

## RAE

- 1. TIPO DE DOCUMENTO:** Trabajo de grado para optar por el título de LICENCIADO EN LENGUA INGLESA
- 2. TÍTULO:** EMPIRICAL IN-SERVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS' (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY BEFORE AND AFTER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
- 3. AUTORES:** Mónica Molina Santana, Andrés Felipe López, Julian David Silva.
- 4. LUGAR:** Bogotá, D.C
- 5. FECHA:** Enero de 2021
- 6. PALABRAS CLAVE:** Educadores en ejercicio, (re)construcción de identidad, formación profesional.
- 7. DESCRIPCIÓN DEL TRABAJO:** Esta investigación tiene como propósito estudiar el tema de identidad del profesor desde una visión más profunda, partiendo de un elemento inexplorado hasta el momento (en la medida del conocimiento de los investigadores) y que creemos que constituye una perspectiva más humanista de la profesión. De tal manera, quisimos saber cómo fue el proceso de (re)construcción de identidad de un grupo de profesores quienes empezaron su formación profesional mucho después de haber encontrado su vocación por accidente.
- 8. LÍNEAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN:** Formación y práctica pedagógica.
- 9. METODOLOGÍA:** Es una investigación narrativa dentro del paradigma de investigación cualitativa.
- 10. CONCLUSIONES:** Los hallazgos más importantes de la investigación se resumen en que los educadores empíricos en servicio configuraron su identidad docente basándose en la idea sobre el ser profesor que construyeron desde su experiencia; también se halló que la educación profesional contribuyó, primordialmente, como herramienta para cualificar su oficio docente y buscar mejores oportunidades laborales. Se concluyó que los participantes consolidaron su condición identitaria basándose en sus experiencias como profesores empíricos y no en la formación profesional.



Empirical In-Service Language Teachers' (Re)Construction of Identity Before and after  
Professional Education

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Trabajo presentado como requisito parcial para optar por el título profesional en  
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**Table of Contents**

Abstract	8
Resumen	8
Chapter 1: Project Identification	10
1.1. Title of the Project	10
1.2. Faculty and Academic Program	10
1.3. Group and Research Line:	10
1.4. Topic	10
1.5. Project Tutor	10
1.6. Researchers	10
Chapter 2: Introduction	11
Chapter 3: Description of the Project	13
3.1. Statement of the Problem	13
3.2. Research Question	15
3.3. Objectives	15
3.4. Rationale	15
3.5. Literature Review	16
4. Theoretical Framework	35
4.1 Identity	35

Empirical in-service teachers (re)construction of identity	6
4.2 Narrative Research	38
5. Research Design	40
5.1. Type of study	41
5.2. Context	41
5.3. Participants	42
5.4. Data Collection Instruments	42
Chapter 6: Data Analysis	44
York's Narrative	44
John's Narrative	50
Mariana's Narrative	54
Interpretation of narratives	59
A teacher is born, not made.	60
Giving my 100%	64
Expectations	66
Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications	69
Chapter 8: Limitations and Further Research	71
Annexes	75
Annex 1 - Protocol	75
Annex 2 - Table of categories	76

**List of Tables**

1. Table 1 - Literature review

### **Abstract**

The theme of in-service teacher identity (re)construction has been widely researched in various contexts and regions. Nevertheless, there is a lack of information about empirical in-service teachers, that is, teachers who have had teaching experience prior to professional education. This narrative research focuses on the (re)construction of identity of empirical in-service teachers who are in their last semester of Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching at Universidad de San Buenaventura in Bogotá, Colombia. It consists of a narrative analysis which parted from interviews with three participants: York, Mariana and John. After analysing their experiences, beliefs and expectations, different categories (*sense of belonging*; *giving my 100%*; and *expectations*) were drawn. The major findings of the research were that the empirical in-service teachers identified themselves as such from their experience-based ideas of being a teacher, and that professional education served, mainly, as a tool to improve and seek better work opportunities. It was concluded that the participants shaped their identity based on their empirical teaching experience rather than their professional education.

### **Resumen**

La (re)construcción identitaria de educadores en ejercicio es un tema que se ha investigado ampliamente en diversos contextos y geografías. Sin embargo, existe una evidente falta de información acerca de profesores empíricos, es decir, que ya han tenido experiencia enseñando antes de ingresar a la formación profesional. La presente investigación narrativa se centra en la (re)construcción de la identidad de docentes empíricos en servicio que están terminando su ciclo de formación profesional en la Universidad de San Buenaventura, de la ciudad de Bogotá D.C., Colombia. Esta investigación consiste en un análisis narrativo que parte de entrevistas semiestructuradas con tres participantes: York, Mariana y John. Después de



analizar sus experiencias, creencias y expectativas, surgieron varias categorías (*sentido de pertenencia; dar mi 100%; y expectativas*). Los hallazgos más importantes de la investigación se resumen en que los educadores empíricos en servicio configuraron su identidad docente basándose en la idea sobre el ser profesor que construyeron desde su experiencia; también se halló que la educación profesional contribuyó, primordialmente, como herramienta para cualificar su oficio docente y buscar mejores oportunidades laborales. Se concluyó que los participantes consolidaron su condición identitaria basándose en sus experiencias como profesores empíricos y no en la formación profesional.

## **Chapter 1: Project Identification**

The purpose of this research is to derive the topic of teacher identity towards a deeper look, starting from an element unexplored until the time of this research (to the extent of the researchers' knowledge) and that we believe constitutes a more humanistic perspective of the profession. In this way, we wanted to know how was the process of (re)construction of the identity of a group of teachers who began their professional education long after they had found their vocation by accident.

### **1.1. Title of the Project**

Empirical in-service language teachers (re)construction of identity before and after professional education.

### **1.2. Faculty and Academic Program**

This research proposal belongs to the *Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales* and it is part of *Programa de Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa*.

### **1.3. Group and Research Line:**

Research Group: Tendencias Actuales en Educación y Pedagogía – TAEPE

Research Line: Formación y Práctica Pedagógica.

### **1.4. Topic**

(Re)construction of the identity of pre-service English teachers

### **1.5. Project Tutor**

Jairo Enrique Castañeda Trujillo Ph.D. (C) in Education with emphasis in ELT

### **1.6. Researchers**

Andrés Felipe López, Mónica Molina Santana, Julián Uribe Silva.

## Chapter 2: Introduction

This inquiry offers an insight into the (re)construction of three empirical in-service teachers' identities as a way to understand how their experiences, beliefs, and expectations served as the formative basis of their profession, instead of the pedagogical education. It also provides relevant information to evidence that the degree and depth of positioning as a language teacher goes beyond tradition or career choice in terms of the idealization of oneself in the future, as AraxiSachpazian and Papachristou explain (2019, p. 2). To our limited knowledge, no research has been conducted with teachers who have worked in the field without professional education; therefore, we have assigned the term empirical in-service teachers to our participants. This term characterizes them and brings meaning to the whole purpose of this research. The term seemed all reasonable since these teachers found their vocation by accident, embraced it, and made it their career choice. Consequently, they started professional education; they are currently in their last semester of Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching at Universidad de San Buenaventura. Before professional education, their training to be teachers comprised autonomous endeavors such as trial and error or learning from experience.

Based on the relevance of narrative inquiry to “understand the inner mental worlds of language teachers” (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2013 p. 2), we used this form of qualitative research as a means to reveal the trajectories and circumstances that have allowed participants to position themselves as language teachers from an empirical stand. The narratives derived from open-interviews which were analyzed in search for significant patterns that would unfold the conceptions and trajectories that have shaped the identity of these empirical in-service teachers, as well as the contributions or changes of the professional education.

Our findings revealed a deep conception of the participants about the teaching profession in a way that their identity is not based on pedagogical education but on their own personal experienced-based ideas of a teacher. Professional education has been a theoretical tool that supports their experiences, preconceptions, and agentic behavior, and their accreditation as teachers in purely labor terms. It was concluded that the participants built their identity as English Language Teachers (ELT) through their empirical practices rather than professional education.

This paper follows a strict line of organization required by the University that allows each chapter to be delimited. It sets from the contextualization, in chapter 1, significant to understand the nature of the research. It is followed by the introduction in chapter 2. The next chapter outlines the objectives and the theoretical background; it is followed by the theoretical framework which corresponds to the support and structure of the research subject. Chapter 5 addresses issues concerning the methodology and the systematization to grant logic to the data, an analysis of which is presented in the next chapter. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions and implications, followed by the limitations and further research in the last chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Description of the Project**

#### **3.1. Statement of the Problem**

To the extent of the researchers' knowledge, research on the construction of language teachers' identity has been conducted mostly with student-teachers who have not had previous experience in this field, so their identity contrives with their pedagogical education (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre, 2018; Quintero Polo, 2016). Given this fact, we have a great interest in knowing how empirical in-service teachers forged their identity. It would be easy to conceive teacher identity from the perspective of pedagogical foundation, its reaffirmation or transformation within the practicum stage of the course, and its life-long reconstruction within the context of job performance. Nevertheless, we believe this a subjective conception of the natural course of professional identity construction. Our participants' motivations to become professional language teachers were a subsequent decision to their initial "imagination of possible selves" (Savickas et al. (2009) as cited in AraxiSachpazian & Papachristou, 2018) after being redirected by the experience of having worked as language teachers out of nothing more than opportunity. This particular matter of inquiry leads us to adhere to Gee's (2000) description of identity (cited in Anspal, 2018 p.12), specifically that of "A-identity" insofar as it can be predicted that the participants would have developed such a deep-seated interest in the profession that they envisioned themselves as educational agents in their communities of practice. The vision that they have about themselves is consistent with Gee's former description of identity that includes important elements such as "sense of belonging" and "affiliation" to a particular group.

The subjective conception of identity construction idea allows us to contrast this research with the already existing contributions to the same subject in question. Teacher Identity, which will be referred to as TI in this research, has been subject to research in different parts of the

world. A narrative study was carried out in Turkey by Cigdem, N. & Celebi, H. (2020). It focused on constructing the identity of 18 student-teachers in an ELT education program concerning their roles and domains of specialization. In the same way, Sarasa (2016) in Argentina consolidated a narrative inquiry whose objective was to understand pre-service English teachers' identity construction process by gathering the participants' individual stories. Later, in 2017, the same author revealed the relevance of agentic behavior and investment within TI construction in a narrative study carried out in Argentina. To bring a closer context in Colombia, several investigations have been carried out. Such is the case of Quintero Polo (2016), who focused on the (re)construction of the self about the construction of identity, through the narrative of 9 student-teachers in the Modern Languages Program at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. The research included the significant aspects for their learning to allow them to investigate how pre-service teachers constructed their professional identities from the interplay between participation in a community and their systems of knowledge and beliefs. Likewise, Torres & Ramos (2019) explored, through narratives, the acquisition of 13 language students' identity from a public university in Tunja and their connection as future English teachers.

The previously mentioned research themes and the particular characteristics of our participants led us to explore the subject of identity. The need for this inquiry was born to learn how these empirical in-service teachers (re)constructed their identity within the process of professionalization by referring to their experiences, beliefs, and expectations.

### **3.2. Research Question**

How have the trajectories of empirical in-service teachers changed after consolidating their professional education in terms of the experiences, beliefs, and expectations that have shaped their identity?

### **3.3. Objectives**

#### **3.3.1. General Objective**

To understand how empirical in-service teachers shape their identities from the experiences, beliefs, and expectations of their different trajectories before and after professional education.

#### **3.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- To analyze the beliefs, experiences and expectations of pre-service teachers before and after entering professional education.
- To interpret the changes in the (re)construction of pre-service teachers' identity before and after entering professional education.

### **3.4. Rationale**

This research was carried out to explore the (re)construction of identities of empirical in-service teachers who have experienced the activity of teaching before becoming professional. It is intended to benefit the whole subject of teacher identity construction to enhance the teacher education programs from the perspective of the human dimension and illustrate the impact of Universidad San Buenaventura's Bachelor of English Language Teaching program on experienced teachers seeking to formalize their profession. It is crucial to analyze these empirical in-service teachers' expectations to grant purpose, meaning, and horizon to the teacher Bachelor programs.

It is desirable that universities, more specifically, Universidad de San Buenaventura, view this paper as an insight into how experienced in-service teachers expect and believe the program will contribute to their performance, identity, and future as Language Teachers. Furthermore, to know whether their identity as professionals matches the version created by themselves due to experience. We believe these are essential issues in the profiling of aspiring teachers.

Another major issue lies in the processes of teaching and learning English as a second language and the *culturalization* of Colombia. Endeavors are being made to make it official as a bilingual country. In this sense, this study could serve as a frame of reference to establish the relevance of empirical experience over professional education, primarily in secluded areas of the country where higher education is barely accessible and where teachers from an empirical background are educating such a large part of the future Colombian society.

### 3.5. Literature Review

**Table 1**

**RAE No. 1: A narrative inquiry into pre-service English teachers' imagined identities.**

<b>Year</b>	2016
<b>Bibliographical reference</b>	Sarasa, C. (2016) <i>A narrative inquiry into pre-service English teachers' imagined identities</i> . Gist education and learning research journal. N° 12 ISSN 1692-5777
<b>Type of document</b>	Research article



<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This research was carried out in order to answer the question, "how do these undergraduates' stories negotiate the development of their professional identity?"</p> <p>It inquired about the construction process of pre-service teachers' identity through the participants' individual stories, using narrative inquiry techniques. These narratives included fictional, and family stories, memorable teachers, real-life heroes, significant challenges, academic decisions, and the researcher took part as a participant researcher.</p> <p>The participants were 24 Argentinian undergraduates in an advanced English language communication course at a state university.</p> <p>The following categories were conceptualized: desired, passionate, imagined and in transit.</p>
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>Data analysis concluded that teacher identity conceptualised upon the participants' own life experiences in different settings, instruction and others' who have served as role models, can be interpreted as a wish to be a potential member of a community of practice. It also involves agency and performativity acquired through experiences in which resilience becomes a factor of identity construction.</p> <p>The research may contribute to improve the design of pre- and in-service development programs in terms of a curriculum that considers their real needs as living a process of becoming a teacher, rather than to expect them to behave as "real" teachers in their practicums.</p>

**RAE No. 2: Creating a pedagogical space that fosters the (re)construction of self through life stories of pre-service English language teachers.**

<p><b>Year</b></p>	<p>2016</p>
<p><b>Bibliographical reference</b></p>	<p>Quintero Polo, A. H. (2016). <i>Creating a pedagogical space that fosters the (re)construction of self through life stories of pre-service English language teachers</i>. HOW, 23(2), 106-124. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.293">http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.293</a>.</p>
<p><b>Type of document</b></p>	<p>Research article</p>

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The project is carried out at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá, Colombia. It is a narrative study that intends to reconstruct nine pre-service English teachers' identity through narrations of their life, considering different aspects and stages of their trajectories. It is, therefore, regarded as qualitative research.</p> <p>The population started being 80 pre-service teachers of English as an L2, but only 9 completed the study. They were all females of a variety of ages that averaged to 20 who were studying a bachelor of education in English teaching. The intervention started when they were taking Seminar VI of the program, and they all signed a consent to be part of the research.</p> <p>The study's objectives were to examine how main social actors storied meaningful academic experiences to (re)construct and make sense of their personal, academic, and professional selves. It was based around the following research question: <u>What do meaningful academic experiences of pre-service English language teachers portray about their personal, academic, and professional selves?</u></p> <p>The data collection was done as a narrative study, where the data was the written life stories of the nine final participants. These stories would then be <u>analyzed and categorized</u>. For the analysis, they followed Barkhuizen's theories that focus on <i>story</i> (personal aspect), <i>Story</i> (policies → author has less power) and <i>STORY</i> (government, ministries &amp; laws of a country) as well as <i>who, where and when</i>. They would be displayed with the Model of Life Story that the Barkhuizen suggests. The categorization was done by finding patterns in their stories and grouping them together in a table with <i>stages, main themes, participants and "true self"</i>.</p>
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<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>The study concluded that there were three major stages (patterns) where the participant's stories had similarities. Retrospection (past experiences), interpretation (events currently occurring) and prospection (expectations about the future). They also categorized three different "true selves": personal, academic and professional. These were analyzed and categorized into three main themes: meaningful others in shaping the true self, the human dimension in forming English teachers, and finally becoming teachers of English who are transformative, instead of transmissionists.</p> <p>The findings were that the participant's experiences constituted a form of self-representation of social interaction that involved other people. Therefore they saw themselves as part of a community where interaction with meaningful others was transformative. They also found that the participants felt that their academic experiences gave them ground to understand teaching as human and social practices and that it was through the university that they acquired the theory and tools to put the teaching into practice. These experiences helped the students construct an identity as future professionals in language education and their role in society. As a result, they have developed a critical view and social sensibility to project themselves as transformative educators who acknowledge the value of education and research to become agents of change.</p>
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**RAE No. 3: A narrative inquiry into pre-service English teachers' temporal investments in their initial education curriculum.**

<p><b>Year</b></p>	<p>2017</p>
<p><b>Bibliographical Reference</b></p>	<p>Sarasa, M. C. (2017). <i>A narrative inquiry into pre-service English teachers' temporal investments in their initial education curriculum</i>. HOW, 24(1), 27-43. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.24.1.337">http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.24.1.337</a>.</p>
<p><b>Type of document</b></p>	<p>Research Article</p>

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This research originates in Argentina, Mar del Plata, and it derives from another research paper that captivated the author's interest. By using narrative inquiry, Sarasa gathers 24 participants during an 18-month timespan and collects their fieldnotes to gather the information that she needs. She then analyzed and discussed her findings to reach a conclusion. The population was 24 sophomores that studied a language communication course in an English teacher education program at an Argentinean state university for 18 months.</p> <p>The research's objective was to elucidate the identity construction processes of prospective English teachers studying in an Argentinean state university by answering the research question: "How do undergraduates narrate the negotiation of their unfolding teacher identities?"</p> <p>This narrative study used an adapted narrative inquiry, which studies experience as a storied phenomenon. Sarasa used narrations given by the 24 sophomores and re-wrote them with their guidance and consent. She also had one-on-one encounters with her participants to discuss some of the experiences that they had. She collected some oral and written narratives about different texts and co-composed 24 identities with them. They did a narrative analysis by retelling and conceptualizing their findings.</p> <p>Their findings were categorized into forms of investing, divesting, and reinvesting their time in their prescribed curriculum. (categories): <i>temporal investments in the Curriculum</i> (4 students), <i>Temporal Investments In-Between the Curriculum and the Personal Domain</i> (4), <i>Temporal Reinvestments in the Curriculum</i>(6), <i>Temporal Divestment in the Curriculum, and Reinvestment in the Personal Domain</i> (1) and <i>Temporal Investments in the Personal Domain</i>. (9). Each category has quotes from the participants where they expressed their feelings about the amount of time they were spending to study or where the focus of their "time investment" was at. These findings were then put into a discussion to find a conclusion.</p>
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>In this sense, student-managed time was not always devoted to following the chronological sequencing of the prescribed curriculum that allows undergraduates to "turn into" English teachers (Gimeno Sacristán, 1998)</p> <p>The conclusion that derived from the discussion from the different findings was that, in the first place, students believed time to be one of the most valuable assets which they invested into becoming graduate teachers, according to the different visions or possibilities that they had in mind.</p> <p>Student-managed time wasn't completely devoted to following or completing the chronological sequence of the curriculum that the University prescribes for students to become English teachers. Some had extremes and devoted full time to their studies or to their personal lives. Others tried to find a balance between time spent in personal life and academic life. They all had the purpose of graduating, but they also doubted how the time that they spent was going to be reflected on their progress.</p> <p>Other conclusions were also made. To begin with, the studies allowed the author to take a look at how the students retold their real experiences with</p>

	curriculum as opposed to the standardized forms prescribed by the education programme offered by the university itself. It helped Sarasa to see the differential gaps of the “future oriented” time and the individual—independently of which “way” it moved, backwards, forwards, stationary—rhythms of student-lived time.
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**RAE No. 4: English Language Student-Teachers Developing Agency Through  
Community-Based Pedagogy Projects**

<b>Year</b>	2020
<b>Bibliographical Reference</b>	Hernández, W. and Gutiérrez, D. (2020). <i>English Language Student-Teachers Developing Agency Through Community-Based Pedagogy Projects</i> . PROFILE, Revista de la Universidad Nacional. Bogotá, Colombia. Vol. 22 N° 1 ISSN. 1657-5760
<b>Type of document</b>	Research Article
<b>Description</b>	<p>This research project was carried out through the narrative stories of student-teachers who taught English in southern Colombia and the objective was to understand how student-teachers developed agency when narratively inquired their community by planning and conducting community-based pedagogy projects.</p> <p>There were 23 student-teachers from Universidad Surcolombiana in Neiva, Colombia, who participated in the project. The motivation for the research sparked during a pre-intermediate English lesson, at the beginning of August 2018. At the time, 28 students of ages 18 to 28 years old would participate and freely form groups of four to six students. In the end, however, only five teams participated and produced five narrative inquiry projects.</p> <p>Four stages guided the process to conduct the narrative inquiry projects. The first one was named “planning your inquiry” and consisted of having the participants select an issue in their community and express how they were going to research it. The second stage was “local inquiry”, in which participants approached their subjects for the first time, getting to know more about the issue from the primary source. In the third stage, “complementary local inquiry”, participants had the opportunity to cover certain doubts about the previous research encounter and experience, and inquired with more depth using their subjects for more detailed information. In the end, a fourth stage took place, “reflect and share”, where participants were suggested to reflect on the work they had done and take into</p>

	<p>consideration why and how their voices could be Heard through this intervention.</p> <p>The researchers selected five problems in their community. In this sense, they focused on the stories and the analysis to observe common features that could lead them to identify the development of their agency. The study was conducted over a four-month period in which the researchers finally asked participants 10 interviews, 23 personal narrative journals, and five video-recorded talks.</p>
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>The results of the analysis of narrative data revealed that participants' significant inquiry experiences contributed to developing agency through a four moment process a) Interacting within inquiry groups; b) Narratively interacting with the community; c) Voicing the untold necessities of the community and d) The moment of taking action.</p> <p>Regarding the category: Inquiry Groups, the investigators concluded that agency development in this study started when the participants interacted within their narrative inquiry groups. This interaction emerged from defining the topics to inquire, assigning roles and tasks, to discussing how to engage the inquiry. They also considered that the acceptance of the topics by teachers and peers was fundamental to allow the student-teachers to experience agency.</p> <p>The second category: Interacting with the community was another crucial moment that facilitated the development of agency because it helped the group members' access to knowledge and understanding of the reality that surrounded them. Moreover, interacting with their community has led them to reflect on their role involving the necessities of their community</p> <p>The third category: Voicing the untold necessities of the community strengthened the development of agency because inevitably, interaction with the communities led students to question the way different members of their community had been silenced due to their life conditions.</p> <p>The fourth category: The Moment of Taking Action was a determining factor in developing agency because it provided important insights into participants' decisions towards taking some steps to tackle issues found as problematic in their inquiries.</p> <p>The actions that triggered the development of the agency in the students in the categories described in this study, also influenced reconceptualizing participants' perspectives on the local socio-cultural resources they inquired about.</p>

### **RAE No. 5: Narrative Events of Pre-Service Teachers at the End of their Teaching**

#### **Practicum with Regard to their Pedagogical Advisor: Learnings Reported**

<b>Year</b>	2016
<b>Bibliographical Reference</b>	Castañeda, H., Rodríguez, M., Salazar., A y Bejarano, P. (2016). <i>Narrative events of pre-service teachers at the end of their teaching practicum with regard to their pedagogical advisor : Learnings reported</i> . Signo y Pensamiento, vol. XXXV, núm. 68, enero-junio, 2016, pp. 52-64 Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Bogotá, Colombia.
<b>Type of Document</b>	Research Article
<b>Description</b>	<p>The research from which this article derives focused on two broad questions:</p> <p>a)What linguistic, social, cognitive, educational, emotional or other aspects of teaching practice were narrated as meaningful experiences by 184 language student teachers? and b) what theories of teaching and/or educational thought had language student teachers built from the experiences narrated about their teaching practicum?</p> <p>The input for the study was the student-teachers' self-assessment reports regarding their advisor, namely the social, emotional, and pedagogical aspects, because in the texts, there was no evidence of psychological, cognitive, or linguistic aspects.</p> <p>The analytical categories found in the data set with regard to the relationship between the pre-service teachers and the pedagogical advisor corresponded to elements related to emotional, pedagogical, and social.</p> <p>Two research groups carried out the study within an inter-institutional research project: Lectoescrinautas, from Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas; and Language, discourse, and complexity, from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, during the practice from 2009 to 2012.</p> <p>The analysis included the meanings attributed to the experiences reported by the participants; and internal and external structures inherent in the ways in which participants lived the phenomenon under study.</p>

<b>Conclusions</b>	<p>With regard to the emotional category, the student teachers pointed out as relevant in their written self-assessment one instance where this aspect is associated with issues of responsibility. Nonetheless, this became a learning situation for the teacher-to-be where there was room for self-improvement.</p> <p>Awareness of self-improvement was also viewed by the participants in terms of positive achievements in classroom management, confidence, and experience. The data showed that this awareness could have originated in prior self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>The investigators also concluded that awareness of self-improvement could constitute in initial teacher education a fruitful avenue of research that relates both learning partnerships and learning awareness. This study confirms that their beliefs about being a teacher are grounded in a process of reflection about themselves.</p> <p>Another important conclusion refers to the fact that when pre-service teachers put together their self-awareness and their preconceptions about what a teacher is and what teaching implies, reflection arises in terms of their suitability.</p> <p>They saw advisors as the one that drove their confidence and guided them to gain experience as teachers.</p> <p>Additionally, rapport, confidence, feedback, rigor, learning from mistakes, and communication was intertwined in the relationship to favor learning.</p> <p>Student teachers seemed to focus more on lesson preparation and responsibility to do the tasks they are assigned at the school and pre-service teachers thus seemed to conclude that good practice meant following class procedures appropriately based on a carefully planned lesson.</p>
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**RAE No. 6: Becoming language teachers: exploring student-teacher's identities construction through narratives.**

<b>Year</b>	2019
<b>Bibliographical reference</b>	Torres Cepeda, N. & Ramos Holguín, B. (2019). <i>Becoming language teachers: exploring student-teacher's identities construction through narratives</i> . Gist education and learning research journal. N°18 ISSN 16925777.
<b>Type of document</b>	Research Article



<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>In this qualitative research, 13 student-teachers from the University of Tunja in their eighth semester of the modern language program with a focus on English teaching, wrote about their experiences as learners and in their practicums. They were also interviewed face to face. These narratives were categorised into structural, thematic and interactional narratives for the analysis. They were organized in that way in order to answer the research question: what do student teachers' narratives unveil about their identity construction as language learners?</p> <p>It explores the construction of student-teacher identity and the connections they make with their future in-service identity.</p> <p>The grounded theory approach was used for data analysis, gathered through narratives, journals, and interviews.</p>
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p>	<p>The reflections that learners in teaching programs make along their process and take part in the construction and reconstruction of identity are important assets. It is also important knowing the principles and understanding the factors that influence teaching since this facilitates making decisions and changes in the curriculum.</p> <p>As people's experiences, emotions, and contexts bring meaning to the self, identity construction becomes a mixture of those factors and implications and others. In learning to be a teacher, these experiences, emotions, and contexts are essential to identity construction itself. In this sense, student-teachers need to be heard and supported. Thus, the role of the teacher-educator becomes vital to them and their communities.</p> <p>Results showed that student-teachers are concerned with the human dimension of their role as a pre-service teacher. In addition to that, they revealed how their identity construction and reconstruction are also grounded on their own experiences as language learners, framed by the bits and pieces gathered from their different teachers regarding the type of teacher they would like to become.</p> <p>The perspective of teaching from a theoretical point of view was another important factor; student-teachers would like to be characterized under the perspective of critical and transformative pedagogy.</p>

**RAE No. 7: ELT Student Teacher Identity Construction: Exploring Teacher Roles****and Domains of Expertise**

<b>Year</b>	2020
<b>Bibliographical reference</b>	Aktekin, Nafiye & Çelebi, Hatice. (2020). <i>ELT Student Teacher Identity Construction: Exploring Teacher Roles and Domains of Expertise</i> . International Journal of Language Education. 4. 10.26858/ijole.v4i2.10655.
<b>Type of document</b>	Research article
<b>Description</b>	<p>This research explored early ELT identity construction in relation to teacher roles and domains of expertise. The researchers based themselves on the following two questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there a common role that the English Language student-teachers believed they were struggling with while they positioned themselves?</li> <li>• Was there a common domain of expertise (pedagogy, subject matter, and didactics) in which student-teachers reported feeling the need to develop themselves the most?</li> </ul> <p>The study was carried out at the Faculty of Education, Department of English Language Teaching at a private university in Turkey where 18 student teachers participated. Their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years old. Two types of data collection tools were used in the study: reflective journal entries and a survey.</p>

<b>Conclusions</b>	<p>The findings indicated that ELT student-teachers found it difficult to position themselves as experts of English language and that they felt a need to be equipped with expertise in the subject matter, and then in didactics, followed by pedagogy. These results reported that in ELT teacher education, certain language ideologies still prevailed and needed to be dealt with by teacher educators for transformative outcomes in education.</p> <p>In the reflective analysis, there were many cases where student teachers expressed concerns about not having a high mastery of the English language as they would have wanted to, and about not being competent enough to do certain tasks.</p> <p>Also, the student-teachers frequently commented that they wanted to be “a teacher with strong knowledge”. About ELT student-teacher roles, the findings indicated that student teachers frequently evaluated themselves as second language learners and criticized their proficiency in English as well as their knowledge about the English language.</p> <p>The researchers concluded that Teacher identity demanded special interest from teacher educators and teacher education programs.</p>
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## 4. Theoretical Framework

### 4.1 Identity

The field of identity has been explored in many studies for the past few years. It is relevant to our understanding of the relationships between ourselves and the dynamics of our ever-changing world. The term identity is referred to as “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (Norton 1997, p.410 cited in Sarasa, 2016). Based on this notion and the highlighted responsibility that lays on English teachers as their “identity construction and negotiation” (Norton, 2013) relates to language as "a self-representation that is deeply connected to people’s social identities" (Miller, 2003 cited in Quintero Polo, 2016), we have come to understand the importance of enquiring about this issue to legitimize language teachers’ trajectories since early stages.

In order to understand the value of identity in the field of teaching, it is necessary to conceptualize it. Nevertheless, this is only an outline of some relevant aspects of this purpose. It is safe to say that Teacher Identity (TI) is far from being concretely defined as it is shaped by various complex elements that are not to be analyzed under a sole perspective; It cannot be limited to certain features due to its social, but at the same time, individual nature. In fine, it is framed within an evolutive definition because of the ever-changing contexts, societies, and ideas that arise from constant reflection.

From a pedagogical episteme, TI has historically changed along with the different scenarios and contexts, as well as the roles that have been attributed to teachers. Furthermore, it evolves along the student-teacher course and professional practice within the means of reflections that involve a reciprocal perception among academics. Maria-Araxi Sachpazian and

Papachristou V. ,2019 citing Sougary & Sifakis, 2010) argue that colleagues and other community members play an important role in acknowledging a teacher's contributions to sense that they belong to their community of practice.

Professional development of teachers, as seen from the identity point of view, also involves a composition of qualifications regarding specialized knowledge in terms of subject expertise (or subjects, as it is the case of Colombia, where the figure of the self-contained teacher is used) and pedagogical knowledge, that is, awareness and accurate operation of all the elements involved in the pursuit of the educative goal within an educational setting. Hence, the idea of professionalization. TI emerges from individual identity as its process of construction includes how we view ourselves in our minds, in terms of career choice; thus, the choices we make evoke our idealizations (Savickas et al. 2009 cited in Maria-Araxi Sachpazian and Papachristou 2019)

Under this perspective, it is important to view TI as a holistic process in which teachers reflect upon their beliefs and expectations as *social individuals* who want to become teachers and their negotiations during and after their transformation into *academic agents*. We argue that this perspective is traditionally conceived as TI origins; that is, it results from the wish or desire *to become teachers* idealized in a future setting. Moreover, within performance as a professional teacher, awareness of the personal qualifications, knowledge, and beliefs may be continuously scrutinized due to the (re)construction of identity. As far as the researchers in this study are aware from the different information resources on the subject, two distinctive features are recurring in several papers and serve the purpose of this study as key elements in the re(construction) of TI: agency and investment.

Sarasa (2017), citing Norton (2000), defines the concept of *investment* as “paying careful attention to their degree of mobilization of the personal assets that they ‘spend’ on their [...]

teacher education process” (p. 30 ). Thus, investment plays an important part in the (re)construction of TI since spending time and resources in language learning, and professional development is a way of investing in one’s own (re)construction of identity. In the context of this research, empirical pre-service teachers chose to become professional teachers. Therefore, it could be said that they made a long-term investment in their lives and in their identities and reflected their willingness to perform in the best possible way of drawing resources from their own doctrine of autonomy.

Autonomy and agency are intimately related. Agency could be described as the input for autonomy as it involves the materialization of one’s willingness to begin a career in teaching and to maintain a clear perspective of the responsibility that this entails in terms of social standards and expectations, and personal beliefs. In his research paper, Feng Teng (2019) cited Chik (2007) to describe how autonomy develops alongside identity. In this sense, positive or negative features of autonomy affect the development of identity. He also outlines the relationship established by Benson et al. (2007), between these three elements that help shape TI. Therefore, it could be said that autonomy and identity are malleable and depend on agency execution.

As agency underlies any idea or action that is to be carried out, maintained, and rebuilt and also fosters autonomy and identity formation, it is a term that, in a broad sense, defines the commitment of teachers in their communities of practice, thus, it reflects on the teaching settings and the teacher’s own perception. It is unlikely that student-teachers continue to have the same ideals as professionals in their practice. The inescapable tensions that the process comprises, not only are negotiated thanks to agentic behavior but are frequently considered through identity and autonomy development. Agentic behavior is referred to as the exercise of agency in which knowledge, experiences, and opportunities foster reflection and positive self-criticism to change

or improve one's own pedagogical discourse, thus nourishing the competence and general view of teachers within their communities of practice.

Diversely, agentic behavior is affected by the institutions' working systems and pedagogical frameworks, by the positions that teachers find themselves in within the educational settings, and by personal beliefs, either as student-teachers in their practicum or as working professionals. In these scenarios, executing agency becomes a constraint itself. Performance may be affected by the guidelines, the regulations, or how school owners or managers standardize the educational processes. The former means that autonomy may be limited. Ideally, agentic teachers would not succumb to the traditional teacher ideologies. Restricted or imposed settings would be opportunities to assume an active position to make changes or effective, innovative contributions in their practices, curriculum design, classroom management, and the continuous construction and reinvention of themselves.

Making pedagogical decisions and managing one's own competency (posing it as our own view of agency) along with the commitment to be teachers without professional teaching skills, concern this research as they are features we associate with the (re)construction of the language teacher. In this scenario, it is crucial to view the teacher as a social construct model and as a culture developer.

## **4.2 Narrative Research**

Narratives are a research methodology that seeks to understand a population's experience by retrospectively looking at it. De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2015), citing Freeman (2012), suggest that "narratives always and necessarily entail looking backward, from some present moment, and seeing in the movement of events *episodes* that are part of some larger whole." It is a methodology that presumably started as *narratology*. It analyzed experiences and knowledge

transfer that occurred during voice-to-voice exchanges (interconnectivity), for example, in ancient tribes. It was also studied in written texts of old narrations. Furthermore, it became more and more popular and was integrated into the research of humanities, linguistics, and other areas of study.

Applying this idea to an educational context is very representative of the type of study due to the trend in analyzing experiences to (re)construct identities in different teaching environments. In this unusual case, narrative studies allow us to look into the retrospective dimensions of empirical in-service teachers' experiences, beliefs, and expectations and grant us a chance to find previously mentioned *episodes*. The latter can be considered specific *events* or *actions* during a specific timeline. The activity is defined as “narrative knowledging” (De Fina, Georgakopoulou, 2015), whereby the researchers make sense and reshape the narrators' experience and analyze them to find episodes and generate knowledge, essentially the central aim of narrative studies.

Furthermore, related to the concept of narrative knowledging, Bruner, citing Polkinghorne (1995), suggests the concept of *paradigmatic cognition*, which means “classifying a particular instance as belonging to a category or concept” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 101). Such categories may vary depending on the theme, subject, population, etc. Still, they consist of categorizing and finding patterns to associate them with their different codes. With these patterns, the researcher's task is to make sense of them and analyze how those patterns have (re)constructed the participants' identities.



## 5. Research Design

Narrative inquiry as a methodology within the qualitative research paradigm offered the best way to approach our concern, so as to understand how, through the experiences told by the protagonists, they built and consolidated a concept of the teaching profession that constituted the basis of their training in an empirical context and its claim in an educational context. This corresponds to the description given by Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chick (2014) as the main strength of narrative inquiry. Individual open-interviews were conducted as the means for gathering data, which also agrees with the previously mentioned authors in that it “may be the most suitable to be used for accessing personal perspectives (...) (p. 16).

The questionnaire that was used to conduct the interviews was previously structured by the researchers and contained the protocol and 11 open questions that pointed at learning about the participant’s experiences, beliefs, and expectations within the frame of the research question. We may point out that, even though we agree with Atkinson (1998) in that the participant’s own way of telling their stories with their words and style is much more consequent with a narrative (cited in Barkhuizen, Benzon & Chick 2014), due to the researchers’ little experience in this field, it seemed much more convenient in terms of accuracy.

The narratives derived from those interviews were presented to the participants so that they could account for their words' veracity and intentionality. After giving their approval, the narratives were analyzed to search for distinctive patterns that could elucidate the answer to how their trajectories as empirical in-service teachers had changed in terms of the experiences, expectations, and beliefs that had shaped their identities.

### 5.1. Type of study

This research falls into the qualitative approach paradigm with a narrative inquiry as the method for understanding the participants' thoughts, behavior, and experiences in their teaching history. Their narrated stories allowed us to make sense of their experiences and their personal nuance (Elliott, 2005).

As we needed to gather the stories of Mariana, York, and John, an open-interview turned to narrative offered the best approach to their perceptions in a way that both contexts -*the empirical and the professional*- needed to be contrasted for this study. In this sense, as Elliott (2005) described, interviewing bridged the feelings and values, they sponsor as teachers with our understanding of their language teacher identity (re)construction as professionals.

### 5.2. Context

This research was carried out with three empirical in-service teachers in their practicum from the virtual Bachelor's of Education (B. Ed) in English language teaching at San Buenaventura University. Although the virtual modality allows the course's international availability, the program belongs to the Faculty of Education in Bogotá.

It is noteworthy that in Colombia, many universities provide education at the undergraduate level. We highlight that in the most recent years, the San Buenaventura University has been one of the pioneering institutions that offer this learning modality. It is the only university in Bogotá that provides an entirely virtual Bachelor of Education (B. Ed). in ELT. Given the circumstances, this ten month-long research was done in synchronous and asynchronous ways using different virtual platforms and apps and corresponds to the graduation project that is mandatory at the same university to support the professional title. The researchers and participants were in the 7th and 8th semesters (the last two) of the B.Ed. The whole process

of research was carried out under the supervision of one of the program professors from the San Buenaventura University under the title of Project Tutor.

### **5.3. Participants**

Our participants, Mariana, York, and John, whose names were changed to protect their identity, were empirical in-service teachers who were about to complete the B.Ed. in Teaching English. They were chosen because they had considerable teaching experience before embarking on formal studies at university. As this was the only distinctive characteristic, there was no particular range of age or gender in the researchers' minds. However, we consider it important to point out that they all have been empirical English teachers for over nine years due to the characteristics mentioned above. They are all Colombian, but their English acquisition as a second language occurred in a native English country where they had lived long before.

### **5.4. Data Collection Instruments**

To collect the data, we decided to structure an open-interview followed by its interpretation into a narrative in which the words and emotions (as far as the expressions allowed) perceived during the said interview were compiled. This methodology has been used in different researches of similar topics, such as De Fina & Georgakopoulou (2015) citing Murphey, Chen and Chen (2004), "Data for the project consisted of learners' first-person narratives of their learning, specifically their language learning histories (LLHs), which are retrospective accounts of past learning" (P. 102). Although the researchers created the narratives in this research, they were presented to the participants to give an account of their own words and understand the process of (re)construction of their identities.

The questionnaire comprised eleven questions that would help us look at participants' experiences, beliefs, and expectations. They were asked to answer these questions descriptively

and in detail. After they had approved our narrative, we studied them searching for codes that would serve as the categorizing patterns of their beliefs, experiences, and expectations that (re)constructed their identities. We then made our own interpretations of their words and supported them theoretically with different authors mentioned in our theoretical framework and literature review. This can be visually accessible in our Annex 1, which is the table where the two instruments came together as one.

After the data was successfully collected, we continued to make textual transcriptions of the three different interviews. Using the information that was gathered, we then proceeded to create narratives of the pre-service teacher's trajectories, which were then sent to them for review. Once the pre-service teachers approved our narrative constructions about them, we analyzed the information to find patterns and categories (which we later defined as *codes*) organized into Annex 1 following De Fina's and Georgakopoulou's (2015) methodology for narrative analysis. With these categories, we made interpretations of what the pre-service teachers said to detect the changes in their trajectories, in terms of the experiences, beliefs, and expectations that have shaped their identity, both before and during college studies. However, these interpretations will be theoretically supported through the authors mentioned in our literature review and theoretical framework to avoid subjectivity.

## Chapter 6: Data Analysis

This chapter has been organized into different sections. First, each participant's narrative is presented, beginning with York, then John, and finally Mariana. Then, we analyzed where the concepts from the narratives met, where they were frequent and from this, we created two categories of analysis: the *sense of belonging* and *giving my 100%*.

### 6.1 York's Narrative

York is an English teacher who was teaching 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th grades at an international baccalaureate school when doing this interview. He has been working as an English teacher for around 12 years despite not having a Bachelor's degree in education. He is currently in the last semester of his B.Ed. in the English language.

He graduated from high school more than 15 years ago and started studying journalism. However, soon he realized that he was not very keen on that career, and there was a period in his life when he was not sure what he wanted to be. York experienced doubts in his vocation, but in that dilemma, there was a spark that hinted at him and reminded him of the way forward.

*“But since I was very young, I always had small teaching jobs with cousins, with neighbors and as time went by, I started falling in love with teaching...”*

Perhaps those moments had been kept in his memory, to later emerge under certain circumstances to define the path towards his identity. A critical circumstance that motivated him had the opportunity to work as an English teacher and be recognized as competent in using this language. However, he recognized his lack of methodologies in formal education at that time.

*“and then one day I got the opportunity of being an English teacher due to my good level of English. I got the opportunity to start working as an English teacher, and I fell in love with it then, and since then, I have known that I wanted to be a teacher...and I think that I've*

*always had the talent to teach... it is a bit difficult, because there are a bunch of things that you don't know in terms of methodology, in terms of processes and in terms of the working world in general. So, it was good and nice, because I actually it was the way that I fell in love with what today's my profession."*

It is in this sense, being a teacher became a great challenge, and as a novice teacher resorted to what he considered correct to perform in the best way. In this case, this interaction generated positive attitudes as he began to assume his responsibilities and positions as a teacher. It is there when the process of building his identity continues with his beliefs in a scenario that demanded classroom management.

Additionally, York points out that in the process of educational practice, he made efforts to overcome difficulties in such a way that he proceeded to experiment and confront with work realities in which experiences and tools are acquired to improve and reflect.

*"I think that I did a lot of things just as I thought they were, and learning by mistakes, so it was just like trial and error and I tried to do it, and then like learning."*

The previous information indicates that he internalizes his work as a teacher and makes it part of his life as an element of personal fulfillment. At the same time, he acts and makes decisions independently to solve problems or challenges. The exercise of agency contributed to his performance at a certain point in his work as a teacher.

York also expressed that he had to work with preschool children at the beginning of his working life. From there, he climbed and passed through different grades until he reached high school, but always preserving the authenticity and estimating each experience as valuable.

*"I actually have taught on a lot of different levels. When I started, one of my first jobs was teaching in the preschool, so I taught very small kids. It wasn't like a bilingual kind of*

*preschool, so it was more like a vocabulary type of thing and something extremely basic. And I actually, I tried to be very authentic in the way that I teach and be myself...Of course, it changes the way that you face things... I am always going to be myself and try to bring that to the classroom.”*

Authenticity is considered important to York. He expressed feeling comfortable and did not manifest any objection when asked if he would teach at different English levels, so it is evident that he has full conviction and identification as an English language teacher.

*“I don't feel that I can be different in that sense, in the age groups or in the level groups.”*

Although York implied that each level provides important concepts and structures that serve as the basis for his training as a teacher, he also indicates that there are individualities that strengthen aspects of his work, so that the question of identity as a teacher includes a diverse range of contents and processes immersed in his community of practice.

When asked what motivated him to study a B.Ed. of English, York responded the following:

*“Well, several things. One thing is I wanted to have professional training and I felt that I wanted to know more and there were things that I was only going to learn through the time in the university. The other thing is specifically in English. So, it was what I wanted to do and I loved teaching. English is my passion, really. So, I wanted to learn more, and I felt that it was the only way. Of course, I wanted to have my title and to go from like the informal training to the formal training, just because I think it's the best way or the most certain way to be able to advance your career, to be able to get better jobs, to be able to think about different things for your life and for your well-being and your family's well-being.”*

York had the full conviction of his recognition as a teacher and was clear about improving his process through the construction and reconstruction of knowledge. Each time he faced challenges to achieve competitive students at an international level in learning English as a second language. Besides, professionalization allows improving salary conditions, seeking personal, family, and institutional well-being. Therefore, an investment in the target language is also an investment in its own identity.

York acknowledges that his experience before graduation brought him certain benefits, but enrolling in a formal university-level entity would give him status, power and improve his teaching methodology. This was essential to establish personal identity through self-image and self-recognition.

*“I think the advantage is that you actually gain a lot of experience... but also, it allows me to have another view of teaching... It's a little bit tough to teach without the proper training...But learning professionally and having formal training has helped me a lot to enhance my teaching processes. And I do feel the results, the way that I feel in the classroom and the way that I carry out myself as a teacher has improved... in terms of being able to get better jobs and better pay.”*

He recognizes that entering a university to study a B.Ed. of English would not only change his life but would strengthen his knowledge to feel more confident and be part of his community of practice, voluntarily investing in his own training with new expectations in his pedagogical work because Investment has both returns-individual and social.

*“I think that I've learned a lot in the program... and things have advanced a lot since work... So, I feel that I've become more communicative, I think I feel that I've become more*



*flexible in the classroom, I feel that especially learning has helped me be a lot more dynamic and a lot more creative in the classroom and bring new ideas.”*

It is important to note that York sees his efforts reflected in good results within days of receiving a bachelor's degree and feels a transformation in his identity that has been building for more than 12 years when he considered that he identified himself as a teacher for the first time.

*“But I feel now that I have a very strong foundation on what I do on the academic part. So, I feel that I’m not like something that has already been troubled in building my own past but based on things that other people already did. So, I think that in my profession, it has helped a lot, and I also see the results that I have with my kids and how I see them engaged in my classes... But I knew very quickly when I started teaching more than 12 years ago... and I noticed that that was what I wanted to do and I started feeling like a teacher and I identified myself as one.”*

There are also different things that York expects from an English teacher:

*“I expect that English teachers are good at English, first of all. Second, that they have a good methodology for the English teaching; but above all, I think that it is very important for English teachers to be authentic when they teach, because I do think that when students are engaged with the teacher and feel appreciated by the teacher and feel like that connection, also going to help them in the process to feel confident and comfortable when speaking.”*

Although York considers that knowing English is essential, he is not unaware of the human aspect that a teacher should have, showing a form of socialization and interaction and connection with the community, where identities are built in the relationships of experiences with others.

York perceives that society expects and demands a lot from an English teacher. He argues that public policies for the education sector are not the best because teachers are currently not given the necessary tools to thoroughly fulfill their work. There are few opportunities for training. However, he is aware of the responsibility that being a teacher carries within his community of practice.

*“I think that society expects a lot of it from us... But also, parents, in many cases, expect us to fill the void that they left and to do what they are not able or not willing to do... And unfortunately, I also feel that there are other teachers like in the syndicates or whatever that don't give us a good image... But they are not willing to give us all the tools and all the elements that we need to be that they want us to be... But people are not willing to pay us the money that we should deserve. They are not willing to let us train, to give us the chance to be trained and to get master's degrees to get our type of training... We have to make our best effort to keep everybody happy.”*

Finally, York affirmed that education in Colombia had followed particular interests, where the educational system, in general, has been affected. Still, the great challenge that he faces as a teacher, who loves his profession, is to continue identifying as a teacher despite adversity, without losing expectations in this job.

*“But unfortunately, the fact that in our country, education is a business... I think that the biggest challenge is that I don't feel that in our country being a teacher is valuable enough. So, I think that in terms of feeling proud to be a teacher, feeling good with my profession and feeling happy to be one, I don't imagine myself being another thing. So, I love my profession and I have no issue with it and I'm proud of what I've been able to accomplish as a teacher.”*

## 6.2 John's Narrative

John is currently undergoing the last semester of the B.Ed. in the teaching of English at Universidad San Buenaventura in Bogotá, Colombia. He has been teaching for more than 20 years, and he is strongly committed to education. Before his career started, John lived in the United States but then decided to go back to his hometown for vacation. He decided to stay and then was allowed to be trained at the Meyer Institute. This well renowned English academy was praised many years ago for its excellence and effective instruction. In this institute, John was given the opportunity to teach as part of his training. It was there and then that John knew that he was a teacher:

*“The training lasts for a month. And I began working there as a teacher and I said, well, I like it, it's like something natural came out of me.”*

Time passed during his teacher training, where he would train and teach at the same time. It was not easy. He had struggles and challenges that he needed to overcome:

*“It was not an easy task. The training was very complicated. We were like 20 guys and only two finished. It was another guy and me. The training was hard, and I thought, ‘I'm not going to make it. I'm not a teacher’. Then I said, ‘No, I have to do it.’ I put all my effort in it and at the end I made it. But that training... that training made me think like, ¡Oh, my God, is it worth it? I don't know.”*

In the end, it was his own desire to pursue his teaching career that helped him prevail and finish the training at the Meyer Institute. He had a strong commitment to his community of practice and even a stronger agency. It was during those moments, those few months, that John knew for a fact that he was a teacher:

*“Well, that was a long time ago when I had my first job at the Meyer Institute. I said, ‘I am a teacher. I’m not going to be a lawyer, administrator, or a pilot. I want to be a teacher.’”*

When adversity came, and he had setbacks in the very first months of his career, he was already fully committed to his objective of being a teacher. It came to a point where he felt the *need* to be in the classroom and teach:

*“I need to be back in the classroom. I need to be there and teach. So, I gave my one hundred percent and then made it.”*

After a lot of sacrifice, resilience, intrinsic motivation, and agency, John finally finished the training. Out of 20 candidates, only he and another colleague got through and were granted the certificate for the course. This was very important for John. People started calling him without having a degree.

*“‘...teacher John, come in here. Can you help me out?’ And I was like ‘Wow they’re calling me a teacher now!’ and that made me very proud of myself.”*

It was important for him to be called a teacher:

*“It made me feel more comfortable in the classroom.”*

But this wasn’t the only positive impact that he got from completing his training. John felt like he deserved the honor of being called a teacher. It made him feel more comfortable being there as a person. It meant a lot to him as an individual.

Years ago, that Meyer Institute certificate was all he needed to teach. He even got a raise in little time and became the academic director there, where he *“...started training teachers around Bogotá. Then I traveled to Cali, Medellín, San Andrés. And it was interesting.”*

But with the coming of years, the policies of education started to change, and it is now compulsory to have a teaching degree to be part of a school. He knew that change was coming and that he was going to be a part of it. He had to make some investments to further his career. This is why, after many years of teaching, John decided that it was time to join a University and get his B.Ed. in the teaching of English here, at Universidad San Buenaventura.

John is completely convinced that having some experience as a teacher before entering the University courses made it easier for him. Not only could he approve some credits because of his fluent English, which saved him at least one year of his academic career, but he also felt that the content was easier to digest:

*“It was much easier, for example, here at the university. I didn't take the English classes.”*

He also feels that even though he was already a teacher when he started the B.Ed., the content of the courses and having contact with other teachers gave him a solid background which helped him become a better teacher:

*“The experience I had was great. I met teachers during this university, a lot of great teachers. I learned a lot even though I had the experience. I needed this background, this pedagogical background, for me to be a better teacher. And I and I'm about to finish. I'm just missing the semester, and I'm done. But, I mean, I needed this as a teacher to be a better teacher... now I understand more things.”*

John has also been able to apply some of the content that he has learned in the past few years at the Bachelor. Planning, task-based learning methods, and differentiation strategies are some of the things that he has learned at university that he now does within his daily teaching. His investment has paid off, as he admits,

*“I was a lot like a grammar-based teacher; my institute was one hundred percent grammar-based. But now I'm now learning all of these task-based learning, communicative approaches, all these things made me look wider, broader.”*

It is undeniable, then, that the B.Ed. has positively impacted John's teaching career:

*“It has worked 100 percent for the tasks, the warm-up, presentation, practice, all these things. They have worked a lot.”*

There is a significant thing that John feels like an individual. He firmly believes that he is a person before being a teacher. He is an independent individual who belongs to a community of practice. Even when he believes that his university experience has provided him with tools and knowledge to be a better teacher, he feels that it has also empowered him as a person. As an individual. He believes that,

*“It gave me more power as a person. Now, in the meetings, I feel more confident. I feel like I know a lot more.”*

So it can be said with plenty of confidence that John has changed and grown even more as a teacher and as a person since he joined the university for the very first time. *“In my well being,”* he says, the university has provided him with professional growth and other job opportunities. Still, he believes that the most important things that he has learned are evident with his teaching and with his individual development as a person.

It is clear to John that teachers have a certain responsibility with their students. He thinks that a teacher must be knowledgeable and caring. Also, he strongly believes:

*“There is something that has been with me always, and this is a quote that I made up. A teacher is born. He’s not made. You see what I’m saying? A teacher is born, not made through his experience.”*

To him, some people are born with an inherent and intrinsic motivation to help, to guide and to teach. Characteristics like these are the skills or personalities that teachers are born with. They don’t get it from experience or learning; they are predestined with them.

With these characteristics, teachers become something “*more than teachers*”, John says. *“So we, as teachers, become mom and dad. It’s more beautiful than being just there to teach the subject, the verb, this simple past, or the future tense. No! You have to be there and be more than a teacher.”*

He believes that it is the duty of teachers to adapt to situations where the role can be more related to being a parent and helping them solve problems that are not strictly related to the content of a lesson:

*“You solve the problem and they’re either happy and say thank you for telling me what to do, now my mom and dad are happier. It’s that part.”*

John is still teaching and looking forward to continuing to contribute to the Education Guild and to his students. He will graduate very soon and is looking forward to a position as a coordinator.

### **6.3 Mariana’s Narrative**

Mariana is a last-semester student of Bachelor’s degree in education who, in turn, has also been working as an English teacher for around nine years. Her career in education started long before she even thought of becoming a teacher. Her love for this profession started at that same moment as she began tutoring her classmates at University. She initiated her biology studies abroad around 20 years ago because she wanted to be a marine biologist.

It was this activity of tutoring what made her realize she had teaching skills and that she liked doing so, in her own words:

*“So those moments of one to one tutoring gave me, like, the...the opportunity to identify that I liked teaching and that I had the ability to transmit knowledge. So that was like the first experience I had.”*

Even though it all started as a need, the experience of working as a tutor became an enriching and gratifying opportunity that ended in a life-changing event, not only because she faced a change in her profession but also because it allowed her to find an ability she had not explored before.

On an unplanned return to her home country, even though she had not had any professional training, only the ability to speak English opened doors for her to work as an English teacher for the first time. Under her perception, she was a teacher of heart before being a professional teacher, and the actual exercise of this profession confirmed her feelings about it. It also gave her what we have come to call empirical training.

*“... I... I guess knowing that, that being a teacher is also part of having, like, the gift of teaching, eh, and not necessarily not necessarily having an academic background in teaching. So I guess it was just eh, the opportunity that I had to teach and discovered that I had the skills and that I enjoyed what I was, what I was doing.”*

*“...And then, throughout those almost eight years that I worked there, I was able to grow as a teacher and to develop the teaching skills. And of course, it was like the experience was at my school. Right? I mean, experience was my teacher. And, of course, at the same time, I would try to inquire about some teaching methodologies or teaching practices. And then, ah, some years after that was when I decided to, to start the bachelor's degree.”*



Even before her academic beginnings, her agentic behavior allowed her to start searching for ways to perform in the best way since she began teaching at a school without any professional background in this *métier*. In this sense, she decided to be part of her community of practice and invest in her own academic growth in an autonomous way.

Even Though she conceives teaching as the archaic activity of transmitting knowledge, which certainly is a key skill according to her discourse, she concentrates on the human and dynamic side of a teacher regarding students' personal and academic dimensions. This shows a strong feeling of commitment.

*"...So, so that's what for me a teacher is; ah, having the gift of teaching and like that passion for teaching and just transmitting the knowledge that the person has; and we know, of course, that teaching is not only that, just passing down knowledge, but it's also like a way of letting or allowing or making the students discover the skills that they already have or develop them making more degree or also discovering a their passions or their talents as well."*

*"... I was good at teaching and, and of course, that I had, eh, I had already been a second language learner; I mean, I went through that process myself. So, so I knew, like, what were the difficulties that a second language student would, would face and like the common mistakes that you would make in the process..."*

Mariana draws significant advantages of her first experience as a second language teacher besides her later formal education in this field. She discovered her natural talent for teaching by her own means and committed herself to this practice by investing in teaching techniques. Still, she also acknowledges the importance of professional training.

*“...having the experience to teach for... for whatever number of years, of course, gives you tools and gives you some some knowledge and everything to apply in your classrooms, but once you pursue or you complete the program, you have more like, eh, theory or more, eh, academic background that can help you understand things better or learn like the roots of the teaching language, process and everything. So it gives you more confidence, I guess, and, and more like academic background so that you can understand things better. And like feel, as I mentioned, make more secure and more confident in what you are doing.”*

She recognizes that professional studies have contributed to her growth on a pedagogical level and to her confidence as a teacher. However, her teaching identity from before professional preparation was already framed in a pedagogical context. When asked about meeting her students' educational goals, even though she was not a professional in the field she was working, she felt absolutely sure of her performance. She also reflects upon the expectations that draw this profession regarding society and is aware of the responsibility this entails within her community of practice.

*“...Yes, yes, with no doubt. I think that, like, if we were to see the results of those students at that time, that would speak by itself. Like, if you see that there is a progress in the process and there is evidence that they eh, advance in the use of the language, then that will be the result, saying that it worked.”*

*“...I think that they would expect me to be able to fulfill the needs of their children, whatever they are. I mean, we know that teachers do not only teach a subject, but we, we provide life skills and we support their, their development in many aspects. So, so I guess it will be that, to be able to, to supply those needs and, and contribute to their development.”*

Nevertheless, it is clear that she focuses on her students' acquisition of the target language even though she had only worked at one school as a self-contained teacher by the time this research was carried out. This shows a firmly fixed vision of herself as a language teacher, an idea that was confirmed when asked if she would teach higher levels of English, to which she agreed.

*"...I, for sure I would know that it would be a challenge for me, but I would also feel comfortable and confident of my, my language knowledge. So I would, I would teach it. Yes."*

She knows that being a teacher encompasses the many practices related to the dynamics in the classroom. Even though her teaching abilities were challenged when she had difficulties with a particular group of students and found herself questioning her own pedagogical resources, she could overcome the situation. The exercise of agency contributed to her taking action in a scenario that demanded classroom management.

*"...But there was one group that I and we know that the first weeks of, of the school year, it's a matter of getting to know each other and the kids, getting to know the teacher and we as teachers getting to know them and everything. But with this specific group maybe it was like one month, two months, three months, and I wouldn't and I hadn't, had been able to to a, a I don't know, like to guide the class as I would do it with any other group. I mean, it was, it was difficult and it was, there were some cases in which it was like: is the first day of class or what? because you wouldn't see any progress."*

All along with her experience as a teacher without previous professional studies, her identity was shaped by her passion and talent for doing this job and, in turn, by the experiences lived within the academic context; later, by professional training. Actions of reflection,

self-awareness, and autonomous acquisition of pedagogical skills to perform this activity have been acknowledged by her students. It was that acknowledgment and feeling what made her feel like a teacher for the first time, and it has been like that since.

*“...At that moment, with those first students and I remember it was maybe chemistry or even math and it was there that I noticed whenever they would come back to me saying thank you, I passed my exam, or I’m doing better in my classes or whatever their comment was, it was there...”*

*“...And I guess what really mattered for me there was like the...eh, I mean, it was like an infinite calls, number of calls and messages from families, from my students, even from my first two students back in 2013, that they would just express their gratitude and like recognize the job that I did for them and everything. So it was, it was that; those words and those, eh, I guess eh, experiences that you are able to provide to those kids that they, they still remember that they still value and that they still acknowledge that it was, it was enriching for, for their lives. So, yes, definitely. Yes.”*

Despite her inexperience and lack of professional training during the first years of her work as a language teacher, she has taken part in her community of practice investing autonomously in her own training to gain experience and pedagogical skills; managing her own practical and personal resources, but above all, it could be said that she accidentally found her true vocation, which allowed her to conceive herself as a teacher from the beginning.

#### **6.4 Interpretation of narratives**

With the narratives, we created from the interviews with John, York, and Mariana, we then constructed a table with the different categories that we considered would help us fulfill our research objectives (annex 2). We then continued to solidify our interpretations of those

narratives in a more textual way. The final result was an interpretation of narratives with three categories: *A teacher is born, not made*; *Giving my 100%*; and *Expectations*.

#### ***6.4.1 A teacher is born, not made.***

The first category consists of the pre-service teacher's conception of teaching as a gift. The analysis suggests that these empirical teachers strongly believe an inherent characteristic or natural quality that determines their professional identity. Their first experience as teachers made them aware of their strong, positive feelings towards this profession and of their natural talent, which could be understood as a set of skills that they developed in their upbringing and allowed them to teach proficiently before taking part in the B.Ed. in ELT:

*"...and then one day I got the opportunity of being an English teacher due to my good level of English...and I think that I've always had the talent to teach... it is a bit difficult because there are a bunch of things that you don't know in terms of methodology, in terms of processes and in terms of the working world in general." (York)*

York suggests that he has always had the talent to teach despite his lack of knowledge in teaching. What he described as a "talent," John casts it as an expression of his vocation. He said that there was something natural within him. The discourse in this quote shows that by choosing the word "natural," the participant believes it is in his nature to belong in a classroom:

*"The training lasts for a month. And I began working there as a teacher and I said, well, I like it, it's like something natural came out of me." (John)*

Mariana, like her colleagues, relates the teaching work with an ability prescribed by nature when she describes it as a gift:

*“I guess knowing that, that being a teacher is also part of having, like, the gift of teaching, eh, and not necessarily having an academic background in teaching. So I guess it was just eh, the opportunity that I had to teach and discovered that I had the skills and that I enjoyed what I was, what I was doing.” (Mariana)*

Their vocation arose from their experience in the field, even without considering it from a professional perspective. This “first examination of conscious thoughts and feelings,” as Quintero Polo (2016) describes it, citing (Dickinson, 2012), enabling a more in-depth interpretation of their identity. In this sense, the conception that “*A teacher is born, not made*” generated by John during his interview, and corroborated by the other two participants, determines the human dimension of the profession and brings a new significant element to be included in the study of teacher identity. Thereby, the stage of retrospection, as described by Quintero Polo (2016), can bifurcate towards a more personal construct than a vocation. It is relevant to mention that in this research, the retrospective stage focused on the participants’ school learning experiences that served as identity shapers.

*“There is something that has been with me always, and this is a quote that I made up. A teacher is born. He’s not made. You see what I’m saying? A teacher is born, not made through his experience.” (John)*

That is, culturally, we have the belief of developing a professional career based on our interests. Contrary to being interested in teaching as a profession, our participants came across it by chance and discovered their passion for it. As Mariana said, it was life that made them teachers.

It could be argued that these empirical teachers’ identities, retrospectively, were already determined by certain aspects. A hidden passion arose from this activity; they imagined themselves as teachers and used their own assets to continue doing it. Savickas et al. (as cited in

AraxiSachPazian & Papachristou, 2018) described how people make their career choices based on how they view themselves. “The imagination of possible selves,” as named by the authors, is connected to the self-concept. Therefore, it can be said that John, Mariana, and York imagined and identified themselves as teachers because they realized their natural talent to teach. In Mariana’s words,

*“...life made me a teacher first before the academy. And that is totally what happened.”*

The latter, along with the descriptions of their first experiences as teachers, or what we have called in this research, empirical teaching, we can assume that this is not just a career choice. Being a teacher is not just a matter of talent, regardless of the difficulties in terms of pedagogical knowledge; it is also a matter of doing what you love and deciding upon a newly found self-concept.

Thus, the decision to develop the new self-concept is a clear example of the “imagination of possible selves,” so that experience was the start point of how these *empirical teachers* began to shape their identity. The imagination of possible selves makes us believe that their self-concept was redirected when they found this new passion, discovered abilities for doing it and above all, enjoyed it.

*“So, I think that in terms of feeling proud to be a teacher, feeling good with my profession and feeling happy to be one, I don't imagine myself being another thing. So, I love my profession and I have no issue with it and I'm proud of what I've been able to accomplish as a teacher.” (York)*

The idea of a teacher being born and not made has certain other implications. One could ask about those set of skills being applied to a different field, for example. Why did these

pre-service teachers decide to use their skills, natural characteristics, or gifts towards teaching? It is undeniable to highlight that York, John, and Mariana had a **sense of belonging** in the teaching profession. There is an obvious feeling of pertinence towards teaching. The sense of belonging was there all along:

*“Well, that was a long time ago when I had my first job at the Meyer Institute. I said ‘I am a teacher. I'm not going to be a lawyer, administrator or a pilot. I want to be a teacher.’” (John)*

*“...So those moments of one to one tutoring gave me, like, the...the opportunity to identify that I liked teaching and that I had the ability to transmit knowledge.” (Mariana)*

Similarly, Hernandez and Gutierrez (2020) observed in their research that pre-service teachers who interacted within their community of practice developed agency and what could be understood as a sense of belonging. By taking part in their communities, participants started feeling like they belonged there more and more, and that it was through these interactions that others could feel the same way as well. It can be said that the different participants in our research at Universidad San Buenaventura also had a feeling of belonging once they immersed themselves in their school, classroom, and other communities of practice as well. It is vital to highlight that the interactions were significant, even more so than the community itself.

This sense of belonging and interactions led them to use their predetermined skills in the field of education. Their identities began to take shape right after their first teaching experience, where they put those innate skills to practice and noticed that they belonged to the educational field.

It was, however, a challenging path. As York mentioned, the skills they were born with were not enough to become the teachers they really wanted to be. There was still a lack of



knowledge and other skills (methodologies, practices, and approaches, amongst others) that they needed to acquire. They had to work hard and overcome their difficulties, which takes us to the second category.

#### **6.4.2 Giving my 100%**

Being born with a set of capabilities that allowed them to teach without any prior experience can definitely be considered a gift, as Mariana said. However, this does not mean that the pre-service teachers had an “easy way in” into the classrooms and other educational settings. The pursuit of better qualifications and general knowledge to enhance their performance due to the lack of pedagogical background enabled York, Mariana, and John to exhibit awareness of their professional constraints. This determined their autonomous actions towards the investment of resources and efforts to develop teaching skills to improve their practice. They demonstrated agency and investment when surpassing the obstacles that they found:

*“The training was hard, and I thought, ‘I’m not going to make it. I’m not a teacher’. Then I said, ‘No, I have to do it.’ I put all my effort in it and at the end I made it.” (John)*

To further develop the previous idea, investment and agency are considered to be personal, conscious, and attentive spending of their assets into their teacher education process. The participants’ investment is clear; they all willingly spent personal assets to advance in their careers “we conceive agency as teachers’ fully autonomous capacity to act, to feel, and to adapt, [...] refuse and resist” (Sarasa, 2017, p. 29), which in turn, reflects autonomy, flexibility and resilience in their performance, characteristics of agency. Therefore, the pre-service decisions and actions regarding their careers are a perfect example of investment and agency. Mariana, for example, says that

*"...I was able to grow as a teacher and to develop the teaching skills (...) it was like the experience was at my school. Right? I mean, experience was my teacher. And of course, at the same time, I would try to inquire about some teaching methodologies or teaching practices. And then, ah, some years after that was when I decided to, to start the, the bachelor's degree."*

It is essential to involve Norton (2013) in this regard, who says that investment seeks to make a meaningful connection between desire and commitment to learning. The pre-service teachers seek to get qualified as they acquire and learn the skills to improve their teaching:

*"One thing is I wanted to have professional training and I felt that I wanted to know more and there were things that I was only going to learn through the time in the university... The other thing is specifically in English. So, it was what I wanted to do and I loved teaching." (York)*

*"...having the experience to teach for... for whatever number of years, of course, gives you tools and gives you some knowledge and everything to apply in your classrooms, but once you pursue or you complete the program, you have more like, eh, theory or more, eh, an academic background that can help you understand things better..." (Mariana)*

Therefore, it is clear that York, John, and Mariana invested in different ways to expand their knowledge and develop teaching skills. In this sense, their actions are identified with Duff (2012), when he refers to agency as people's ability to make decisions, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals, potentially leading to personal or social transformation. Connecting this idea to the previously mentioned self-concept and imagined possible selves, agency enables people to imagine, take up, and perform new roles or identities.

We believe that through their investment and agency, the three pre-service teachers (re)constructed their identity as language teachers.

It is important to highlight that the three participants worked hard to become the teachers they wanted to be and that they already had in mind an idea about what it was to be a teacher. This imaginary or idea became a role model, something that the participants wanted to become and that they expected to be, which brings us to the next category.

#### ***6.4.2 Expectations***

Another fundamental category that shows us how York, Mariana, and John have (re)constructed their identities is their expectations. What do we mean by expectations? It can really be divided into two different pillars concerning the same concept. In the first place, we believe that every pre-service teacher has an imaginary about what a teacher should be. Going back to the idea of the self-concept, they invest to achieve a self-concept where they identify themselves with the imaginary. In simpler words, they do what they can through investment and agency to be the teachers they are “expected” to be. It can be either expected by themselves, by others, or by a combination of both.

Savickas (2009) argues that teacher identity emerges from individual identity as the construction of the self-concept includes how we imagine ourselves in the future. Under this premise, it is related to the expectations of teachers, who reflect on what they expect from their teaching practices and their future professional goals to be met:

*“I expect that English teachers are good at English, first of all. Second, that they have a good methodology for English teaching; but above all, I think that it is very important for English teachers to be authentic when they teach.” (York)*

It can be argued that pre-service teachers have a common expectation from an English teacher. A good English teacher must be familiar and fluent with the language and know how to teach it. Therefore, it can be interpreted that they believe that they must also be very good at using English and teaching it to their students. This, however, is only one of the expectations that they have:

*“So we, as teachers, become mom and dad. It's more beautiful than being just there to teach the subject, the verb, this simple past or the future tense. No! You have to be there and be more than a teacher.” (John)*

There is clearly an expectation to “be something more than just a teacher.” York, Mariana, and John feel the need to invest and put their innate skills into practice to become what they imagine to be a “good teacher.” They (re)construct their identities and become “more than just a teacher.”

On the other hand, taking into account that the (re)construction of pre-service teachers' identity is a constant and does not stop at a particular given time (considering that people's identities keep changing as they live and experience different things). It is only natural that we also look at the prospective (re)construction of identity. The previous is the second pillar of the concept of expectations; the pre-service teachers' expectations for the future after completing the Bachelor's degree.

The first idea that comes to mind when thinking about the future is their almost immediate graduation from the B.Ed. in ELT. John expresses this feeling when he says,

*“Now I can look for a job as a coordinator and I can do many things now that I have my degree.”*

There is a very concrete and clear expectation that completing the B.Ed. in ELT will serve as a pathway to new opportunities, jobs, and higher income. This can (re)construct their identities regarding the success that they have achieved as teachers:

*“...just because I think it's the best way or the most certain way to be able to advance your career, to be able to get better jobs, to be able to think about different things for your life and for your well-being and your family's well-being.” (York)*

From the categories mentioned beforehand, we could see how York, Mariana, and John's trajectories (re)constructed their identities as Language Teachers. They were born to be teachers, and they invested through their agency to become precisely the teachers they expected to be. Their different experiences have played the most important role in their (re)construction of identity as they have become more efficient, confident and proud English teachers.

## Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications

In an attempt to answer the research question posed, the findings in this narrative inquiry have enabled the researchers to view the teaching profession from a broader angle. We believe that its humanistic sense is reaffirmed and the reciprocal relationship between vocation and its pedagogical foundation.

Although research on language teacher identity construction has generally been conducted with participants who have not yet formally worked as teachers as opposed to the participants in this research, a clear relationship can be identified between the expectations and beliefs of aspiring and empirical teachers. The empirical teachers in this research found the human meaning of the profession manifesting itself in their passion for teaching and in their willingness to position themselves as teachers from an active, vigilant, and transforming role of attitudes and skills without being drawn to the teaching profession as their career of choice. This tells us that their initial trajectory and positioning as language teachers were grounded on their sense of belonging, the capacity to overcome the pedagogical obstacles due to their lack of professional training, and their investing autonomously in their own assets for high performance.

The former is consistent with Sarasa's narrative inquiry about pre-service teachers' imagined identities (2016), which concluded that the participants' agentic behavior and their resilience determine the orientation of student teachers' identity. In the same way, we can align the idea of the agency with our findings so that the conceptions of teacher professional education

need a greater foundation in the importance of constructing their identity rather than a largely academic foundation. `

In this sense, a new element that we believe has not been explored yet, materializes from this research. John, York and Mariana began the construction of their identity from the sense of fulfillment, comfort, and pride that emerged from the experience. This idea contradicts that of other studies which have stated that teachers' professional identity is based upon the theoretical and practical elements offered during professional training and in turn, these elements provide human meaning to support their identity (Quintero Polo, 2016). Our participants' beliefs and experiences as empirical language teachers determined their identity. During their interviews, the message and feelings perceived told us that the experience rather than the training made them aware of the human dimension of the profession and thus shaped their identity.

On the matter of implications, this research may exhibit a new vision to the construction of teacher identity that we believe could be of benefit to the University programs. TI may not just be seen as one of the issues within the curriculums but as its foundation. On the other hand, within the whole construct of TI, what we consider the most valuable element is reaffirmed, which is clearly framed by the human dimension of the profession and follows its naturalistic appreciation: vocation. Therefore, future student teachers in the Bachelor programs could observe that Universities grant great importance to the *identity of the teachers* along the whole process of becoming professionals and that this is complemented by the subject of expertise in order to forge integral teachers.





### **Chapter 8: Limitations and Further Research**

There were a few issues that we consider important to highlight as limitations in order to give this research a more viable standing. In the first place, we feel that there were limitations regarding the participants' geographical population and the literature review. As all participants were from Bogotá, the country's Capital District, we believe it would have been interesting to learn about the trajectories of empirical in-service teachers from different regions.

Regarding the literature review, and having mentioned this issue in the statement of the problem (which naturally became a limitation as well), there is so limited information about identity regarding empirical teachers who have experience in teaching but not in professional education. It limited us to create a more elaborate estate of the art literature review, but we truly hope that our research will contribute to this problem.

With this idea in mind, we also noticed that our investigation could be used for some further research about (re)construction of the identity of empirical teachers who do not have access to professional education. On the contrary, it would also be interesting to study the (re)construction of the identity of those students in Universidad de San Buenaventura who have not had any teaching experience before entering the program.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1 - Protocol

*Dear colleagues, we would like to thank you in advance for your time and willingness to participate in this project. We request your authorization for the analysis and processing of your personal data which will be digitally stored; this includes all the information provided by you during the interview and it will only be used for the purpose of this research. We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality and security of your information as participants, Do you agree with the previous information and want to continue with the interview? We also want to let you know that you are free to answer in English or Spanish.*

#### Interview questions:

1. Introduction. Small talk.
2. What do you expect from an English teacher?
3. When and how did you know that you wanted to be a teacher?
4. How has the experience of being a teacher been before enrolling in the B.Ed? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having worked as an English teacher without previous professional teaching education?
5. What level of language do you teach? Do you feel comfortable teaching this level? If you were asked to teach a different level, would it affect your identity as a language teacher?
6. What motivated you to study a B.Ed of English?
7. What changes have you noticed of working as an English teacher after enrolling in the program?
8. What do you think that professional education would contribute to your professional growth?
9. When do you consider that you identified yourself as a teacher for the first time?
10. What has been the biggest challenge to identify yourself as a teacher?
11. What do you think that society expects from you as a teacher?

## Annex 2 - Table of categories

The interest in developing these narratives was based on the acquisition of data that served as input for our research. It consisted of analyzing the beliefs, experiences and expectations of pre-service teachers before and after entering professional education and interpret the changes in the (re)construction of their identities.

The participants in this study were chosen because they were students of the last semester of the B.Ed. in English and because they had served as teachers before entering university education. They shared their different experiences by participating in an interview. The compiled recordings were transcribed and turned into a narrative which was later reviewed and approved by the interviewees.

The subsequent analysis of the three narratives yielded a series of repetitive data that were used as categorization patterns. “Analyses of narrative content [...] follow the procedures of coding for themes, categorizing these and looking for patterns of association among them” (De Fina, Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 101). The four predominant categories that surged from the narratives are: *sense of belonging*; *giving my 100%*; and *expectations*. Then, an interpretation is given to it by the researchers. Finally, those categorization patterns were interpreted and legitimized by the respective theory that supports them.

<b>SENSE OF BELONGING</b>		
<b>Textual quotes</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Theoretical Support</b>
<p><i>"...and then one day I got the opportunity of being an English teacher due to my good level of English...and I think that I've always had the talent to teach... it is a bit difficult, because there are a bunch of things that you don't know in terms of</i></p>	<p>There are teachers who follow paths based on their belief, preferences and perceived needs.</p>	<p>Castañeda &amp; Rodríguez &amp; Salazar &amp; Chalá (2016) argue that although theories, beliefs, or attitudes may seem to be rooted in a person's mind, they are also inextricably connected to context. Thus, teachers' pedagogical beliefs are closely connected to experiences.</p>

<p><i>methodology, in terms of processes and in terms of the working world in general". (York</i></p> <p><i>"So, I think that in terms of feeling proud to be a teacher, feeling good with my profession and feeling happy to be one, I don't imagine myself being another thing. So, I love my profession and I have no issue with it and I'm proud of what I've been able to accomplish as a teacher". (York)</i></p> <p><i>"There is something that has been with me always, and this is a quote that I made up. A teacher is born. He's not made. You see what I'm saying? A teacher is born, not made through his experience". (John)</i></p> <p><i>"The training lasts for a month. And I began</i></p>	<p>There is a strong belief that a predetermined "something", a predisposition or inherent characteristic that people innately have and develop as a teacher, even without prior knowledge or experience in the field.</p> <p>The discourse in this quote shows that by choosing the word "natural", the participant believes that it is in his nature to belong in a classroom.</p>	<p>Álvaro Quintero (2016) citing Barkhuizen, suggests that people (re)create their identities based on different stages. One of them is the stage of Retrospection. It is very peculiar to find that some pre-service teachers believe that they were meant to be teachers even before they were born. It could be argued that their identity, retrospectively, was already determined by certain aspects.</p>
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<p><i>working there as a teacher and I said, well, I like it, it's like something natural came out of me.”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, that was a long time ago when I had my first job at the Meyer Institute. I said ‘I am a teacher. I'm not going to be a lawyer, administrator or a pilot. I want to be a teacher’.</i></p> <p><i>“And I was like ‘Wow they're calling me a teacher now!’ and that made me very proud of myself”</i></p> <p><i>“...So those moments of one to one tutoring gave me, like, the...the opportunity to</i></p>	<p>There is a very clear feeling of pertinence towards teaching. The sense of belonging was there all along.</p> <p>The fact that he is identified and named “teacher” by other people made him feel more comfortable, as if he really belonged in a classroom.</p> <p>It is clear that the three participants in this research strongly believe that their vocation as teachers arose from their experience in this field even without having previously considered it from a professional perspective. That is, culturally we have the belief of developing a professional career based on our</p>	<p>Hernandez and Gutierrez (2020) observed in their research that pre-service teachers who interacted within their community of practice developed not only agency, but also what could be understood as a sense of belonging. By taking part in their communities, participants started feeling like they belonged there more and more, and that it was through these interactions that others could feel the same way as well. From this, it can be said that the different participants in our research at Universidad San Buenaventura also had a feeling of belonging once they immersed themselves in their school, classroom and other communities of practice as well. It is vital to highlight that the interactions were very important, even more so than the community itself.</p> <p>Savickas et al. (as cited in AraxiSachPazian &amp; Papachristou, 2018) described how people make their career choices based on how</p>
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<p><i>identify that I liked teaching and that I had the ability to transmit knowledge” (Mariana)</i></p> <p><i>“...life made me a teacher first before the academy. And that is totally what happened” (Mariana)</i></p> <p><i>“I guess knowing that, that being a teacher is also part of having, like, the gift of teaching, eh, and not necessarily having an academic background in teaching. So I guess it was just eh, the opportunity that I had to teach and discovered that I had the skills and that I enjoyed what I was, what I was doing” (Mariana)</i></p>	<p>interests. Our participants, contrary to being interested in teaching as a profession, came across it by chance and discovered their passion for it. As Mariana said, it was life what made them teachers.</p> <p>Based on the descriptions of their first experiences as teachers, or what we have called in this research, empirical teachers, we can assume that this is not just a career choice. Being a teacher is a matter of talent, regardless of the difficulties in terms of pedagogical knowledge; it is also a matter of doing what you love and deciding upon a newly found self-concept.</p> <p>Thus, this is a clear example of “imagination of possible selves” in a way that experience was the start point of how these <i>empirical teachers</i> began to shape their identity. This imagination of possible selves makes us believe that their self-concept was redirected when they found this new passion, discovered abilities for doing it and above all, enjoyed it.</p>	<p>they view themselves. “The imagination of possible selves” as named by the authors, is connected to the self-concept.</p>
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<b>GIVING MY 100%</b>		
<b>Textual Quotes</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Theoretical Support</b>
<p><i>“I think that I did a lot of things just as I thought they were, and learning by mistakes, so it was just like trial and error and I tried to do it, and then like learning”. (York)</i></p>	<p>He internalizes his work as a teacher and makes it part of his life as an element of personal fulfillment through agency. Experiences are acquired to improve and reflect upon the empirical practice.</p>	<p>In this sense, his actions are identified with Duff (2012), when refers to agency as the ability of people to make decisions, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation. Thus, agency enables people to imagine, take up, and perform new roles or identities. It can also enable people to resist certain behaviors, practices, or positionings. In the same way, Biesta and Tedder (2006) perceive agency as the ability to exert control over, and give direction to one’s life so it is synonymous with action, emphasizing implicitly the undetermined nature of human action.</p>
<p><i>"I tried to be very authentic in the way that I teach and be myself... and try to bring that to the classroom. I don't feel that I can be different in that sense, in the age groups or in the level groups". (York)</i></p>	<p>He reflects and practices introspection that motivates him to learn more about his essence or fundamental nature.</p>	<p>From this point of view, the question of agency plays a central role in modernization of (social) scientific knowledge on the reflexive project of the self, Duff (2012). So, self-reflection leads to self-recognition and many times it can lead to changes.</p>
<p><i>"One thing is I wanted to have professional training and I felt that I</i></p>		

<p><i>wanted to know more and there were things that I was only going to learn through the time in the university... The other thing is specifically in English. So, it was what I wanted to do and I loved teaching".</i> (York)</p> <p><i>"But I feel now that I have a very strong foundation on what I do on the academic part... and I also see the results that I have with my kids and how I see them engaged in my classes".</i> (York)</p> <p><i>"The training was hard, and I thought, 'I'm not going to make it. I'm not a teacher'. Then I said, 'No, I have to do it.' I put all my effort in it and at the end I made it."</i> (John)</p> <p><i>"I need to be back in the classroom. I need to be there and teach. So, I gave my one hundred</i></p>	<p>York considers important the construction and reconstruction of knowledge in his pedagogical work.</p> <p>Professional studies have contributed to his strengthened self-positioning as a competent teacher</p> <p>It wasn't easy for the participants to get to where they are right now. Just like any other person, they had to overcome struggles and challenges. They made conscious efforts to surpass these obstacles.</p>	<p>It is important to involve Norton (2013) in this regard, who says that investment seeks to make a meaningful connection between desire and commitment to learn. On the subject, the teacher seeks to qualify himself to improve his teachings in his community of practice.</p> <p>In this way, Norton (2013) considers that investment in the target language is also an investment in a person's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space. This suggests thinking that the teacher wants to have broad knowledge, vision and self-recognition</p> <p>Sarasa (2017) considers investment and agency to be a personal, conscious and attentive spending of their personal assets into their teacher education process. The participants' investment is clear; they all willingly spent personal assets to advance in their careers: "we conceive agency as teachers' fully autonomous capacity to act,</p>
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<p><i>percent and then made it”.</i> <i>(John)</i></p>		<p>to feel, and to adapt, [...] refuse and resist” (Sarasa, 2017, p. 29).</p>
<p>“...I was able to grow as a teacher and to develop the teaching skills (...) it was like the experience was at my school. Right? I mean, experience was my teacher. And of course, at the same time, I would try to inquire about some teaching methodologies or teaching practices. And then, ah, some years after that was when I decided to, to start the, the bachelor's degree.” <i>(Mariana)</i></p> <p>“...having the experience to teach for... for whatever number of years, of course, gives you tools and gives you some some knowledge and everything to apply in your classrooms,</p>		

<p>but once you pursue or you complete the program, you have more like, eh, theory or more, eh, academic background that can help you understand things better...” (Mariana)</p> <p><i>"English is my passion, really... So, I feel that I've become more communicative, I think I feel that I've become more flexible in the classroom, I feel that especially learning has helped me be a lot more dynamic and a lot more creative in the classroom and bring new ideas... But learning professionally and having formal training has helped me a lot to enhance my teaching processes".</i> (York)</p>	<p>This involves satisfaction, identification as a teacher, sense of belonging and feeling of sympathy.</p>	<p>For this reason, Quintero (2016) involves the term human dimension in the formation of teachers of English, because it results from</p> <p>the perception of teaching as both a human and a genuine social practice. In this sense, teaching is a life experience of relevance for the participant because it mediates knowledge and helps to form reflections, attitudes, motivations, sense of belonging and values.</p>
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EXPECTATIONS		
Textual quotes	Interpretation	Theoretical support

<p><i>“...just because I think it's the best way or the most certain way to be able to advance your career, to be able to get better jobs, to be able to think about different things for your life and for your well-being and your family's well-being”.</i> (York)</p> <p><i>“I expect that English teachers are good at English, first of all. Second, that they have good methodology for the English teaching; but above all, I think that it is very important for English teachers to be authentic when they teach”.</i> (York)</p> <p><i>“Now I can look for a job as a coordinator and I can do many things now that I have my degree.”</i> (John)</p> <p><i>“...once you pursue or you complete the program, you have more like, eh, theory or more, eh,</i></p>	<p>Expectations in his pedagogical add status, power, self-image and self-recognition.</p> <p>There is a very concrete and clear expectation that getting the degree will serve as a pathway to new opportunities, jobs and higher income.</p>	<p>Savickas (2009) argues that TI emerges from individual identity as the construction of the self-concept includes how we imagine ourselves in the future. Under this premise, it is related to the expectations of teachers, who reflect about what they expect from their teaching practices and their future professional goals to be met. Torres &amp; Ramos (2019)</p>
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<p><i>academic background that can help you understand things better or learn like the roots of the teaching language, process and everything. So it gives you more confidence, I guess, and, and more like academic background so that you can understand things better. And like feel, as I mentioned, make more secure and more confident on what you are doing.”</i></p>		
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