

ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA AND PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS:  
CHALLENGING BELIEFS IN A COURSE ON ENGLISH PHONETICS AND  
PHONOLOGY

A Thesis Presented by

ANDERSON STIVEN PULGARIN PEREZ

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Approved as to style and content by:



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Adriana María González Moncada, Chair.



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Sonia Moran, Committee Member.



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Tellma Gimenez, Committee Member.



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Jaime Alonso Usma Wilches,  
Director - Escuela de Idiomas

## DEDICATION

To my beloved parents, who have always been there for me and have given me the courage to persevere despite difficult situations, and to my sister, who supported me from the distance and never doubted that I would accomplish this goal, even when I did. To Juan, who was extraordinarily patient with me throughout this process and recognized my passion and effort in this work.

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## ABSTRACT

# ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA AND PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS: CHALLENGING BELIEFS IN A COURSE ON ENGLISH PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

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M.A., ANDERSON STIVEN PULGARIN PEREZ,

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Directed by: Dr. Adriana González Moncada

Due to the globalized dimension the English language has gained over the years, researchers have emphasized the importance of questioning traditional English language learning (ELL) and English language teaching (ELT) ideas in teacher education. Such deep-rooted beliefs have historically responded to hegemonic pedagogies from Inner Circle countries that dictate how non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) should learn, use, and teach the language, devaluing NNESTs' contextual language usage, expertise, and teaching approaches. Willing to recognize NNESTs as valid English users and teachers, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) appears as a post-method pedagogy that challenges colonial language perceptions. An awareness of ELF on NNESTs fights native-speakerism-based learning and teaching outcomes, and builds up horizontal power connections among language speakers. The introduction of ELF awareness and its subsequent analysis must take place at the beginning of NNESTs' professional lives, that is to say, in language teacher education programs. This study aimed at analyzing and portraying how ELF

awareness introduction transformed pre-service teachers' perceptions of ELL and ELT in a language teacher education program in Colombia. To do this, an exploratory case study was carried out. Data were gathered from virtual in-class participant observations, class video recordings, student-teachers' final written reflections, and individual semi-structured interviews. These data were analyzed through an in-depth analysis process. Findings from this analysis revealed that ELF-aware-based reflections helped both shape and uphold student-teachers' beliefs related to the English language, its pluricentricity and ownership, students' learning goals, and language accent. Furthermore, participants challenged standard language teaching assumptions and questioned their preconceived teacher choices. Finally, this study includes some implications for Colombian ELT programs and teacher education research. The former expresses the need of including ELF awareness in local university teaching programs' curricula. The latter suggests the development of local studies in which pre-service teachers use ELF awareness to question preconceived ELL and ELT ideas.

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## **Introduction**

Because of the international perspective English has acquired over time (Matsuda, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2005), several scholars stress the need for changing the traditional English language teaching (henceforth, ELT), learning, and language teacher education beliefs that have remained in the fields (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Deniz, Öskan & Bayyurt, 2016; Seidlhofer, 2001). These traditions have historically responded to English language Inner Circle cultures (Kachru, 1992) and their hegemonic pedagogies that have remarked roles and attributes between English native and non-native speakers (henceforth, NNSs). Such established attitudes and practices have ruled the ways NNSs should learn and, therefore, non-native English-speaking teachers (henceforth, NNESTs) should teach (Holliday, 2018). Accordingly, the long-established ELT and language teacher education attitudes marginalize NNESTs' contextual language use, knowledge, and teaching methods (Barrantes-Montero, 2018; González, 2020, 2022; González & Llurda, 2016; Holliday, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Viáfara, 2016a, 2016b).

The NNESTs' demeaned reality in the global ELT and language teacher education is not alien to the Colombian background. Over the years, national policies have emerged with the purpose of strengthening the language proficiency of Colombian English language teachers, as if they were unskilled practitioners with poor language abilities and ineffective teaching methods (González, 2021, 2022). Governmental measurements have comprised, for example, the setting of national standards for ELT and English language learning (henceforth, ELL), the widespread and regular execution of English proficiency tests for English language teachers, and the promotion of teaching certificates recognized worldwide (González, 2020, 2021; González and Llurda, 2016). These regulations privilege language

learning and teaching practices coming from Inner Circle-centered pedagogies, increasing the belief that NNESTs are not valid English language owners (Holliday, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Viáfara, 2016a, 2016b).

Based on the necessity to recognize NNESTs as legitimate users of English (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Dewey & Patsko, 2017; Sifakis, 2019), an English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth, ELF) perspective reconfigures the English language teacher education models by moving the focus “from the learning-teaching of preconceived norms to the creation of spaces for negotiation” (Jordão & Marques, 2018, p. 53). In this sense, ELF awareness appears as a post-method pedagogy (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Kumaravadivelu, 2003) that challenges ELT beliefs related to native-speakerism (Holliday, 2018; Rose, McKinley & Galloway, 2020). Framed within decolonial approaches, which understand and expose “new forms of inequalities in education and society and new productions of subaltern subjectivities under globalisation” (Lin & Martin, 2015, p. 6), ELF awareness contests the notion that native speakers (henceforth, NSs) control how NNESTs should use and teach the language (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b). Besides that, ELF-aware teachers recognize English as their own, which allows them to question language norms, stress horizontal power relationships among language speakers, and construct new meanings in line with their learners' local and intercultural needs. (Deniz et al., 2016; Jordão & Marques, 2018; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Mansfield & Poppi, 2012; Rose et al., 2020).

Bearing in mind that ELF awareness attempts to shift deep-rooted NNESTs' beliefs in ELL, ELT and language ownership, it is of paramount importance that the introduction of ELF awareness and its subsequent analysis takes place at the beginning of NNESTs'

professional lives, that is to say in language teacher education programs (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Deniz et al., 2016; Dewey & Patsko, 2017; Sifakis, 2019). Teacher education programs are part of a crucial process where student-teachers build their knowledge base and discuss ELL convictions and future ELT practices (Dewey & Patsko, 2017; Johnson, 2009). It is the place where learners restructure or develop new beliefs by mediating between theory and practice through significant reflections (Cota & Ruiz-Esparza, 2012).

According to Dewey and Patsko (2017), pre-service NNESTs need to benefit from ELF awareness in their undergraduate courses. This could “provide the time necessary to reflect on the implications of ELF for their teaching practice” (Dewey & Patsko, 2017, p.10). Hence, undergraduate courses transform into optimal settings to think critically about student-teachers’ role as valid users and future educators of English and how beliefs about language education have admitted predominantly NSs standards (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018). The possibility of carrying out critical reflections about ELL and ELT resides, then, in language teacher education courses that advocate for ELF awareness.

ELF-aware language teacher education courses rely on both regional and international language use and teaching aspects. They draw from different local backgrounds and situated actions while preparing pre-service language teachers with an intercultural analysis of phonological, syntactic, semantical, and pragmatic communicative competence skills (Mansfield & Poppi, 2012; Sifakis, 2014b). Such aspects display the international multilingual nature of ELF (García, 2013; Jenkins, 2006). ELF awareness modifies the Inner Circle-centered pedagogies in language teacher education by providing student-teachers with an innovative view of the language subsystems in their ELL process

and, subsequently, teaching methods (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Cogo, 2012; Jordão & Marques, 2018).

During the last twenty years, the awareness and analysis of ELF-based practices in teacher education have called the attention of several researchers around the world. In the ELF construct (Jenkins, 2015; Sifakis, 2019), studies have moved from legitimizing ELF through the analysis of language varieties (Jenkins, 2000; Seildhofer, 2009) and understanding ELF users' accommodation and intelligibility strategies (Cogo, 2012; Jenkins, 2006, 2009) to inviting teacher education stakeholders to apply ELF awareness-based pedagogies in their programs (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a; Gimenez, Salles El Kadri & Cabrini Simões Calvo, 2018; Sifakis, Lopriore, Dewey, Bayyurt, Vettorel, Cavalheiro, Siqueira, & Kordia, 2018; Sifakis, 2019). However, there are few scholars in the international context who have examined pre-service teachers' beliefs on ELL and ELT after carrying out ELF-based initiatives (e.g., Deniz, Kemalglu-Er & Öskan, 2020; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemalglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Soruç, & Griffiths, 2021; Zacharias, 2016). Regarding the Colombian literature, there are nonexistent inquiries that have analyzed and raised appreciation of the pedagogical potentials that ELF awareness might provide to pre-service English teachers in language teacher education programs.

Only Macías (2010) and García (2013) have considered ELF-related theories as alternate worth-discussing perspectives that could object to traditional beliefs related to language use and legitimization. Macías (2010) explored ELF's implications, instead of English as a Foreign Language (henceforth, EFL), to the Colombian ELT. After scrutinizing elements such as methodologies, teaching materials, English teacher models, and culture, the researcher claimed that English language teachers should develop local

reflections and practices based on their contextual features and learners' interests and needs. This contextual knowledge could, according to Macías (2010), "reduce the role played by hegemonic dominant Inner Circle (Kachru, 1992) varieties in ELT in Colombia" (p.181). Concerning García's (2013) literature review, although not directly focusing on ELF awareness, the scholar encouraged discussions in the teacher education regional community about challenging traditional attitudes with an English international perspective. The scholar examined research regarding NNESTs' beliefs about teaching and learning different English language varieties. García (2013) concluded that the present established ideologies do not correspond to the socio-cultural realities of English used in the country.

Willing to fill the gap mentioned above, this study aims to analyze pre-service teachers' perceptions of ELL and ELT while being part of ELF-aware discussions in a language teacher education course in a Colombian public university. Consequently, the study will contribute to understanding how student-teachers may transform or reaffirm their ELL and ELT pre-established assumptions because of an ELF awareness introduction. The following research question summarizes the focus of the study: "How does introducing ELF awareness in a language teacher education course transform pre-service teachers' beliefs about English language teaching and learning?"

Following a critical in-depth analysis (Bohman, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Richards, 2003), the present study refers to a qualitative exploratory case study (Yin, 2014) based on critical theories about English language teaching and learning (Barrantes-Montero, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Lin & Martin, 2015; Pennycook, 2000) and teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Sifakis, 20019).

This research is relevant in the broad field since it heeds the shared call of changing ELL and ELT orientations for pre-service NNESTs through ELF awareness (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Dewey & Patsko, 2017; Mansfield & Poppi, 2010; Sifakis, 2009; Sifakis et al., 2018). As for the local context, this study attempts to raise pre-service NNESTs' awareness of ELF in our country, understand how student-teachers may reshape their ELL and ELT perceptions because of critical ELF-based reflections, and expand the implementation and analysis of ELF awareness in Colombian teacher education programs. Teachers, teacher educators, scholars, and policymakers could all benefit from the results of this study. They may get insights into transformed pre-service NNESTs perspectives on English language teaching and learning and how ELF awareness introduction may help question hegemonic discourses in the mentioned field.

In the following sections, I present the concepts this study draws: ELF, native-speakerism, ELF awareness, beliefs, and critical language teacher education under critical perspectives of ELL and ELT. Next, in the setting section, I offer a brief description of the context in which I conducted my study. Afterward, I explain the data collection and analysis process in the research methodology section. Then, I describe the findings from participant observation field notes, video recordings analysis, student-teachers' final reflections, and semi-structured interviews. Thereupon, I analyze the findings considering theories about ELF awareness and native-speakerism, along with international studies related to ELF awareness and teacher education in the ELL and ELT fields. Finally, I point out the conclusions and limitations of the research and potential implications and suggestions for further studies.

## Conceptual Framework

In this section, I will lay out the conceptual framework that helps truly understand my research question. This framework includes the explanation of four major components: a) ELF; b) native-speakerism in relation to NNESTs; c) awareness of English as a lingua franca, which in this case refers to NNESTs' beliefs; and d) teacher education.

First, I will use Sifakis' (2019) and Cogo's (2012) definition of ELF as a starting point based on "The Three Circles of English" (Kachru, 1992). Then, I will relate ELF to Holliday's (2005, 2018) philosophy of native-speakerism. This is because contextual knowledge and practices, on the part of those who use English within an ELF frame, are suppressed and undermined by native-speakerism-based ideologies. Third, I will take Bayyurt and Sifakis's (2015b) ELF awareness notion and establish its connection with NNESTs beliefs. The authors present how ELF awareness can critically help to address and deconstruct English language teaching and learning attitudes. Afterward, I will draw on Johnson (2009) who provides an overview of teacher education, along with Hawkins and Norton (2009) and Sifakis (2019) who refer to the same from critical and ELF-aware perspectives respectively.

To define ELF, scholars refer to Kachru's (1992) model of "The Three Circles of English." The scholar portrays how English is distributed into norm-providing (Inner Circle), norm-developing (Outer Circle), and norm-dependent (Expanding Circle) communities. The ELF notion traces its roots in this model because it is across the three circles where ELF takes place, serving as "the discourse produced in interactions involving speakers of different first languages" (Sifakis, 2019, p. 289), not only in face-to-face encounters but also in virtual-transnational spaces (Cogo, 2012).



People from the Expanding Circle involve the largest population of English speakers worldwide (Dewey & Patsko, 2017). They must communicate and negotiate more frequently and effectively regardless of their multiple varieties of English (Canagarajah, 2005). However, they still rely on the idea that NSs own the language (García, 2013; Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2005). Not being from an English-speaking country gives NNSs a norm-dependent assumption, which means that there is a control of norms and standardization from English NSs in learning, using and teaching the language (Deniz et al., 2016; Holliday, 2005, 2018). As a result, NSs become the model to follow and acquire power over English and those who employ it in the periphery (Barrantes-Montero, 2018; Deniz et al., 2016; González & Llorca, 2016). These conceptions of NSs' dependence and ownership of English have remained for decades not only in NNSs' beliefs (García, 2013; Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2005) but also in those of ELT practitioners, especially in NNESTs (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Seidlhofer, 2001; Tajeddin, Alemi, & Pashmforoosh, 2018). Holliday (2005) conceptualizes this philosophy as native-speakerism.

In his analysis of the balance of power in English language educational contexts and ownership, Holliday (2005) describes native-speakerism as a neo-racist ideology that positions NSs top-of-the-line English models to follow and attain no matter the lingua cultural complexities of the English language learner and user. This ideological construction carries discriminatory beliefs in English teacher education, where native-speaking teachers represent the Western culture “from which springs the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (Holliday, 2005, p. 6). Native-speakerism based ideologies in ELL and ELT marginalize and delegitimize the

contextual knowledge, practices, and use of NNESTs' language (González & Llurda, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2016).

The monolithic perception of native-speakerism leads NNESTs to follow pedagogical models that correspond to language ideologies (e.g., a standard variety of English) which depict utopian, unrealistic, and constraining ways of thinking and behaving when using and teaching the language (Deniz et al., 2016; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017). Therefore, NNESTs keep reproducing the traditional English teaching methods from the dominant Western cultures: American and British (Holliday, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Rivers, 2017). To illustrate, in her studies about the status of English language learning and teaching in Colombia, González (2020, 2022) refers to international corporations that spread linguistic-imperialism-based practices. Subsequently, they contribute to the use of power and colonial discourses that maintain the dominating position of English-speaking cultures. In order to counteract deep-rooted models such as these, it is necessary to raise awareness about ELF-related discussions that empower NNESTs as valid intercultural communicators and English language educators (Sifakis, 2009, 2014a).

According to Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015b), ELF awareness is a post-method perspective that immerses teachers into “a reflective journey in which they think critically about established teaching practice and their convictions concerning English as a medium of communication” (p.129). Through thoughtful discussions, ELF awareness makes “teachers conscious of their deep convictions about Standard English, the role of NSs”, and “the importance of mutual intelligibility in interactions involving nonnative speakers” (Bayyurt and Sifakis, 2015b). Additionally, ELF awareness provides NNESTs with the development of contemporary meaning-making practices, along with the understanding of

the potentialities of language in local contexts (Jordão & Marques, 2018; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Sifakis, 2019). By gaining ELF awareness, NNESTs see themselves as legitimate users and educators of the language (Sifakis, 2009, 2014a, 2019), and uphold the conceptions that the language does not belong to any specific English-speaking country (Hsuan-Yao, 2008) and that language changes, adapts, and becomes pluricentric according to the environment (Cogo, 2012; Sifakis, 2019).

ELF-aware thinking entails for NNESTs a fundamental change in beliefs they might have acquired from their experiences in English language and ELT training programs. In a broad sense, the term “belief” comprises a set of principles, theories, attitudes, judgments, conceptual systems, ideologies, and perceptions that describe individual mental constructions subjectively valid for the person in use (Pajares, 1992). These conceptions apply to various contexts, including educational ones (Durán-Narváez, Lastra-Ramírez & Morales-Vasco, 2017). In English language learning and teaching, the study of learners’ beliefs has called the attention of researchers who are eager to challenge the educational system (e.g., Sifakis, 2014a; Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018). Accordingly, investigating students’ conceptions gives an account of their ELL and ELT normative and contextual approaches, that is to say, their preconceived notions and beliefs coming from their nature and experience (Durán-Narváez et al., 2017) which can be strong but also flexible in a gradual transformation (Huttayavilaiphan, 2021; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Sifakis, 2019). In this sense, the introduction and analysis of ELF awareness in language teacher education are imperative to confront and reconstruct ELL and ELT perceptions and assumptions.

Overall, teacher education refers to how prospective teachers build the basis to guide their pedagogical practices (Johnson, 2009). According to Johnson (2009), teacher education programs “shape the complex ways in which teachers think about themselves, their students, the activities of teaching, and the teaching-learning process” (p. 20). The researcher refers to this set of abilities as a knowledge base, which with regard to ELT:

“Informs three broad areas: 1) the content of L2 teacher education programs, or what L2 teachers need to know; 2) the pedagogies that are taught in L2 teacher education programs, or how L2 teachers should teach; and 3) the institutional forms of delivery through which both the content and pedagogies are learned, or how L2 teachers learn to teach” (p.21).

It is crucial, then, that language teacher education programs encourage future NNESTs to have critical consciousness about the ELL and ELT perceptions during the acquisition of the knowledge base. Hawkins and Norton (2009) stated that critical language teacher education focuses on “how dominant ideologies in society drive the construction of understandings and meanings in ways that privilege certain groups of people, while marginalizing others” (p. 31). In relation to this, English language teacher education programs focusing on critical perspectives grant pre-service NNESTs’ reflections on the hegemonic issues of empowerment and disempowerment in the learning and teaching processes (Barrantes-Montero, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Lin & Martin, 2015; Pennycook, 2000).

An ELF-aware perspective in language teacher education allows for thought-provoking discussions (Sifakis, 2019). It draws pre-service NNESTs’ attention to the challenge of colonial beliefs, making known the current status of English and legitimizing student-teachers’ role as competent language users and future teachers (Bayyurt & Sifakis,

2015a; Kemalolu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Sikafis, 2014a, 2014b, 2019). Indeed, student-teachers benefit from ELF awareness introduction at the early stage of their training in order to experiment with ELF integration and question pre-occupied assumptions about the language itself and the language education (Dewey and Patsko, 2017; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemalolu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018).

Finally, in order to re-appreciate established perceptions and practices in teacher education through ELF awareness, Sifakis (2019) describes three phases to develop in teacher education programs. The first step consists of exposing teachers to concepts such as ELF, World Englishes (WE), and English as an International Language (EIL) as a way to encourage their reflection on the intricacies of English-medium communicative situations in contemporary worldwide realities. As for the second phase, it aims to increase educators' understanding of the difficulties those intricacies present for their particular instructional setting in both critical and practical ways. The last stage entails teachers' engagement to create courses of action in which they would integrate suitable and feasible pedagogical issues from ELF-based standpoints in their teaching contexts (Sifakis, 2019).

## Setting

I carried out the present study in a teacher education undergraduate program, which belongs to a public university in Medellín, Colombia. This program educates teachers to work in secondary and middle school education, according to the current regulations in Colombia. The program's curriculum lasts ten semesters and includes forty-four courses; it intends to provide training based on critical pedagogy and intercultural education ideas, both of which are intertwined throughout the training plan.

The course where I conducted my research is called "English Phonetics and Phonology." It is a pre-established theoretical-practical course of the fourth-semester in the language-training component of foreign language teacher education curriculum. The course's main goal proposes to provide student-teachers with phonetic and linguistic English language resources to become more aware of language phonological varieties and consider the consequences of these on communication between speakers of different cultures. Moreover, within its specific objectives, the course includes a critical approach to how dominant cultures discriminate against local knowledge and varieties that English language-speaking minorities make to the language. These course objectives align with the first phase described by Sifakis (2019) in ELF-aware teacher education, which involves exposing student-teachers to ELF and encouraging them to consider the difficulties of English-medium communication situations in today's global world. Furthermore, I chose pre-service English teachers from this particular course because of their early ELT training and the preconceptions they might have already acquired regarding norms and ownership of the language in their ELL process.

Although the course was thought to be developed under a presence-based modality, classes turned virtual. The biosecurity measures applied by the national government to all educational institutions, in their efforts to mitigate the spread of the world's pandemic Covid-19, prevented students and faculty from in-person education. Hence, student-teachers met with her professor via Google Meet and Zoom in 2-hour sessions twice a week for four months.

Referring to the professor in charge of the course, she is a full-time educator and researcher at the tertiary education level her main academic interests focus primarily on critical views regarding Teachers' Professional Development, teacher education, and ELF. During the course, the professor designed lessons and activities with an awareness of EFL-based orientation.

Among the ELF-aware oriented tasks planned during the course, it is paramount to highlight some of them that made students discuss and think critically of their beliefs about the English language ownership, language varieties and accents, and their role as learners and future teachers. The course focused the development of consonants, vowels, and suprasegmentals within the framework of the ELF Core Phonology (Jenkins, 2000). Additionally, the professor proposed four ELF-related activities: an international speaker's oral production report, a talk by Dr. Enric Llorca about English as a global language, individual final reflections derived from students' interviews with a multilingual speaker, the analysis of their oral diagnosis passage, and a reflective writing task about the English used by a Colombian multilingual scholar. I present a general description of these activities hereafter.

As for the international speaker's report, student-teachers were invited to analyze how personalities used English. Based on their personal interests, students chose celebrities from the entertainment business, politicians, artists, or social leaders. All the characters were not NSs but used English in their professional activities on a global scale. The overall purpose of this exercise was to raise awareness of how English usage differs between countries and domains.

Through the talk about English as a global language, pre-service teachers could share their thoughts about this matter with Dr. Enric Llorca, a multilingual and multicultural scholar and professor at the University of Lleida in Catalonia, Spain, and researcher on ELF with NNESTs and language teaching methodologies. Dr. Llorca's speech intended to fuel in-class discussions about the spread of English worldwide and discriminatory practices in ELT toward NNESTs under two primary premises: first, English has been traditionally taught as a foreign language in Expanding Circle countries like Colombia; and second, as English is a current lingua franca, there is a raised need to teach and learn the language from an ELF awareness perspective.

At the beginning of the course student-teachers recorded their voices reading aloud an English text. This baseline would allow them to analyze different oral productions using the ELF core Phonology (Jenkins, 2000). For the last two ELF-related activities, students were invited to write an individual final reflection based on the analysis of their diagnosis passage recordings, focusing on how intelligible they believed they were, and on any possible phonological features they would like to change. The final activity included their analysis of the interviews that they carried out with Colombian scholars who were multilingual speakers and used English internationally. The written reflections aimed at



getting to know the process of ELL for someone who could become a learning model, i.e., a competent bilingual NNS. I will refer to these tasks further on to explain how the introduction of ELF-aware-based activities may transform student-teachers' beliefs related to English language teaching and learning (Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Sikafis, 2014a, 2014b, 2019).

Moving on to the participants, nine student-teachers whose ages ranged from 20 to 30 years, six women and three men, decided to engage in the study. Most student-teachers had started their ELL process in language academy courses. Some others had studied English since high school and continued in the university undergraduate degree. Only a few had some learning experiences through contact with NSs or life experiences in English-speaking countries. Despite the willingness of the nine student-teachers to be part of the study at the beginning of the course, the research focused only on a convenience sample (Yin, 2014): four pre-service teachers from Medellín, three women, and one man. As the course developed virtually, it could have affected students' motivation to engage in-class activities and study. However, these four student-teachers participated actively in all tasks and discussions. Besides, their opinions gathered from class observations, written reflections, and semi-structured interviews were diverse and controversial, which generated critical reflections that were worth exploring.

The pseudonyms given to the four participants were the following: Andrea, Paola, Adriana, and Manuel. Below is a brief description of their English studies and contact with the language before entering the program and their job situations at the time of the research.

Starting with Andrea, she began her English studies when she was a child at a private language center in Medellín. Likewise, she had the opportunity to travel to the

United States as a tourist for several weeks. Before entering the undergraduate program, Andrea pursued her language studies in two more private language centers. By the time of the study, she had worked in fields where English was a requirement – call centers and volunteer programs.

As for Paola, her interest in the English language developed thanks to music. That is why she started learning the language through music online platforms and apps on the Internet. She had never been abroad in an English-speaking country; however, she constantly talked to foreigners because of her job. During the course time, Paola worked as a hotel receptionist, receiving and handling the demands of English and French-speaking customers.

In the case of Adriana, she had contact with English early in her childhood at private primary and secondary schools in the city. Additionally, Adriana lived in the United States for two years. In that time, she attended some summer schools with the purpose of learning the target language. Afterwards, Adriana returned to Medellín and took an English course at a private university until she enrolled in the undergraduate program. When the course developed, Adriana worked on a language learning online platform teaching Spanish to foreigners, using English with her students if necessary.

Finally, yet importantly, is Manuel's background. Before entering the university program, he had started learning English at a private language center because of his passion for the language. Manuel used to have a full-time job at a contact center that provided services to an American telecommunication company during the course time. He maintained telephone conversations with people from all over the United States.

The information described above came from a demographic questionnaire employed by the professor before classes began. Because of the virtual modality turn the course had, she wanted to get some students' knowledge to make any changes in the type of activities to develop if necessary. This information is relevant for further analysis in the findings and discussion sections since both previous and new experiences define individuals' points of reference to reflect critically on their assumptions and ideas (Huttayavilaiphan, 2021). Such reflections result in new ways of shaping student-teachers' beliefs and realities.

## **Research Methodology**

This qualitative exploratory case study aimed at analyzing and portraying how ELF awareness introduction transformed pre-service teachers' perceptions of ELL and ELT in a language teacher education program in Colombia. According to Merriam (2009), "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 13). By adding a critical perspective, Richards (2003) and Merriam (2009) claim that researchers seek to develop detailed understandings of a phenomenon and critique the existence of such a phenomenon to challenge, transform, and empower subordinate communities. In addition to this, Yin (2014) describes exploratory case studies like the ones with no pre-established outcome; on the contrary, the researcher attempts to get a far-reaching and in-depth examination of a phenomenon that falls short of study in the literature. An exploratory case study tackles "how" and "what" research questions to build theories and hypotheses of unexplored concerns. (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, I drew on critical perspectives to analyze the findings. Bohman (2005) stated that adequate critical theories intend to highlight, explain, and take action on issues of oppression in the current social reality, and suggest clear guidelines for criticism and change. This research contributed to understanding how Colombian student-teachers could transform their attitudes regarding ELL pre-established beliefs and ELT dominant practices after an overview of ELF awareness in one of their language teacher education courses.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection procedures that I implemented in this study were the following: virtual in-class participant observations, class video recordings, student-teachers' final

written reflections, and individual semi-structured interviews. In the case of participant observations, Richards (2003) refers to them as detailed descriptions and analyses of a phenomenological complexity where the researcher gets involved in the setting, identifying connections among people, systems, and behaviors associated with the context. Participant observations helped this study because they allowed me to narrate and interpret in-class reactions, behaviors, and opinions that arose from student-teachers once ELF-related discussions occurred. During the observation process, I recorded 25 class sessions with the participants' permission and took field notes per each session for further analysis. Lastly, my role was that of an observer as a participant, meaning that I primarily observed, but I could also interact with the participants (Glesne, 2011).

As referred to as video recordings, their use in qualitative research “enables spontaneous and transitory information to be captured” (Penn-Edwards, 2004, p. 267). Video recordings go beyond audio recordings due to their provision of more contextualized information that supports what the study participants are doing or saying (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). Additionally, researchers would benefit from video recordings because the latter allows them to review the recorded material and, therefore, revisit the field several times, and avoid emotional interpretations when analyzing the material (Garcez, Duarte, & Eisenberg, 2011; Penn-Edwards, 2004). I revised the class video recordings and extracted participants’ comments, reactions, and reflections to help answer my research question.

I also collected data through participants’ final written reflections. Reflective tasks give an account of the influenced and, in most cases, modified beliefs about pre-service teachers’ learning and teaching conceptions (Cota & Ruiz-Esparza, 2012). Reflections

facilitate critical thinking within an ELF awareness perspective by bringing attention to beliefs that clarify the current English status and may position pre-service NNESTs as competent language users and future teachers (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a; Kemalglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Sikafis, 2014a, 2014b). I considered the four final written participants' reflections to get a broader sense of what they got to think at the end of the course regarding English language use, ownership, learning, and teaching. Besides, it is paramount to mention that the study participants presented their reflections in English. Therefore, I did not introduce any changes in the texts they jotted down.

In addition to this, I carried out interviews with each of the participants. Concerning interviews, they serve to “explore particular lines of inquiry to find out how different people view the same things” (Richards, 2003, p. 61). In this study, interview questions were semi-structured since it was possible to add or replace pre-established questions depending on the participants' responses throughout the process (Glesne, 2011; Richards, 2003). Several months after the end of the course, I implemented individual semi-structured interviews with the participants to get to know any transformed or non-transformed perceptions regarding ELL and ELT after being exposed to ELF-aware oriented tasks. Since the interviews were held in Spanish, I translated the excerpt used in this study from Spanish to English.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In terms of ethical considerations, I created a consent form to be signed by the four pre-service teachers who took part in the study. It allowed me to use the information and tasks they provided along the course. I also explained in the consent form the study's

objectives and those of the in-class observations, video recordings, and interviews. I informed them about the possibility of withdrawing from the study, the data management procedure, and the protection of their identity. Additionally, I gave to the participants my contact information and that of my advisor in case they had any questions. To protect student-teachers' identity, I adopted the pseudonyms mentioned above to describe them and present the findings. Furthermore, I informed the university program committee about the research aims and the data collection process.

### **Data Analysis**

For this research, I carried out an exploratory case study in which the researcher, according to Yin (2014), tries to obtain an in-depth look at a phenomenon that has not been studied in the literature. This study enabled me to portray possible changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs about ELL and ELT in a first attempt to be exposed and get awareness of ELF.

In order to analyze the information gathered from the data collection instruments, I considered Richard's (2003) suggestions for analysis, which ensured an ongoing process of deconstructing the data set and trying alternative ways of arranging it. His recommendations included the following process: collecting the data; thinking of possible ways of categorizing the data taking into account the research aims; doing the data categorization through codes and themes; making reflections by adding notes and comments; organizing categories in various ways to observe the data from many angles, looking for patterns and relationships; and connecting the discoveries to concepts and theories to have a better grasp of them.

What I did first was to review the class video recordings and transcribe the participants' excerpts that had any relationship with my research. Then, I read the extracts multiple times and underlined the ideas that stood out. Secondly, I transcribed the interviews and went through the same process. Thirdly, I began coding the data from the video recordings and interviews as I discovered similarities. I took into account Saldaña's (2016) work about coding in qualitative research. I constructed charts with several columns wherein I copied the transcriptions and excerpts, added comments to expand or clarify participants' ideas, and wrote preliminary codes. Later on, I followed a bottom-up approach by creating a large number of simple codes, grouping them, looking for trends, and deducting a higher degree of meanings from subsequent readings. Finally, I went over the chart and added two more columns to jot down the emergent themes and possible categories according to data similarities and connections.

As for the observation field notes and final reflections, first, I created specific charts to compile the descriptions and reflections derived from students' work and my observations. I then read each of the extracts and started coding and categorizing from a bottom-up perspective. Afterward, I made connections and compared ideas with what I found previously in the video recordings, interviews, and the information participants gave before starting the course regarding their English studies, previous contact with the language, and job situations. In the end, I identified and conceptualized themes and defined the categories on which I based the findings section development.

I used methodological and data source triangulation to reduce the risk of biased representation, validate the collected data, and ensure trustworthiness (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, Dicenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Richards, 2003). In methodological



triangulation, I used video recordings, observation field notes, interviews, and participants' written reflections to look for any links between the data regarding the aim of my research. As referred to in data source triangulation, I collected information from participants' viewpoints and mine. Also, my advisor and I discussed the analysis cycles to exchange and compare our perceptions.

From the data analyzed, I obtained information about how ELF awareness transformed and reaffirmed certain student-teachers' pre-established beliefs regarding English language learning and teaching. These topics are highly related to participants' previous language experiences and exposure to ELF awareness when completing the "English Phonetics and Phonology" course. The data analysis resulted in three central categories: awareness of ELF in ELL, changes in ELL beliefs, and changes in ELT beliefs.

## **Findings**

As was aforementioned, research aimed at exploring how four pre-service teachers transformed their ELL and ELT perceptions after taking the course “English Phonetics and Phonology” designed under an ELF awareness orientation. Such a course was held in an undergraduate foreign language teacher education program in a public university in Colombia. It was part of a larger study of ELF in teacher education, in which I participated as a co-researcher. The research question on which the study was based was the following: “How does introducing ELF awareness in a language teacher education course transform pre-service teachers’ beliefs about English language teaching and learning?”

The data collection instruments I used in this research included class video recordings, observation field notes, interviews, and student-teachers’ final written reflections. From the data collected, I carried out an analysis process that consisted of making transcriptions, extracting information, employing a bottom-up coding approach, revising the codes that emerged from the information, connecting and comparing such codes, discussing with my advisor the relationships I discovered among the codes, and establishing themes and categories. As a result, I came up with a classification of findings that gives an account of shaping, changing, and ratifying certain ELL and ELT pre-established student-teachers’ beliefs. My findings focused on three major categories: awareness of ELF in ELL, changes in ELL beliefs, and changes in ELT beliefs.

To organize the findings within the three main categories presented, I outline the organization of this findings section. In the first part, I display evidence of ELF awareness in ELL. There, I portray participants’ shaped opinions of English from a globalized perspective. Besides, I report how student-teachers recognized and endorsed the

pluricentricity of the target language. Then, in the second part, I present changes related to pre-service teachers' ELL beliefs. Throughout this subsection, I detail how native-speakerism appeared from several student-teachers' perspectives, reaffirming certain preconceived ELT perceptions. In addition, I inform the emergence of tensions referring to accents since it was evident how participants differed on this topic. Finally, in the third part, I address pre-service teachers' transformation of teaching beliefs. I describe how some participants challenged traditional teaching assumptions by revising their English language teacher preferences. Additionally, I describe the student-teachers' need to have English language teachers who acknowledge the language's pluricentricity.

### **Awareness of ELF in ELL**

The present category groups shaped pre-service teachers' perceptions of English as a globalized language after being introduced to ELF-related issues through course content delivery and learning activities. It also addresses the awareness and validation student-teachers gave to English language pluricentricity.

#### **Perceptions about English as a globalized language.**

The introduction of ELF awareness in the course content allowed three out of the four study participants to think critically about how they see English, recognizing it as a lingua franca. The English Phonetics and Phonology class sessions encompassed ELF awareness-oriented activities in which pre-service teachers could debate how speakers of English from different parts of the world, including themselves, use the language. When asked about their language perceptions, Paola, as an example, referred to English as a

means of communication between people whose native languages differ. She provided a picture of what the English language represented to her during the interview:

“English is like that medium in which we can all meet and, even if people are, I do not know, from a country where Spanish is never going to be a known language, they know English, and I know English. I can communicate in some way or another.” (Excerpt from interview, Paola, 06/19/2021) (Own translation)

The perception mentioned above regarding the English language from an ELF perspective was also visible in my observation field notes of class # 19. Throughout that class session, student-teachers discussed the global spread of English and discriminatory practices in the ELT profession. Dr. Enric Llurda, a professor at the University of Lleida in Catalonia, Spain, and specialist on NNESTs, language teaching approaches, and ELF, was the invited speaker on that date. In the observation entry, I specified Andrea’s behavior and subsequent reaction after the scholar’s intervention:

“After Dr. Llurda’s presentation, students thanked the scholar for sharing the current picture of English with them. Then, Andrea took the floor to affirm that it was her first time hearing about ELF, and she was eager to know more about it. She did not know she could perceive and use English in this sense of globalization. During Dr. Llurda’s talk, I could notice that Andrea was one of the learners who participated the most and found the topic, in her words, “enlightening”.” (Observation entry, class 19, 12/01/2020)

For Andrea, thinking of English from an international standpoint was something entirely new. Therefore, the experiences she lived before the course referring to her ELL process had included systematic reflections on neither the current English reality nor the realities of its speakers around the world. That is why she got interested in getting to know more about ELF.

Similarly, Adriana shaped and reaffirmed her notion of English as a language spoken worldwide for communication purposes and as a means that has become essential

for establishing contact among cultures. She alluded to this idea in a comment during the interview. When I asked her about her perceptions regarding the English language, she mentioned the idea as follows:

“It is not just learning a new language as a group of symbols to communicate. It is also having contact with another culture and many other cultures. English is spoken not only in the United States or England but also in many parts of the world. That makes it much more open, much more global.” (Excerpt from interview, Adriana, 05/06/2021) (Own translation)

Adriana broadened the way she perceived the English language. She did not consider the ELL process merely gathering a collection of symbols used for communication anymore. She went beyond that conception by placing the language in a global scenario and describing the possible interactions and knowledge she could acquire through it.

Furthermore, Adriana challenged the traditional and hegemonic idea that English belongs only to England or the United States; she recognized other uses of the language from the part of those who do not acquire it as their native language.

As part of the participants’ ELF-aware transformed notion of a collective English ownership, I discovered in my observation field notes of class # 20 that Andrea also highlighted the global property of English in a reflection moment the professor provided at the beginning of the session.

“When sharing learnings from the last session, Andrea said firmly that English does not belong to the US or the UK. On the contrary, it belongs to whoever in the world uses it as a bridge to communicate and learn about new cultures.” (Observation entry, class 20, 12/13/2020)

As Adriana, Andrea showed appreciation and recognition of English NNSs as legitimate language owners who take advantage of it as a medium of communication for and among cultures. Hence, being exposed to English from a globalized perception

contributed to shaping Andrea's beliefs that consider the effort of any English speaker to become an effective intercultural communicator.

### **Awareness and validation of English language pluricentricity.**

Closely related to the feelings about a collective English language use, Paola, Andrea, and Adriana agreed on a solid relationship between language and cultures. The pre-service teachers featured this relationship as remarkable in multilingual speakers' ELL process and, therefore, language use. Among the beliefs the three student-teachers raised about the language-culture relationship, they referred mainly to how strong their cultural and language backgrounds were, so much so that the latter shaped the formers' English language intonation and accent. Nevertheless, according to the participants, the linguistic and cultural patterns present in a multilingual English speaker's speech should not create insecurities in skillfulness, knowledge validity, or intonation because of possible biased opinions of other English speakers. On the contrary, student-teachers highlighted the value of feeling confident and comfortable while representing their culture through the use of English, which frames the language in a pluricentric perspective. Paola pointed out this perception in her final written reflection as follows:

“I noticed that, as multilingual people, we normally have many insecurities about our accents, proficiency, and validation of knowledge received from others. [...] What is important is what you say and how it makes you feel. If you feel you are being yourself and representing your culture, you are proud of your first culture as Colombian and proud of the second culture of being bilingual or multilingual. (Excerpt from final written reflection, Paola, 02/11/2021)

Paola's idea presented here accounts for the impressions that some course pre-service teachers, including those who did not participate in the study, developed on the

existence of local and cultural patterns in their ELL process and language use. Besides, it is evident that Paola identified herself as a multilingual speaker and invited her classmates to value the richness present in their talk while using English thanks to the influence of their first and other languages and cultures.

As stated in the setting section, the students belonging to the English Phonetics and Phonology course had the opportunity to analyze their speech and those of international personalities who were multilingual speakers and used English successfully in their daily routines. Specifically, in some of the developed activities, the course participants discussed how easy or difficult it was for them to understand themselves and the speakers, to what extent first language patterns of the multilingual speakers were noticeable while using English, and how pleasant it was for them to listen to English NNSs. Some of the analyzed international multilingual speakers were Colombian, and even from Antioquia or Medellín; therefore, they shared a linguistic background similar to the class students. Likewise, the course pre-service teachers interviewed Colombian scholars who were successful multilingual speakers as part of another ELF-aware class task. They explored when, where, and how those professors learned and used English. In addition, pre-service teachers asked scholars about their significant challenges in ELL and their experiences with different international English speakers.

When Adriana, Paola and Andrea reflected on English as a pluricentric language, they became aware of cultural influences when learning and using the language. Subsequently, they accepted themselves and people from different backgrounds as valid English language speakers. In support of this claim, Adriana commented on NNSs' noticeable first language accents and their influence on the language after some international English speakers' reports:

“If they (English NNSs) have a really strong accent, it does not mean that they do not speak English. It is just part of their identity, and I think that is okay.” (Excerpt from video recording, Adriana, Class 7, 10/20/2020)

Concerning the same issue, Paola referred to the validation and influence of her *paisa* culture when using the English language in her final written reflection after analyzing the speech of a multilingual speaker from her same linguistic and cultural background.

“It is in ourselves not hiding our multilingualism because that is our identity, and we are who give ourselves the credentials of considering our communicative skills [...] and decide what level of (English language) expertise we want to get.” (Excerpt from final written reflection, Paola, 02/11/2021)

This piece of data showed, once again, Paola’s pride of being a multilingual speaker. She understood English NNSs’ multilingualism as an advantage to increasing their confidence when using the language, instead of a drawback. Since ELF users are multilingual, they shape how they learn and use the language, which is part of their identity. Paola stressed the need for English speakers to be aware and proud of the features in their speech coming out of their sociocultural backgrounds. Additionally, she stated that considering English NNSs as valid language users must begin by increasing their confidence to realize that their communicative abilities are valid enough for constructing and negotiating meanings. ELF-related activities and consecutive reflections made Paola shape the aforementioned belief, legitimizing the multicultural realities of English speakers nowadays.

That said, it is interesting to mention that, at the time of the data collection, among the four participants, Adriana and Paola were the ones who constantly held conversations with speakers of English from different countries. In the case of Adriana, she used English as a resource with her Spanish class students. As for Paola, she assisted hotel guests



worldwide as part of her job duties. Thus, they might become accustomed to hearing a wide range of English accents and varieties, each with international speakers' native languages and cultural features.

The recognition of distinct English language varieties and users awakened some participants' interest in getting to know and understand such diversity in the language. To provide evidence of this, I present below two excerpts from my observation field notes and Andrea's interview that give an account of transformed beliefs concerning the new appreciation of different English varieties.

During the first part of the course, student-teachers carried out some exercises as autonomous work intended to practice the transcription of words from a wide range of English accents belonging to language native and non-native speaking countries. The course professor took recordings from the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English VOICE and the International Dialects of English Archives IDEA. When sharing their feelings concerning the activity's development and results in some classes later, Andrea seemed to get frustrated. Before carrying out the task, she thought she had outstanding knowledge about the American accent. However, some words in the exercises whose accent referred to other places of the United States and the world were not part of the accent she was used to hearing. This issue made Andrea feel insecure about her English oral comprehensive abilities. I jotted down Andrea's concern in the observation entry as follows:

“When the professor asked her students to share their experiences concerning the independent transcription work, Andrea took the floor immediately and said she felt disappointed due to her inconsistent results. She mentioned having problems while doing the exercises because she did not know if the words were presented in, according to her, a “neutral American accent” or another variety. So, she could not make sure if her

answers were correct, what despaired her and made her experience failure.”  
(Observation entry, class 5, 10/06/2020)

At the beginning of the course, Andrea believed that it existed a “standard” American accent that applied to all English speakers from the United States. Yet, being introduced to other varieties of the target language made her doubt this hegemonic idea. As the course developed, she started considering the acknowledgment of other English varieties as valid as the American English. Also, Andrea reconfigured her ELL objectives to understand different types of accents apart from the one she used to localize as a “standard” American accent. Attesting to this, Andrea showed signs of her thinking shift during her interview, which took place three months after completing course:

“First, I want to understand everything being said to you in English. Not exclusively in a specific American accent, but in any English accent, whether you are a native or NNS.” (Excerpt from interview, Andrea, 04/29/2021) (Own translation)

In one part of the interview, I asked Andrea about her ELL goals she would like to achieve at the end of her undergraduate program. Without hesitation, Andrea expressed a wish and commitment to be capable of fully comprehending a wide range of English varieties. Then, it became paramount for her to encounter and communicate with people who speak more English varieties, different from the accents she has traditionally been exposed to as a NNS, that is to say American and British English.

In the following sub-section, I provide a description of student-teachers' beliefs about ELL and native-speakerism, which were reaffirmed throughout the course. In spite of shaping a globalized and pluricentric notion of the language, some study participants confirmed deep-rooted perceptions of native-speakerism during their ELL experiences and use.

## **Changes in ELL Beliefs**

The data analyzed exposed two categories related to ELL that made student-teachers reflect on, reassert, and reconstruct their preconceived beliefs. They have to do with language native-speakerism and divergent opinions around English language accents.

### **Native-speakerism related to learning.**

As described previously, Andrea, Paola, and Adriana transformed some of their opinions and appropriated contemporary views of English concerning globalization, ownership, and pluricentricity. Nevertheless, Manuel, Andrea, and Paola reaffirmed particular learning beliefs based on still existing deep-rooted assumptions in English education and their day-to-day experiences while using the language. The following findings present how the two student-teachers in mention maintained traditional ELT preconceptions regarding learning and use, even after being part of a teacher education course that included ELF-oriented reflections. Participants' established beliefs focused on three fundamental axes: NSs' English language ownership and superiority, native-speakerism-based learning goals, and NSs-like accent preferences.

### ***Native-speaker English language ownership and superiority.***

It was possible to find out that Paola and Manuel remained defending the idea that the English language belongs to speakers from the Inner Circle countries. Therefore, according to these participants, it is reasonable that NSs rightfully decide on accepting or rejecting NNSs' language uses and varieties. I referred to this assertion in my observation entry from class # 18. As a warm-up activity, the professor started the class by inviting students to talk about their job experiences. Therefore, the student-teachers shared

information about their day-to-day work practices, especially those that had to do with their English use. Manuel took part in the discussion by outlining the challenges he faces on an average workday. Although he mentioned why he loved his job, Manuel reported that he noticed recurring phone calls in which various American English NSs customers wondered about his location or nationality. In addition, some clients asked Manuel to transfer the call to an American agent because they believed he did not speak English properly, that is to say, with an accent from the United States. From the panorama that Manuel provided us in that class, I came up with the following description note:

“At first, Manuel affirmed that he loves his job because he can improve his pronunciation and listening by talking to English NSs. However, he finds it challenging to put up with them. He sometimes receives offensive comments from some customers because his accent is not American. In the end, he says that it is typically expected that English NSs do not like Colombian-like English accents, so it becomes comprehensible to receive such offensive comments.” (Observation entry, class 18, 11/26/2020)

Manuel’s daily job experiences explicitly showed the rejection some English NSs exerted over him based on their subjective appreciations. Additionally, it became common for Manuel to deal with English NSs customers who did not accept his English with a Colombian accent. According to him, it was not strange to find judgmental comments on the part of English NSs in the phone calls. The data analyzed presented more occasions in which Manuel went over the same thought, stating that it was typical for him to perceive his English and that of other NNSs as less effective language. During Manuel’s interview, he reaffirmed the native-speakerism-based belief when giving a general perception of the teacher education course. Because of his frequent contact with American NSs of English and the unkind messages he constantly received from them for being Colombian, Manuel

probably tended to judge his English proficiency based on NSs standards. The following interview excerpt bears witness to this:

“We had the chance to improve our pronunciation and understanding of English. [...] Sometimes, we think that they [English NS] are telling us something, but they were really telling us something else, completely different. Sometimes, we get confused, but it is obvious that we are not NSs.” (Excerpt from interview, Manuel, 05/24/2021) (Own translation)

Manuel was not the only student-teacher who faced discriminatory treatment by English NSs. It was also noticeable in the data analyzed that Andrea and Paola experienced rejection and felt inferior due to the hegemonic and discriminatory practices of English NSs towards them. In the case of Andrea, an observation entry of class # 18 gives an account of her bad experiences when she worked at a call center and how she troubleshot issues regarding NS’s ideal of superiority.

“During the class conversation, Andrea mentioned that, as Manuel, she used to work at an English-speaking call center. There, she also encountered situations in which NSs rejected their help, making her feel very frustrated. However, when she started imitating a native-like accent, customers turned out to be kinder and treated her better.” (Observation entry, class 18, 11/26/2020)

As Andrea clearly explained, call center customers became friendlier toward her once she began to use an English NS-like intonation. Otherwise, she would have continued receiving the same rejection and mistreatment. One last example referring to this issue was Paola’s job experiences shared in another class session. When discussing English language intonation patterns, Paola gave her opinion about everyday work situations in which NSs question her knowledge and use of English. I transcribed and presented her comment as follows:

“NSs feel you are not going to understand them completely. And they do not really feel like many people here speak English because we do not speak the

English they want to hear. They want to hear the English they are accustomed to. It's their language.” (Excerpt from video recording, Paola, Class 24, 01/21/2021)

It is significant to mention that in the course, the professor addressed intonation patterns as being one of the most noticeable language traits that may either hinder or facilitate communication among English speakers. Such a crucial issue transcends how certain phonemes are pronounced. Concerning Paola's job, she used to work as a receptionist at a local hotel highly frequented by international visitors who were English native and NNSs. As well as Manuel, Paola most likely doubted her language listening and speaking skills due to her regular contact with NSs and the unpleasant reactions she could have received on the part of some customers because of her English accent. Additionally, from previous work experiences, Paola shared the belief that NSs tended to simplify their oral production when they found out that they were talking to NNSs of the language as if they were not valid users. Here is an in-vivo quote from class #18 that reaffirmed the perception of NS English language superiority in pre-service teachers:

“They [NSs] know [English] is not your native language. They try to teach you. However, anyway, when you speak so paísa, they feel like “Ok, I have to speak slower so they understand me.” (Excerpt from video recording, Paola, Class 18, 11/26/2020)

Given all the above, it is viable to say that, based on student-teachers' gathered experiences about language learning and work use, and even after being introduced to ELF awareness, there was still a presence in some of their beliefs about the longstanding notion that English NSs dominate the language and are superior to NNSs in terms of use and knowledge.

### *Native-speakerism-based learning goals.*

As described previously, the ELT's deep-rooted belief that English NSs are the only owners and norm-providers of the language made Paola and Manuel place English NNSs in an inferior position. Consequently, these two pre-service teachers concentrated their learning goals on what traditional ELT perspectives have aimed to: make students sound as similar to NSs as possible. The following data demonstrate how Paola and Manuel strongly reaffirmed their English learning goals of developing NSs-like pronunciation patterns during and after the English Phonetics and Phonology course. Their ELL goals aimed at seeking NSs' approval, hiding Spanish and regional pronunciation features, improving oral communication skills, and developing preferences for English native-like accents.

When analyzing video recordings of various class sessions and relating them with my observation field notes, it was possible to identify that Paola was always determined to attain what she considered the "perfect" English pronunciation throughout the course. According to her, the way to sound accurate in English was when getting to talk using NSs-like accents only. The reason why she maintained such an idea had to do, once again, with her daily work experiences. In order to make English native-speaking customers feel comfortable at her workplace, the student-teacher turned her efforts to learning and developing an accent similar to theirs. In one of the course sessions, Paola told her classmates and professor that she tried to speak as an American when talking to foreigners in some cases. Consequently, as happened to Andrea, customers were more sociable and friendlier with her. Below is one of the excerpts that prove this finding:

"When I try to speak more American-like, they make jokes at me and say "hi" in many different ways. However, when you speak so *paisa*, they are just like, "Ok. Standard English." That is all. [...] So, perfect your English. Try to do it because it will make NSs feel comfortable. When you try to

... speak the best English you can, they feel comfortable and understood. They feel so different. [...] It is not only that we try to speak it because of a job, but also for making NSs feel better.” (Excerpt from video recording, Paola, Class 18, 11/26/2020)

As shown clearly, Paola gave paramount relevance to customers’ attitudes regarding her language accent. Thus, she strove hard to get an English-native-like intonation and pronunciation. The student-teacher’s impression of how English NSs behave toward her and the strong desire to receive their approval was also evident in a class discussion after Dr. Llorca’s presentation about discriminatory actions in the ELT field that affected NNESTs. When jotting down my analysis about what pre-service teachers expressed in the class session, I came up with the following observation entry that alluded to Paola’s perception:

“The reason why Paola supports the idea of imitating English NSs is that she works with them, and she has felt their validation and acceptance when she tries to speak similar to them. That makes her feel comfortable, approved, and pleased.” (Observation entry, class 19, 12/201/2020)

Paola portrayed that deleting the linguistic and cultural features in her oral English production generated a change in NSs’ attitudes respecting her oral language skills. Moreover, rather than developing effective verbal skills regardless of her Colombian accented English, Paola’s primary language learning goal became to sound like an English native speaker of American English. By achieving this objective, she would get NSs’ recognition and maintain their comfortability.

Paola’s stand towards her regional *paisa* accent became not only evident but also ambiguous throughout the data. When participating in class reflections on multilingualism and English pluricentricity, the student-teacher sometimes conceived her accent as another feature of her oral skills of which she did not need to be ashamed, as described previously.



Nevertheless, when discussing English language personal learning outcomes, Paola showed her intentions to minimize any traces of her regional Spanish accent. To exemplify this issue, I quote her in the interview when she described her major concerns after taking the ELF-oriented Phonetics and Phonology course:

“[...] the characteristic intonations of the *paisa* accent stick to me. [...] For example, I start a presentation very well, with well-pronounced sounds, but I end up almost speaking very similar to Spanish with some words in English. My intonation turns *paisa*. So, I think that it is very characteristic that the accent of where a person is from influences the way he or she speaks. I would like to change that.” (Excerpt from interview, Paola, 06/19/2021)  
(Own translation)

Paola shared her thoughts and resulting feelings concerning the oral use of the target language, such as giving a speech. She did not achieve what she expected in terms of intonation. In fact, the pre-service teacher thought that having a solid *paisa* accent negatively affected her English language oral performance. Therefore, she managed her learning outcomes to achieve a turnaround in her English accent.

As evident, Paola gave importance to what NSs thought about her and her language intonation. That is why she based her English learning goals on acquiring a native-like accent. In a similar position, Manuel wanted to figure out how to imitate an American English accent not only to receive approval from NSs of the language but also to increase, from his point of view, receptive and productive oral skills. Throughout the data, it was evident that he held a solid desire to study how American English speakers use the language.

Influenced by his workplace experiences and parallel to Paola’s ELL outcome, Manuel planned to become a language user with a NS-like accent. When I asked Manuel

about his English language aspirations in the completion of his academic studies during the interview, he came up with the following learning objective:

“My vision is, when I graduate, to obviously learn all those grammatical rules; however, and this is what I do, every day I try to study a lot, both in the morning and at night, the way NSs speak.” (Excerpt from interview, Manuel, 05/01/2021) (Own translation)

Manuel also supported his NSs-based learning intentions in his final written reflections. The primary purpose of these written concluding remarks was to raise pre-service teachers’ awareness of the need to use fundamental English elements that aid comprehension among English speakers. Manuel viewed the course as an opportunity to know and perform pronunciation study practices that would help him achieve his speaking language goal in the future, which is to sound more American-like. The student-teacher firmly referred to his learning practices as follows:

“I am pretty sure that I have to be conscious of the intonation I use when talking in English. In the beginning, it is better to speak slowly. In that way, I can be aware of my pronunciation and intonation. Likewise, I know that it is a good idea to try to imitate how NSs of English communicate. With this method, I can improve my oral skills further. These techniques are going to enhance my pronunciation and intonation.” (Excerpt from final written reflection, Manuel, February 11, 2021)

Manuel recognized pronunciation and intonation as essential features to get understood when using English; he gave considerable importance to being capable of recreating intonation patterns identical to those of NSs. In addition, the student-teacher thought he could succeed in his oral abilities if he gets to master an accent similar to that of American English speakers through focused attention and constant repetition. That is why he wanted to concentrate his future learning efforts on studying independently how these people communicate orally.

As apparent from the analyzed data, it was possible to repeatedly encounter different student-teachers' opinions about English accents. On the one hand, some participants showed appreciation and desire to know and understand various language varieties from the Inner, Outer and Expanding circles of English, as described above in the case of Andrea and Adriana. On the other hand, some pre-service teachers displayed fascination and obsession with hearing accents from the Inner Circle, which allowed participants the possibility to label English speakers as well as make comparisons among them. To illustrate the belief mentioned, I will refer to Paola's English varieties preferences that she shared in classes. During her international speaker report, I jotted down a detailed description of Paola's opinion about the British English accent. Paola pointed out how pleasant it was for her when hearing British-like accents because she associated them with higher social classes.

“Paola highlights the presence and strong influence of the British accent in countries of Europe, like Sweden, when giving her international speaker report about Greta Thunberg. She likes the British accent because it creates a high-class impression. She also says that it is not difficult for her to understand this accent and she enjoys listening to it. Paola asserts that we are kind of related to the British accent, and she thinks that the formality she relates to the British accent has to do with the political, hierarchical, and economical power the UK has had throughout history.” (Observation entry, class 7, 10/20/2020)

Apart from emphasizing the British accent's presence and significant influence on how Europeans use English, Paola shared her personal judgements about English from the United Kingdom. The participant assured not to have problems comprehending intonation patterns from this particular accent. Hence, it was pleasant for her to hear British-like English-speaking users. Additionally, she believed that this English variety denoted classy patterns, which conveyed some sort of elite when heard. Equally important, Paola went

beyond her English accent perception; she tried to explain why she associated such formality with British people. She claimed that English NNSs are somewhat linked to accents from the United Kingdom due to the country's historical influence in politics, economy, and social order worldwide.

As mentioned above, Manuel and Paola assumed that the accents of English NSs were the ones to follow and achieve at the end of their ELL process. Thus, they regarded these hegemonic populations as ideal English models, focusing their learning efforts on understanding and attaining English-native-like accents regardless of cultural backgrounds and intercultural needs. Despite carrying out ELF awareness related activities that invited students to think critically about unequal and marginalizing language learning issues that affected English NNSs, Paola and Manuel established ELL goals based on language NSs' models. These two participants' learning objectives derived from needs such as looking for acceptance among NSs. To them, minimizing regional first language features that could be transferred to English and improving oral production skills, which meant sounding as close to an English NS as possible, were their priority.

In the category I describe below, I will expand on tensions from class discussions about English language learning and accent. Debates around the target language accents took place several times throughout the course, becoming a controversial topic among student-teachers.

### **Emergence of accent tensions related to learning.**

One of the most recurrent and noticeable topics of discussion found in the collected data, probably the one that generated more concern to pre-service teachers, had to do with English language accents. This category presents how the introduction of ELF awareness

led some student-teachers like Paola and Andrea to start reflecting and, consequently, challenging personal assumptions about their accent. The two participants addressed beliefs of their own accents from their learning process, English language use, and perceptions received by English language speakers in general.

***Accent questioning.***

Although participants like Paola and Manuel showed a stronger sense of native-speakerism orientation regarding their ELL goals, Andrea was able to begin challenging her conventional accent views as result of conversations centered on ELF throughout the course. Even if she sometimes expressed precise inclinations to speak similar to an English NS, she reached out to legitimize herself as a valid user of the language, accepting her linguistic and cultural intonation patterns.

From the collected and analyzed data, it was evident at first that Andrea's language learning outcomes focused not only on understanding a wide range of English varieties, as mentioned earlier, but also on imitating native-like language accents. Andrea found pleasure in experimenting with her voice and pretending to be a NS. She expressed such a particular learning objective in a final written reflection that intended to get student-teachers' opinions about aspects they should concentrate on in their future learning and strategies for improving their oral skills. The final written reflection excerpt that presents Andrea's NSs-based learning objective is as follows:

“I am one of those people that want to perfect their accent. I want to learn how to speak with different native English accents, just because I enjoy playing with my voice and doing impressions.” (Excerpt from final written reflection, Andrea, 02/11/2021)

In spite of being only for enjoyment, Andrea's idea of refining her English-speaking skills involved setting aside first accent features that permeated her ELL and use. Subsequently, she affirmed the belief that NSs' English language varieties were the most accurate to imitate. Andrea thought she would obtain a high-quality language level only by reaching an English-native-like accent. However, thanks to the interview data analysis, it was possible to find out that Andrea changed her idea of acquiring a language native-like intonation to some extent. When I asked Andrea about the most significant outcomes from the teacher education course on English Phonetics and Phonology, she expressed some doubts about her native-speakerism-based goal described in her final written reflection. Although she had not completely eradicated such a traditional belief, at least she became concerned about her native-speakerism thought and admitted her accent as part of her identity. She realized that her first language accent might not interfere with making herself understood when speaking in English. The following excerpt show evidences of the aforementioned:

“I used to live or, maybe still do, obsessed with the idea that I had to sound pretty. And to me, “pretty” with a specific accent of a native English speaker. Either learn to speak like an American from New York, [...] California, an Irish man from Dublin, or something like that. At this moment, after having taken the course, I think that it is good to play with my voice and pretend to be from another place, but, at the same time, it does not matter what people think about my accent being weird or not. In the end, that is deep-rooted in my being. That is me, and what matters the most is that people understand me.” (Excerpt from interview, Andrea, 04/29/2021) (Own translation)

Andrea admitted to still considering English native-like accents prestigious and part of her language learning goals to achieve. In addition to this, she alluded to her already known belief in using NSs' English varieties to impersonate someone from a different cultural background. Nevertheless, she began to think critically about how English speakers

perceive her language accent despite NSs-based deep-rooted perceptions. As presented in the excerpt, Andrea expressed a less evident concern about what English speakers would say regarding her accent. She emphasized the importance of developing communication skills that support comprehensibility and meaning negotiation for communication.

***From opposite accent perceptions to mutual intelligibility.***

Various discussions framed in an ELF-aware perspective throughout the course led student-teachers to share ideas about English varieties and accents. Their opinions made it possible to discover that pre-service teachers stressed divergent perceptions of the target language spoken with an accent belonging from their first language and those spoken with English native-like ones. Punctually, some course participants, like Manuel and Paola, defended the idea of getting to sound like an English NS as a primary goal in their learning process; whereas some others, as mentioned before in the case of Adriana, validated the existence and acceptance of first language characteristics in the accent and intonation of NNEs' speech.

Regardless of pre-service teachers' disagreement in thinking related to accents, they concluded that what was worth noting between English learners and speakers was mutual intelligibility and respect for differences, neither privileging nor marginalizing any group of people. To illustrate the ideas just presented, I bring up Paola's comments and conclusions from Dr. Llurda's speech in one of the class sessions. She remarked on different points of view concerning the validation of someone as a competent user of English. The following is a video recording excerpt from the class that develops Paola's perception and subsequent analysis:

“It is well-known by the whole group that I am a strong advocate for the imitation of the NS accent. Listening to you [Dr. Llurda] has made me

notice that, here in Colombia, there are two sides: one side defending the NS; and another side defending the idea that it is our culture, our accent, we have to be proud of being Colombian and show *that* in the way we speak. [...]” (Excerpt from video recording, Paola, Class 19, 12/01/2020)

Paola explicitly portrayed diverse and, according to her, contrary positions when reflecting on English language accents. From her point of view, there were two opposite ways of thinking about this matter in the Colombian ELT: the ones who still appreciate and honor NSs as suitable models of the language, on the one hand, and those who worry about exhibiting lingua cultural features when using the language, on the other hand. Nevertheless, sharing distinct opinions did not invalidate the possibility among student-teachers to highlight together what, according to Paola, went beyond taking a hegemonic side, in favor of native-like accents, or a globalized one, which considers speakers’ identities and linguistic background. She called for effective communication among English language users. She exhibited this ELF-aware-based perception during the same class intervention referred to above.

“[...] But, well, you [Dr. Llurda] said something interesting to me, that speaking clearly, being able to send a message the best and the clearest way possible, is the most important.” (Excerpt from video recording, Paola, Class 19, 12/01/2020)

Paola mentioned that what matters in English language communication was not the accent preferences or attitudes she developed. On the contrary, she asserted that there were essential language features that facilitate comprehensibility and that those should be the ones to put first into practice to promote intelligibility and therefore respect among English speakers. Subsequent to this idea, Paola finished her comment with the following consideration:



“It is not about talking like a native speaker nor is it about talking the more Colombian you can. It is about talking the clearest way you can. That changed my mind. [...] You should be aware of the path you want to take and what you must respect.” (Excerpt from video recording, Paola, Class 19, 12/01/2020)

In this comment, Paola declared an ELF-aware position that differed from the one she held in previous class sessions about English speakers. As stated before, Paola supported in some class discussions the idea of acquiring an English native-like accent to receive NSs’ approval of her English. Per contra, as ELF-based reflections developed, she opened up her mind to focus on intelligibility while using the language instead of accent choices. As evident in the video recording excerpt, the pre-service teacher pointedly said that, regardless of their background, English speakers must become conscious of the multiple choices and decisions they may make as speakers of a globalized language. According to her, such decisions affect oral speaking interactions with others, whether positive or negative, when using the language. Then, she asserted that whatever decisions speakers make, they must acknowledge the other’s accent and oral communication skills. Furthermore, Paola’s ELF-aware perception was also present in an extract from her final written reflection, where she established a determined language-learning goal concerning English varieties and accents:

“I still want to achieve a level of expertise that allows me to switch between if I want or not to have an accent. A level that allows me to adapt to every single context and control how I want to sound in every situation, no matter if it is formal, casual or in what corner of the world I could be. I aim to someday be understood all over the world.” (Excerpt from final written reflection, Paola, 02/11/2021)

Paola expressed her desire to control how she sounds while using English, depending on the speakers with whom she may interact. Although it appeared that she did

not give up entirely on the idea of having a native-like accent, she would like to put into practice an ELF-based strategy: to adapt her language use and accent to understand and respond effectively to any speaker of English. For her, it became paramount to become a successful English interlocutor in real-world situations. Then, Paola got awareness of the need to develop new meanings and oral skills in response to effective communication among English speakers. Her language learning outcomes transcended, to some extent, the deep-rooted objectives she generally demonstrated along the teacher education course, as described above.

### **Changes in ELT Beliefs**

Introducing ELF awareness promoted discussion spaces in which student-teachers reflected on some preconceptions related to ELT. According to the data analysis, pre-service teachers transformed some teaching beliefs. The changes focused primarily on questioning their preferences of English teachers and confronted traditional teaching preconceptions about NNESTs' oral communicative skills and accents.

#### **Revising English language teacher preferences.**

The analyzed data displayed that ELF-related tasks developed in the course allowed some pre-service teachers to reexamine ideas they had already established about teaching the language at the time of the study. Therefore, ELF-based class discussions made it possible to revise student-teachers' conceptions with regard to the ideal English language teacher for them and their teacher preferences in ELT.

Through ELF-oriented activities, pre-service teachers evaluated their assumptions about the perfect English language teachers for Colombian students, including themselves.

An example of such critical thinking was evident in students' opinions after Dr. Llurda's intervention. The scholar portrayed how non-native English language users have developed some sort of xenophilia, preferring teachers who come from the Inner Circle countries instead of relying on the knowledge and practices of NNESTs. Based on Dr. Llurda's talk, Andrea and Adriana examined preconceived ELT notions on the part of Colombian English language users. To illustrate this finding, I evinced in an observation field note from class # 19 how Andrea referred to English learners' preferences for NESTs:

“Andrea said that for a given reason she cannot really understand, they [Colombian English users] love *gringo* teachers, that is to say, Americans, or any other teacher who is not from Colombia and has physical characteristics that relate teachers to the first world countries.” (Observation entry, class 19, 12/20/2020)

ELF-based discussions made it possible for Andrea to question why Colombian English language users generally choose NESTs rather than local ones. Based on her learning experiences in Colombia, she asserted that students looked for teachers from countries that meet physical features culturally associated with English NSs: white skin, blonde hair, blue eyes, and great height. In addition, Andrea affirmed that it made no sense why English language learners do not show the same interest in having language educators who look physically similar to them or share their exact birthplace and linguistic background. On the other hand, Adriana highlighted how pleasant it became for her to take English classes with NNESTs due to the ease of communication between teachers and learners. She came up with this opinion after Dr. Llurda's presentation. The scholar described how the myth of the NEST as the ideal teacher has been challenged and deconstructed since the last decade due to discussions in the ELT context about NNESTs

advantages for English learners. To illustrate Adriana's point of view, I present below her thoughts about NNESTs that became known during Dr. Llurda's class intervention.

“When I was at school, I used to have many classmates like me who complained about our teachers' accents. [...] I rather made a non-native turn because, at this very moment, I actually prefer having a NNEST, like if he or she is Colombian. I actually prefer that because we can have better communication.” (Excerpt from video recording, Adriana, Class 19, 12/01/2020)

According to Adriana, communication in her ELL process became easier when being part of classes with English educators who are not NSs of the language. The student-teacher emphasized how straightforward it became for her to communicate comfortably with language teachers that share her first language, nationality, and cultural background. Without aiming to label NESTs negatively, Adriana showed preference for NNESTs due to their kind treatment towards learners. Below is an excerpt from the interview that supported Adriana's choice of local English language teachers. When I asked her about the way English teachers should teach the language, she said the following:

“Some of my teachers have been NSs. Some of them were great, some others were a little difficult to communicate with, and also very strict. They did not have that Colombian warmth to students, and it was a big shock to me and my classmates.” (Excerpt from interview, Adriana, 05/06/2021)  
(Own translation)

As described above, it was evident that Andrea questioned why Colombian English users, including herself, adopt predilections towards NESTs. Similarly, Adriana challenged pre-conceived teacher preferences, highlighting the communicative advantages of having NNESTs in their language learning process. Pre-service teachers' introduction to ELT realities from an ELF-aware perception brought such issues to light during the course classes.

### **Teachers' awareness of English language pluricentricity.**

Similar to what Andrea, Paola, and Adriana expressed concerning the awareness and validation of English language varieties, they also thought that teachers of English should add a pluricentric view of the language in their ELT practices. Data showed that the ELF-oriented course made Andrea, for example, reflect and then advocate for a shift in the teaching deep-seated idea that English language teachers should respond to a native-like accent and expect the same from their learners. Instead, she stood for teachers who could educate learners to be genuinely competent in using the language regardless of their accents. To illustrate this perception, I present an excerpt from Andrea's interview. When I asked Andrea what she thought of how English should be taught, she came up with the following opinion:

“I think that English teaching should reject that accent perfectionism, that belief that language learners have to sound as a native speaker. On the contrary, English language teachers must prioritize the constant use of the language and understanding of its different speakers, so they [English language teachers] can engage students in their learning process.” (Excerpt from interview, Andrea, 04/29/2021) (Own translation).

Andrea opposed the ELT idea of employing traditional teaching methods to make learners reach NS-like accents. She claimed that English language teachers must emphasize how students effectively build and negotiate meanings using the target language. Similar to her ELL belief that advocated for speakers' recognition of accents, as described before, Andrea asserted that the teaching of English should move from promoting perfectionist native-like oral abilities to encouraging students' comprehensibility of different English language varieties. Besides, it is evident that the participant raised the English-speaking

teachers' need to develop skills to make themselves understood in the interaction with other English users.

As a summary of this findings section, data analysis points out that the introduction of ELF awareness influenced pre-service teachers to think of themselves as learners and future language teachers. Regarding ELL, it was possible to find out that ELF-aware-based reflections helped both shape and uphold student-teachers' beliefs related to the English language, its pluricentricity and ownership, students' learning goals, and language accent. Additionally, in the case of ELT, evidence revealed that, through thoughtful ELF-based discussions, participants challenged traditional language teaching assumptions and questioned their teacher preferences. Categories emerged from the data analysis of participant observation field notes, video recordings, final written reflections, interviews, and participants' information about previous English language-related experiences.

Throughout the previous sections, I shared the perspectives of four pre-service teachers who took part in this study, which focused on their built up, transformed and reaffirmed viewpoints of ELT after being introduced to ELF awareness in a teacher education course. In the following section, I will discuss these findings within the contexts of ELT, ELF awareness, native-speakerism, and critical teacher education theories.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

This study intended to explore how the ELF awareness introduction in the teacher education course “English Phonetics and Phonology” transformed pre-service teachers’ notions of English language learning and teaching. The findings revealed that research participants acknowledged, reaffirmed, and confronted various ELL and ELT beliefs.

The findings of this study are coherent with what other researchers have developed regarding the introduction of ELF awareness in teacher education (Deniz et al., 2020; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Soruç & Griffiths, 2021; Zacharias, 2016), and correspond to the initial phase of ELF-aware teacher education (Sifakis, 2019). At this early stage, Sifakis (2019) suggests that learners become conscious of the different discourses, elements, and arguments that distinguish them as ELF users from English NSs. As ELF awareness implies changes in teacher education, “learners’ perspectives on the legitimacy of ELF as a justifiable component of their ELT experience are also likely to change” (Sifakis, 2019, p.295). This is intended to reflect on “the complexities of English-medium communicative contexts in today’s global reality” (Sifakis, 2019, p.298). Such ELF-based reflections must allow student-teachers to re-appreciate their language learning beliefs, question language norms, promote horizontal power connections among language speakers, and increase possibilities for interaction and negotiation of meanings (Deniz et al., 2016; Jordão & Marques, 2018; Mansfield & Poppi, 2012).

The first major finding that the data analysis revealed was a close connection between ELF awareness and the transformation of some ideas about ELL. Most student-teachers acknowledged ideas related to the current state of English and its recognition as a pluricentric language. It was possible for them to think critically about the distinct uses

speakers from around the world give to the language, as suggested by Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015b). Subsequently, participants built up the perception that English is crucial not only for communicative purposes but also to foster cross-cultural understanding (Cogo, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2001). Additionally, ELF-aware-based reflections made some pre-service teachers a) recognize the valid influence of speakers' first language and cultural patterns in their English; b) perceive themselves and other English users as legitimate owners of the language; and c) set new English language learning goals that consider diversity in terms of users and varieties (Hsuan-Yao, 2008; Sifakis, 2009).

The aforementioned findings corroborate what some studies in teacher education have reported in relation to ELL and ELF awareness introduction. For example, Kemaloglu-Er and Bayyurt (2018) also identified that participants recognized the current globalized and pluricentric features of the language. Similarly, Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018) and Soruç and Griffiths (2021) declared that several student-teachers accepted the cultures' rightful impact on the language and called for acknowledging English language varieties apart from the ones traditionally approved, mainly British and American. Finally, Deniz et al. (2020) and Zacharias (2016) stated that pre-service teachers' self-confidence and motivation to speak in English increased through ELF-related critical reflections, perceiving themselves as legitimate language users.

The second major finding that emerged from this study depicted how certain participants reaffirmed ELL thoughts closely related to the hegemonic notion of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2005) even after taking part in ELF-related debates. It was evident that some student-teachers, based on their language learning and work experiences, had already positioned English NSs as controllers of the language and models of good use



(Holliday, 2018; Huttayavilaiphan, 2021). The students' comments and reflections showed what Maldonado-Torres (2007) calls coloniality traces. The scholar referred to them as social discourses and relationships in the Global South that, inspired by the idea of race and supported by individuals' lived experiences and ontological imaginaries, establish and naturalize feelings of superiority and inferiority (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). As shown in the findings, because of the racial legitimation that some participants gave to English language NSs as absolute language owners, they sought NSs' approval as valid English users, tried to hide pronunciation features from Spanish, and imitated native speakers' accents to improve communication.

However, as referred to perceptions about English language accents, ELF awareness made some student-teachers reconsider certain learning outcomes. As described in the findings, pre-service teachers seemed to start questioning the native-speakerism-based goal of speaking like American or British people. Through critical ELF-based conversations, participants understood that developing new meanings and oral ability to communicate effectively among English speakers becomes more crucial than acquiring a native or native-like English accent (Deniz et al., 2016; Jordão & Marques, 2018; Sifakis, 2009).

This study confirms what some scholars found concerning the complexity of embracing native-speakerism, mainly in oral communication. I demonstrated how some student-teachers' opinions were contradictory because, on the one hand, they kept the English native speaker as the ideal target, but, on the other hand, they challenged beliefs regarding the validity of different accents. For instance, Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018) and Zacharias (2016) asserted that, although pre-service teachers went through reflections aiming at empowering themselves as ELF users, they were already skeptical of achieving

an English accent other than any of NSs and still chose to adopt a “standard” British or American variety. On the contrary, Deniz et al. (2020), and Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018) reported that some pre-service teachers appeared to adjust their learning goals to achieve intelligibility and effective interactions with any language speaker, Thus, their intentions to sound English native-like became no longer a priority. As previously described, some participants from this study also embraced this idea.

Regarding the study participants’ assumptions about native-speakerism and ELL, their deep-rooted viewpoints coincide with Colombian pre-service teachers’ beliefs portrayed in Viáfara (2016a, 2016b). The scholar affirmed that, although prospective NNESTs feel confident with their linguistic non-nativeness in their future ELT practices, they consider themselves to be in a disadvantageous stand compared to NSs’ language abilities and cultural understandings (Viáfara, 2016a, 2016b). In this study, the weak self-perceptions as NNESTs that some student-teachers have held may find their origin in prior experiences. Since student-teachers’ learning beliefs derive from their day-to-day situations (Durán-Narváez et al., 2017; Huttayavilaiphan, 2021), those who are in regular contact with English NSs in their jobs position themselves as non-legitimate language users. Additionally, student-teachers’ fragile self-perceptions reflect the hegemonic English NSs and NESTs’ idealization in the Colombian ELT. Over time, national ELT policies and practices have reproduced dominant Inner Circle ideologies that do not consider the current sociocultural realities of English as it is used locally (García, 2013; González, 2020, 2021, 2022; González & Llurda, 2016; Macías, 2010) and internationally (Matsuda, 2012, 2018). As a result, English learners’ identities usually develop and persist under traditional social discourses (González & Llurda, 2016; Jenkins, 2006), reducing NNESTs’ competent language

proficiency merely to achieve an English native-like or the ideal, but non-existent, “standard” accent (Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017).

Moreover, it is worth adding that the undergraduate program in which students were carrying out their studies is not an exception to colonial practices (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) in English language teacher education. Although the program’s curriculum bases its educational proposal on principles of intercultural education and critical pedagogies, its pre-established syllabus replicates hegemonic ELL and ELT practices generally demanded by national academic regulations (González & Llurda, 2016). They encompass, for instance, the setting of CEFR-based goals, the taking of international language exams as a requirement to graduate, and the predominance of input from Western cultures and Inner Circle countries throughout most of the language courses in the program.

Moving on to ELF awareness and ELT, the third major finding was that several student-teachers confronted preconceived teaching beliefs with regard to language users’ choices for English teachers and NNESTs’ oral communicative abilities and accents. As detailed above in the findings section, and reported by Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018), reflections on issues of power and marginalization of NNESTs led some study participants to restate their construct of the ideal English language teacher. Accordingly, the data analysis showed how pre-service teachers emphasized the communicative benefits that language learners may encounter when being taught by NNESTs (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b). In addition, as pointed out by Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018), Deniz et al. (2020), and Soruç and Griffiths (2021), it was evident in this study that some participants became fully aware of the need for English language teachers to expose learners to different English varieties, as well as to promote the development of abilities to communicate with English

language speakers worldwide (Sifakis, 2019). As participants expressed, the need for exposure to more English varieties also applies to them. As in the studies mentioned previously, this research shows that the plurality of speakers as valid input sources and models for language learning reinforces the participants' identification as English users.

From the above-mentioned findings concerning ELF awareness and ELT, it is possible to say that ELF-based reflections made some student-teachers challenge the traditional NNESTs' role in the classroom along with teaching-related practices (Sifakis, 2019). Although the English Phonetics and Phonology course did not involve the analysis of student-teachers' real teaching choices and hands-on actions (e.g., Deniz et al., 2020; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemalolu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018), discussions about ELF might have transformed some participants' teaching convictions that may shape some of their future decisions as English language teachers (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b).

This research is significant in several ways. First, it responds to the local need to challenge deep-rooted assumptions in teacher education through critical pedagogies that advocate for ELF awareness (García, 2013; Macías, 2010). Only García (2013) and Macías (2010) had regarded ELF-related theories as worth-examining alternatives to question colonial perspectives on language use and legitimization in Colombia. However, they did not explore the introduction of ELF and ELF awareness in teacher education. The study contributes, then, to the opportunity of analyzing how Colombian pre-service teachers challenge their ELT and ELL preconceptions when being introduced to ELF and ELF awareness. In fact, this is the first study at the national level that addresses ELF and ELF awareness in language teacher education.

Second, the study demonstrates that participants challenged for the first time in their teacher education program some ELL linguistic preconceptions. Because of the introduction of ELF awareness and the discussions about ELF issues, student-teachers became aware of the existence of ELF. Through critical lenses, they started questioning some of their ELL beliefs that reproduce coloniality ideologies (Deniz et al., 2016; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This study corroborates and expands previous research on the benefits of introducing ELF awareness in teacher education. Issues such as the status of the English language (Deniz et al., 2016), English language pluricentricity and ownership (Cogo, 2012), English users' legitimacy (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a; Sifakis, 2014a, 2014b), recognition of English varieties (Sifakis, 2009), accent choices and preferences (Kaçar and Bayyurt, 2018), and ELL goals (Deniz et al., 2020; Sifakis, 2019) were contested throughout the course.

Third, the study is important because it expands previous research revealing some sort of ambivalence among student teachers' beliefs, a fact only informed in the literature by Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018). Whereas student-teachers in this study advocated for NNSs' validation of different accents and language users through ELF awareness, as shown in Sifakis (2019), some of them kept the hegemonic idea of getting to speak English having a native-like accent (Holliday, 2005). This ambivalence in ELL viewpoints does not reveal any failure in the introduction of ELF awareness in teacher education. On the contrary, it accounts for the gradual, and sometimes arduous, transformation of beliefs that pre-service teachers experience when ELF awareness permeates the classroom (Sifakis, 2019). Indeed, uncertainty in thinking is part of the ELF awareness continuum, a process that, according to Sifakis (2019), helps all ELT stakeholders to acknowledge the complexities of becoming

ELF-aware in teacher education. Besides, the English Phonetics and Phonology course was the first in the students' teacher education program that used the introduction of ELF awareness systematically. Although it lasted only 64 hours, the transformation of student-teachers' beliefs was evident.

Fourth, the study is relevant since it unveils that some study participants called for ELF-aware teacher educators in their pre-service university program. Although the undergraduate course did not aim at reflecting on teacher-related practices such as instruction theories, teaching contexts, or corrective feedback (e.g., Deniz et al., 2020; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018), participants raised the need for today's English language teacher educators and teachers to become aware of the current language complexities and diversity in varieties, users and uses (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Deniz et al., 2016; Sifakis, 2009). Student-teachers' voices adhere to several scholars who have suggested ELF-aware teachers in language teacher education programs (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Dewey & Patsko, 2017; Sifakis, 2019).

Finally, the findings are meaningful in the sense that they contribute to the expansion of the work done by international scholars. Particularly, the findings align with previous studies that have explored how ELF awareness introduction transformed pre-service teachers' perceptions in teacher education. Scholars such as Deniz et al. (2020), Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018), Kemaloglu-Er and Bayyurt (2018), and Soruç and Griffiths (2021) have carried out investigations in Turkey with the purpose of exposing pre-service teachers to ELF and analyzing their beliefs' change in terms of language use, ownership, learning outcomes and future teaching practices. Similarly, Zacharias (2016) developed a study in an Indonesian undergraduate teacher-training program intended to explore how the

ELF pedagogy altered participants' teacher identities. This study is relevant because, thus far, there were non-existent studies with a similar purpose in other parts of the world apart from Turkey and Indonesia.

Despite the pertinence and contribution of the study to expand research on ELF and ELF awareness in language teacher education, this research has potential methodological limitations concerning the sample size, few ELT-related data to analyze, and the class modality. To begin with, the study focused on a limited number of participants. Although data from more students would probably not have changed the study results since I selected a convenience sample, considering more participants would have shed light on other emerging beliefs about introducing ELF awareness in English language teacher education. Furthermore, the data gathered from the participants allowed me to identify a few issues about ELT. A primary reason for this was the fact that the course content and objectives were already pre-established, intended mainly to provide pre-service teachers with English phonetics and phonology content knowledge as part of the English language component in the teacher education program. The course orientation is targeted at raising awareness of the English language's pluricentric and dynamic nature, rather than getting students to reflect on and shape future teaching practices. Lastly, the course on which the study was based had to be developed under a virtual modality instead of a face-to-face one. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and successive country lockdowns, classes moved to virtual settings, as well as the in-class participant observations. This could have affected students' class participation and, hence, hindered the examination of participants' additional opinions and reactions toward the ELF-related issues under discussion.

The previously mentioned drawbacks bring up new possibilities for further research. First, I suggest exploring student-teachers' viewpoints of ELF-related issues in face-to-face sessions. In-presence classroom instructions would allow in-depth analyses of participants' reactions and feelings to support the observation field notes. Second, I advise carrying out further studies with a wider number of participants to find out and scrutinize new pre-service teachers' perceptions about ELF when participating in larger discussions in their teacher education program. Third, I recommend the design, development, and analysis of ELF-aware-based courses in language teacher education that advocate for local meaning-making practices and pragmatic strategies within the ELF Core Phonology framework (Jenkins, 2015; Jordão & Marques, 2018).

Apart from offering suggestions for further investigations, I present some implications for Colombian ELT programs and teacher education research. Concerning the first aspect, study results unveil the need for local university teaching programs to include ELF awareness in their curriculum. By doing so, they will educate student-teachers on current English language complexities and, therefore, increase their own perceptions as valid language users and future instructors (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018). Furthermore, the introduction of ELF awareness should come into play in courses that go beyond linguistic factors. It is important to see ELF and ELF awareness from a broader point of view in the specific curricular and pedagogical training component, and relate the topics with student-teachers' future teaching practicum experiences (Deniz et al., 2020; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018). Finally, it is crucial to give place to decolonial theories and practices, such as ELF, that are aligned with critical



perspectives in Colombian teacher education (Macías, 2010). In the case of ELF awareness, it represents a way to contest coloniality discourses in ELT and ELL.

In what refers to teacher education research, this research suggests the development of local studies in which pre-service teachers challenge preconceived ELL and ELT beliefs through ELF awareness. ELF-based critical thinking would counteract native-speakerism-based practices that have marginalized and subrogated Colombian NNESTs over time.

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## **APPENDIX A: REFLECTIVE TASK: INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER'S REPORT**

**Universidad de Antioquia**

**School of Languages**

**English IV: Phonetics and Phonology**

**Professor: X**

**October 9, 2020**

This activity aims to analyze the speech of famous characters that are not native speakers of English. Yet, they are active communicators in the international arena. You will gain awareness of how English uses change across nations and domains. I have a list of known people, but you are welcome to add any personal choice. Please make sure he/she is not a native speaker of English. Please add your selection of the character to the Google document that I will share with you. If you do not know the person, find some information about him/her (What he/she does, country of origin)

This is the task:

1. Look for different videos where you can watch how he/she speaks in English. Use more than one video to have a clear picture of his/her communication skills. You may look for TED Talks or YouTube.
2. Take into account the following information to support your opinion:
  - a. How easy or difficult it is for you to understand him/her.
  - b. How strong/light/unnoticeable the first language accent is.
  - c. How pleasant/unpleasant/ no reaction it is for you to listen to the person.

**You will share it in a short intervention in our class on October 20, 2020. Prepare your opinion stating your opinion based on a, b, and c. Introduce him/her briefly.**

**If you have any problems or questions with this task, do not hesitate to contact me through email.**



## **APPENDIX B: REFLECTIVE TASK: INTERVIEW TO A MULTILINGUAL SCHOLAR**

**Universidad de Antioquia**  
**School of Languages**  
**English IV: Phonetics and Phonology**

**Professor: X**

**January 21, 2021**

The purpose of this task is to explore when, where, and how a Colombian scholar learned and uses English. You will interview a professor who is a multilingual speaker and uses English internationally. At the end, you will report the scholar's most significant challenges in ELL and his/her experiences with different international English speakers.

### **Activity process:**

- Write an e-mail to the professor asking him/her for an appointment
- Prepare the interview
- Deliver the interview (record the conversation)
- Write your appraisal

### **Questions to consider:**

- Successful Colombian multilingual speakers.
- All of them learned English in Colombia.
- Non-native speakers of English.
- Teachers at different levels.
- High use of the language in national and international contexts.
- Higher academic training.

### **Email model:**

"Dear Professor X,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a student in the \_\_\_\_\_ at Universidad de Antioquia.

Currently, I am taking English IV with Professor Adriana González. In our course, we are analyzing the use of English by successful multilingual speakers.

Based on your knowledge and expertise, I would like to get to know your experience arranging a short interview. I am available on \_\_\_\_\_. Please let me know a convenient time for you.

Best regards,"

**Following steps:**

- Please, book the time and invite the interviewee when you know his/her availability.
- Consider his/her preferences (Time, ZOOM, MEET, TEAMS).
- Remind him/her about the appointment.
- Prepare your questions by reading about the person.
- Be concise.
- Be kind and thankful at the beginning and at the end of the interview.

**Report:**

- Major findings about his/her English (learning history, motivation, contact with English and other languages...).
- Challenges in learning the language.
- Uses of the language.
- General perception.
- Maximum two pages (Grammar, spelling, conciseness).

## APPENDIX C: REFLECTIVE TASK: DIAGNOSIS PASSAGE REFLECTION

Universidad de Antioquia

School of Languages

English IV Phonetics and Phonology

Guidelines for the final paper

February 4, 2021

Professor: X

The purpose of this task is to raise your awareness about the use of important features of English that facilitate comprehensibility. You will analyze the diagnosis passage from the beginning of the semester to identify the points you use well and those you need to address in your learning.

Use as a reference the list I provide below. Please include the words or sentences in the text that show how you pronounced them.

**This activity represents 30% of your total grade in the course. Deadline: Thursday, February 11**

I present below the criteria and one example to guide your work.

Phonological aspect	Did I use it in all the cases?	Examples of accurate/inaccurate use	Explanation
Aspiration of voiceless stops [p <sup>h</sup> ] [t <sup>h</sup> ] [k <sup>h</sup> ] at the beginning of a stressed syllable	In most cases	<b>People:</b> inaccurate. <b>Countries:</b> accurate.	/p/ was not aspirated /k/ was aspirated
Clear difference between /s/ and /z/	In some cases	<b>Use:</b> inaccurate.	I pronounced the voiced fricative as the voiceless sound /s/. I said /jus/, not /juz/
Clear difference between /b/ and /v/	All the time	<b>Level, native:</b> accurate <b>Belong, bases:</b> accurate	Adequate use of the labiodental fricative /v/  Adequate use of the voiced bilabial stop /b/

Pronunciation of all consonants in consonant clusters	Not always	<b>Ask:</b> inaccurate  <b>Reflect:</b> accurate	I omitted the final voiceless velar stop /k/. I said /as/  I pronounced all the consonants in the word
Clear difference between /ɪ/ and /i/	Not always		
Clear difference between /ʊ/ and /u/	In most cases		
Vowel reduction in unstressed syllables	All the time		
Palatalization as /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /j/, /ʒ/	Not always		
Word stress	In most cases		
Intonation in yes/no questions	All the time		
Intonation in information questions			
Intonation in statements			
The stressed-unstressed pattern for content words and function words			
What key aspects should I focus on in my future learning? What can I do to improve my oral skills?			

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Después de haber terminado el curso de English IV Phonetics and Phonology, quiero saber su opinión sobre algunos aspectos en cuanto a la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés:

1. Como hablante de inglés, ¿qué percepción tiene del uso de esta lengua a nivel mundial?
2. Desde su experiencia como estudiante de la licenciatura, ¿cuál considera que sería el nivel inglés para graduarse del programa? ¿Con qué nivel quisiera graduarse?
3. ¿Cómo cree que debe ser el nivel de lengua de un(a) docente de inglés?
4. Ya que está en el quinto semestre del programa, ¿cómo cree que se deba enseñar inglés?
5. ¿Qué recursos cree que un docente de inglés debe usar en sus clases?
6. ¿Cómo cree usted que el curso ayudó a formar las opiniones que tiene actualmente en cuanto a la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés?