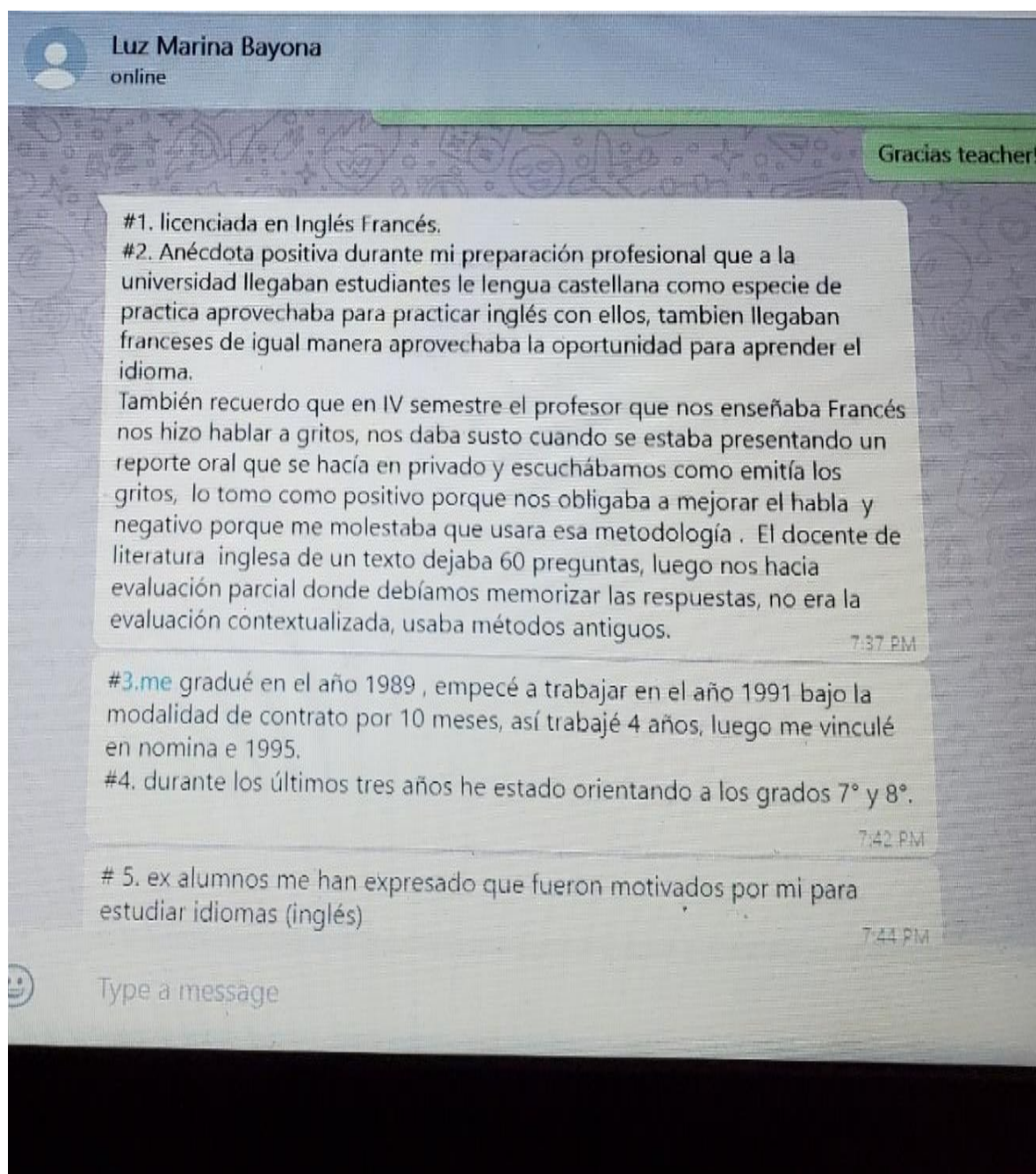
Yazmin: Which school grades have you taught in the last three years?

Luz Marina: During the last three years I have been guiding the 7th and 8th grades.

Yazmin: Can you share a positive teaching/learning experience you have had with any of your students, or with a group of students in the last few years?

Luz Marina: Some of my former students have told me that they felt motivated by me into studying Languages and became English teachers themselves

Interview 3-Image 1



Note: Picture of interview 3, held over the phone, via WhatsApp, due to physical distance between the researcher and the participant.

Appendix B: Field notes

Coherently with the data collection process, as a researcher I visited the participant's classroom to do observation, and take notes that respond to my interpretation.

Image 2

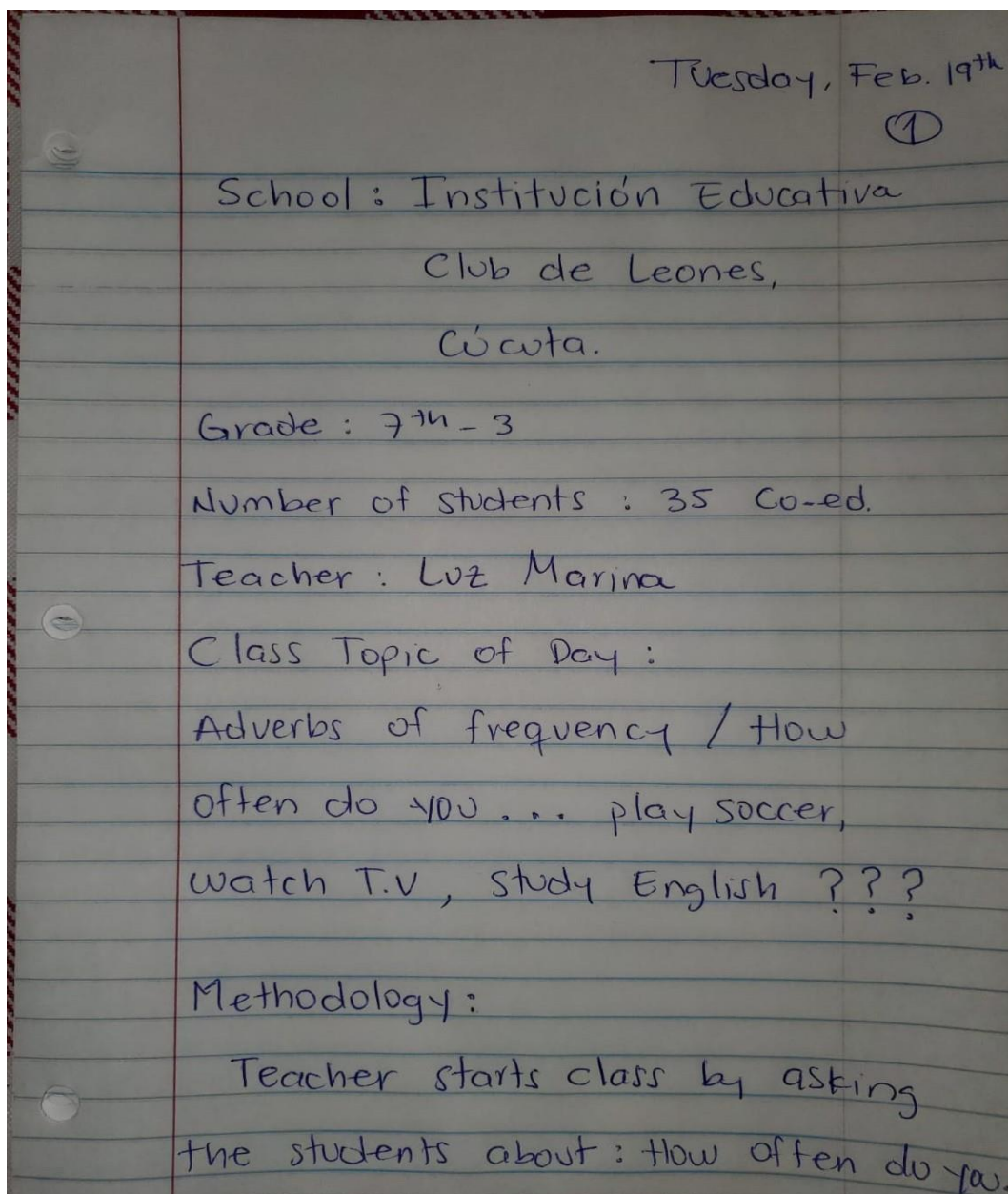
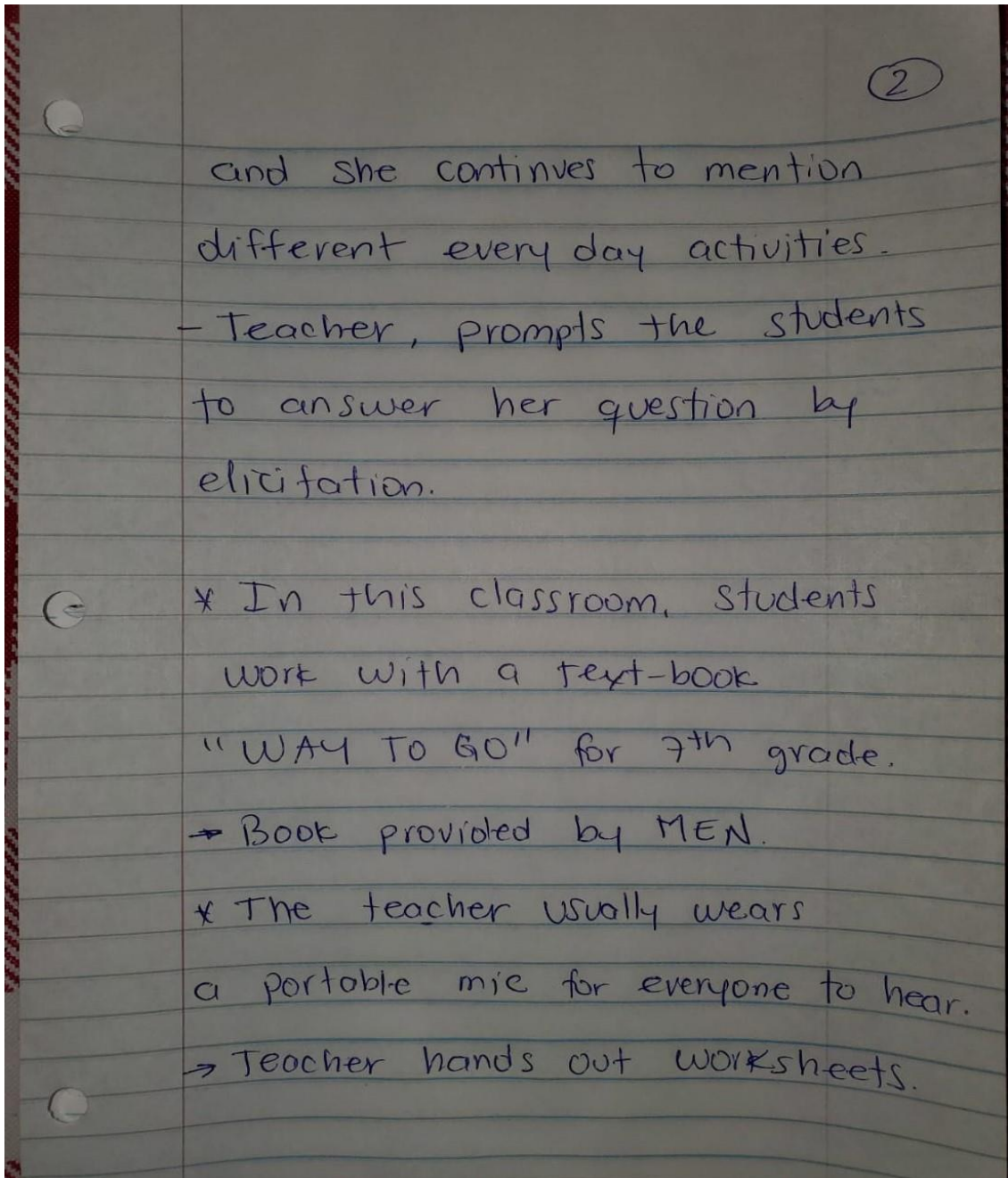


Image 3

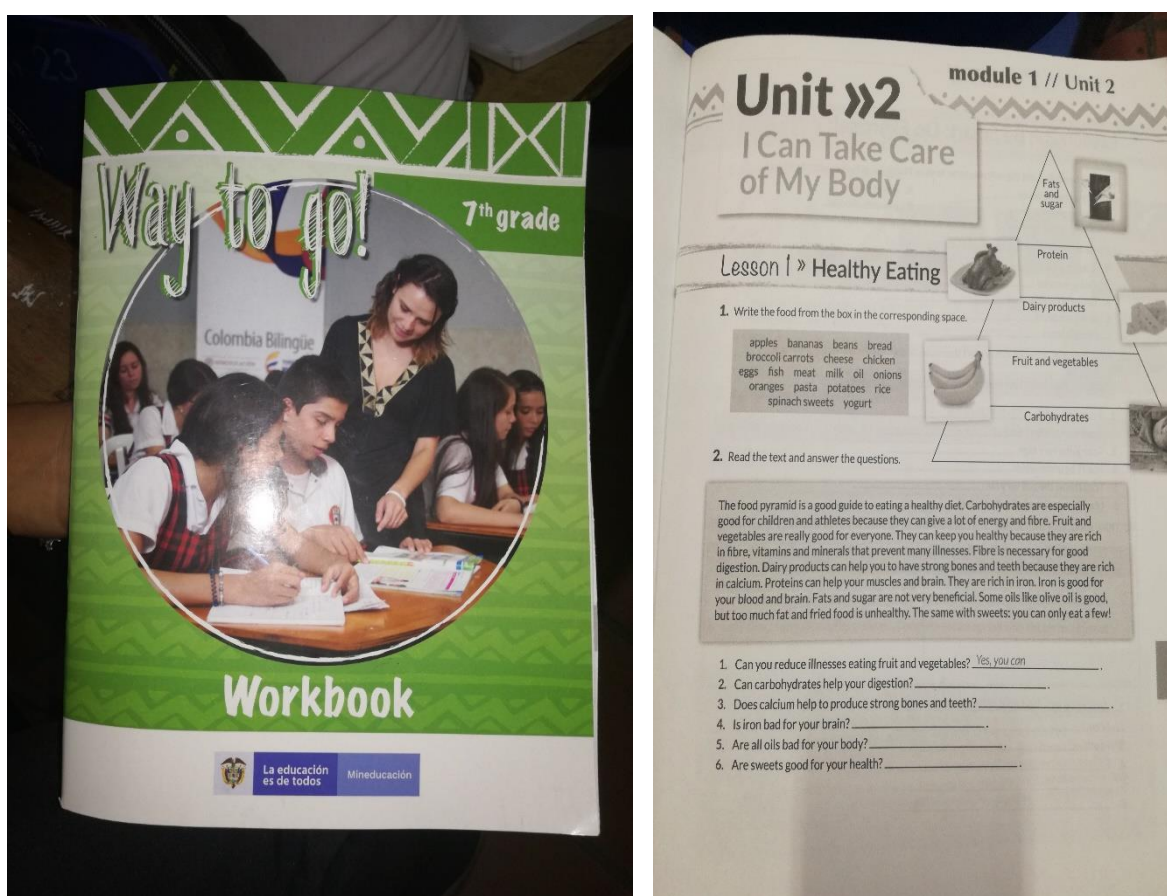


Note: Picture 2 and 3 taken from my personal written descriptive field notes during class visits for observation, giving some details about the topic and activities happening in class that day.

Appendix C: Photographs and pedagogical guides

Despite this book being regarded as proper material to teach English in Colombia, from the participant's point of view; my analysis finds that it does not go in depth with linguistic, communicative and language topics that are required for ELT, thus resulting in the need of supplemental worksheet designed by the teacher.

Image 4 and 5



Note: Multimodal data. Pictures of “Way to Go”, textbook’s cover and content page, provided by Colombian Ministry of Education for public schools and used in this seventh-grade English class.

Image 6

This image illustrates one of the teacher's own designed worksheets, which she uses during her classes as a supplemental pedagogical tool, with exercises that make emphasis on pronunciation. Here we can appreciate a worksheet that includes a reading exercise, that works for reading comprehension in order to help the students infer meaning, but also, gets turned into a pronunciation exercise, when the teacher encourages a reading out-loud practice out of the same instructional point. Although the teacher creates pedagogical guides to qualify her ELT practices, she faces a drawback with the students who are immigrants from Venezuela and they have not studied English before. Thus, requiring her to be patient and accommodate her teaching to include the new students.

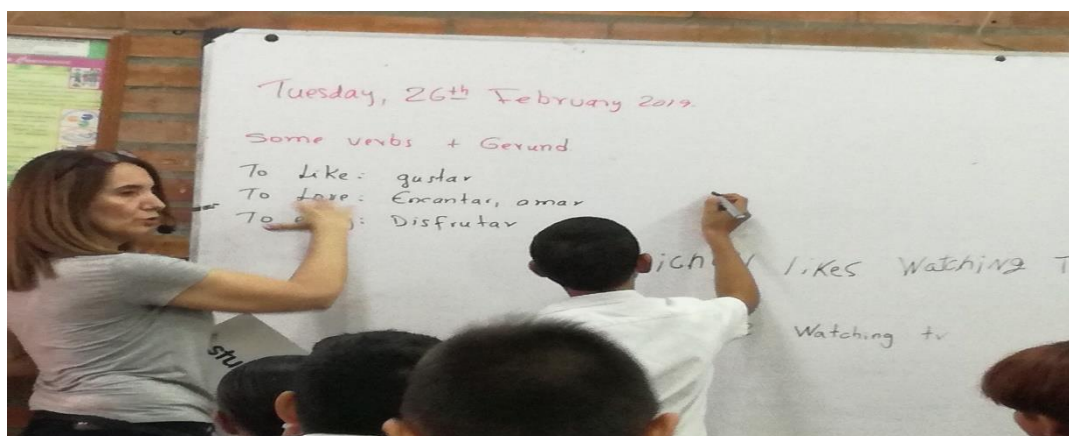
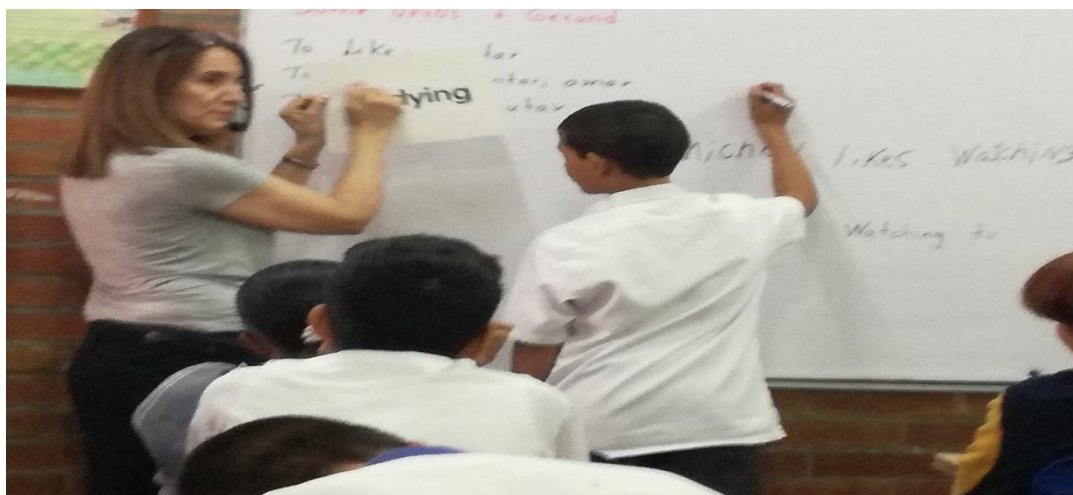
The worksheet is titled "INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA CLUB DE LEONES" and "MANUAL DE PROCESOS RESIDUAL GESTIÓN ACADÉMICA 'Ciencia, Tecnología y Valores' GUÍA DE APRENDIZAJE". It includes a header with "GA-F33", "Versión: 1", and "Fecha: 2019-01-08". A table for student information is at the top right. The main content is divided into three sections:

- LET'S EXPLORE OUR MINDS:** A matching exercise where students relate pictures to numbers 1-9. The pictures show a person watching TV, a skateboarder, a swimmer, a person using a laptop, a person playing football, a person reading, a person drawing, a person riding a bike, and a person playing video games.
- LET'S INTERACT WITH THE READING:** A reading comprehension exercise. It includes an email from Miguel to Juan. Miguel's email discusses his plans for the school year, mentioning the Cultural Arts Centre, sports club, football, gaming, and swimming. A box on the right contains a summary of Miguel's preferences.
- LET'S INTERACT WITH KNOWLEDGE:** A section for applying knowledge, with a list of questions to answer.

Note: Multimodal data. Picture taken of sample worksheet guide designed by teacher Luz Marina with reading exercise for reading comprehension, reading out loud and pronunciation.

Image 7 and 8.

The teacher uses the white board and vocabulary flash cards to explain and deepen on student's understanding. Active interaction and sincere interest from to teacher to share her knowledge with her pupils.



Note. Multimodal data. Teacher actively explaining class topic, interacting with her students, eliciting student's participation and guiding a student to write on the board.

Appendix D: Informed Consent**INFORMED CONSENT**

TITLE OF THE STUDY: Non-native English as a Foreign Language Teacher and her Struggle with a Colombian university lack of proper English proficiency training.

INVESTIGATOR: Yazmin Sanchez Wheeler

PURPOSE: Through this consent, I am requesting your participation in an investigation study, that is being conducted as a fundamental part of the Bachelor in Teaching English as a Foreign Language program, from Santo Tomas University. The purpose of this study is to obtain important information, the testimonials and teaching experiences of a Colombian English as a Foreign Language teacher in order to find out common phenomena issues such as lack of proper university training in the use and instruction skills of the English Language.

PROCEDURE: For this study a series of class observation sessions and one on one interviews will be conducted, in order to obtain the needed information required for building the structure of this investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The name of the participant is confidential and will not be published unless the study participant requires it. In this way, the participant's identity won't be at risk nor there will be a misuse of his/her name. Keep in mind that you are not obliged to answer any of the questions that you may consider inappropriate.

RESIGNATION OF PARTICIPATION: You are free to communicate your decision to stop your participation in this investigation project at any time. This decision will be accepted without any prejudice or consequence.

COSTS AND BENEFITS FOR THE PARTICIPANT: The participation in this study is free and does not have any cost. The only requirement is time concession from the participant for carrying out the class observation sessions and the one-on-one interviews. Please remember that your participation constitutes an important contribution to the development of this research investigation and it enriches the academic context.

FURTHER INFORMATION: If you require more information regarding this investigation project, you may contact any time the primary investigator at yazminsw@gmail.com.

SIGNATURE: Please confirm that the purpose of this investigation study, its procedures, the confidentiality, risks and costs, the same as the benefits you may obtain have been clearly explained by the investigator. All your questions have been answered and you accept to participate in this study.

I confirm that the investigator has explained the contents of this consent and I acknowledge my voluntary participation up to any point I may consider. Likewise, I acknowledge the costs, benefits and confidentiality of this investigation project the same as its procedures and purpose.

Name of Participant Luz Marina Payona S. Date: 29-11-19

Participant's signature 

**(This informed consent is written in English, because the participant in this study has proper English Language domain).