

Exploring EFL teacher agency in language policy:

The case of a schoolteacher's appropriation of the National Program of Bilingualism

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ABSTRACT

This research inquiries into a teacher's appropriation of the National Program of Bilingualism. Based on the ecological approach to teacher agency and using a narrative approach, the study explores a female secondary school English teacher's past personal, academic and professional experiences, her current work context and practices to appropriate the official ELT policy, as well as her expectations towards her teaching. The teacher's interviews and the short stories within reveal the challenges she has encountered in her life and at school, and the agentive actions she has undertaken to overcome these challenges. They also hint at how the teacher has become a language policy agent who embraces aspects of the National Program of Bilingualism, but simultaneously resists the policy goals.

Keywords: language policy, teacher agency, policy appropriation, ecological approach to teacher agency, National Program of Bilingualism.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación indaga sobre la apropiación del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo por una docente. Basado en el enfoque ecológico del agenciamiento docente y mediante el enfoque narrativo, el estudio explora las experiencias personales, académicas y profesionales pasadas de una docente de inglés de secundaria, su contexto laboral actual y las prácticas de apropiación de la política oficial para la enseñanza del inglés, así como sus expectativas hacia la enseñanza. Las entrevistas de la profesora y las pequeñas historias que ellas contienen revelan los desafíos que ha encontrado en su vida y en la escuela y las acciones de agenciamiento que ha emprendido para superar estos desafíos. También insinúan cómo la

docente se ha convertido en una agente de la política lingüística que adopta aspectos del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo, pero al mismo tiempo se resiste a sus metas oficiales.

Palabras clave: políticas lingüísticas, agenciamiento docente, apropiación de políticas, enfoque ecológico del agenciamiento docente, Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Program of Bilingualism is a top-down policy introduced as an initiative from the Ministry of Education (MOE) for citizens to develop communicative skills in English to stimulate the country in the economic and technological globalization. The policy sets the pre-intermediate B1 level as the target goal for all 11th school students, regardless of the characteristics of the schools and teachers. Despite the teachers' key role in policy negotiation and implementation (Menken and García, 2010), they were not part of the policy creation. Nevertheless, they are held accountable for the students' low results in the national standardized test, Saber 11. It is well known the shortage of resources, infrastructure problems and timing issues surrounding language teachers in public schools' contexts might prevent a successful implementation of official policies.

Teachers respond to educational policies agentively as they negotiate the adaptation and implementation of official policies in the classroom. They appropriate policies imprinting their desires and worldviews. Teachers' personal experiences are key in their roles as active agents and policy makers. This research helps us understand from first hand the different limitations a public school teacher faces in her everyday practice while appropriating the language policy, as well as the agency she unfolds during the process of appropriation.

This research showcases the teacher agency during the appropriation process of the language policy for English language teaching. The study reveals how the teachers' past experiences, present challenges, particular context and expectations mold their agentive actions in ELT while appropriating the policy.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Understanding the agency that teachers exercise when facing the challenges that the top-down language policies pose to them is key to repositioning teachers in society. Teachers have continuously been blamed for the “failure” of language policies and the limited foreign language learning at schools, as evidenced in the news every year when the results of the Saber 11 test are released. Yet, little is known about the everyday decisions teachers make and the actions they take to overcome the enduring obstacles they find in their school contexts and, more widely, in the school system, to help their students learn the best way possible. Listening to teachers’ stories about their constant struggles can help better understand the appropriation of language policies in the everyday practices in schools. It can provide a more comprehensive perspective of teachers’ work.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 Main question

How does a public-school teacher respond agentively to educational challenges when appropriating the educational policy for English language teaching?

3.2 Subsidiary questions

- What agentive actions does the teacher undertake to face the challenges at school?
- How does the teacher’s personal background affect their agentive actions?
- What aspirations guide the teacher's agency when appropriating the educational policy for English language teaching ?

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 General objective

To analyze teachers' agency in the appropriation of the educational policy for English language teaching in a public school in Cali.

4.2 Specific objectives

- To identify how teachers face challenges when appropriating the educational policy for English language teaching.
- To analyze the role of teachers' personal history in their appropriation of the educational policy for English language teaching.
- To identify how teachers' projections guide the educational policy for English language teaching.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I review seven articles about the appropriation of English language education policies that reflect teacher agency. These are organized into international, national and local studies, all of them completed within the last twenty years.

5.1 International studies

5.1.1 Agentic responses to communicative language teaching in language policy. An Example of Vietnamese English Primary Teachers

Le (2018) conducted a study to analyze teacher's agency in Vietnam where the government introduced the language policy "Teaching Foreign Languages in the National Education System 2008-2020". The language policy stipulates that most young Vietnamese students will possess a good command of foreign language in order to communicate effectively for different purposes. Six English school teachers participated in the study; the selection criteria included teachers' work experience, availability and commitment to the study. To analyze data, Le (2018) followed Saldaña's (Saldaña, 2015 as cited in Lee, 2018) framework for qualitative coding procedures. The study findings showed that teachers had insufficient professional support, overloaded teaching contents and limited teaching resources. Lee observed that when the policy was implemented, the teachers were not provided with sufficient professional training because of the lack of budget. Teachers had to rely on veteran colleagues, past experiences and online resources. The only material that they were provided was the textbook but sometimes the content was inappropriate for students. According to the author, teachers acted as agents; they performed their agentic teaching practices taking into account their limitations and realities, by actively seeking solutions to address the challenges.

Le's study (2018) contributes to my research in two ways; first, the two main categories, teachers' constraints and teachers' agentic responses, seem to be helpful to organize findings, and it is clear how agency can be exerted within the constraints of schools.

5.1.2 The interrelationship of belief, context and learning: The case of a teacher reacting to language policy

Stritikus (2003) examines how we can better understand teachers' role in the implementation of language policy by focusing on the response of a single teacher. The author focuses on two questions to understand the role teachers play in the enactment of language policy. The first question was how elements of a teacher's personal history and identity influence the way she responds to policy changes, and the second question referred to how a teacher's response to policy influenced the enactment of literacy practice.

The author focused on the single case of a language teacher at an elementary school in California. The teacher's own experience while she was in high school was total immersion and she believed this educational approach worked well, therefore she was on board to try Proposition 227 which focused on total immersion, and followed Open Court's program of bilingual education by script. Stritikus observed 22 classes, and did three two-hour long semi structured interviews with the teacher. Findings show that overtime, teachers' opinion of the policies can change, as the participant teacher later found that total immersion was not the best option for her students. Stritikus' research proved that the teacher's decision-making process was mediated by who she was and the realities of the local school context. The single case research design and the relation between the teacher's past experiences and her enactment of the policy in the findings are particularly helpful to my own research.

5.1.3 A case study on EFL teachers' beliefs about the teaching and learning of English in public education

In Chile, English has been introduced in the national curriculum due to the need for a more active role of the country in different international areas. Hernandez and Larenas (2014) analyzed the beliefs of sixteen English teachers from some Chilean working-class public schools about the components of teaching and learning at the secondary school level. The authors conducted a holistic study and a semantic data analysis to a semi structured interview and a 22-statement survey. They divided the analysis into four steps: data segmentation, initial coding, categorizing and exploring relationships.

Hernandez and Larenas (2014) reported that teachers demonstrated the curriculum should be modified into every different school context. Some participants considered that the content aims often were difficult to fulfill because of the different challenges teachers face in the field and also depended on the time students are exposed to the language. Findings also showed how teachers bring their experience and knowledge into the classrooms and how they had to adapt different materials and resources according to the students' needs most of the time. Even though the participants agree that there is a relationship between language curriculum and the material contexts, they think that the language curriculum was idealistic and far-fetched from the context of Chilean public schools. The study shows how teachers' beliefs, practices and perceptions work in their favor to assume an agentic role to accomplish educational policies goals.

5.2 National studies

5.2.1 The wisdom of teachers' personal theories: Creating ELT practices from Colombian rural schools

Cruz Arcila (2018) explored English teaching practices locally grounded in a rural school in Colombia. The main objective that guided the study was : providing a grounded account of how active ELT policy operated in the country. Ten teachers participated in this research, each of them located in seven different schools and municipalities in the Andean region of the country. The author collected the data by field observations and interviews with the teachers. The study revealed different ways teachers approached and made the most of their expertise with the limited resources and the context in which they work in order to help students make sense of learning English. According to Cruz Arcila's study, teachers understand the position in their social and cultural work settings, and they reinvent their work to help students feel comfortable using the language with their cultural background. Cruz Arcila (2018) explains how classroom practices were renegotiated with policies in order to make sense of English and fit in the context, work setting and what they considered important to teach. The teachers were able to create their own units to work in the classes and use technology to make students interested in English.

This research by Cruz Arcila (2018) clearly shows teachers' agency in adapting their classroom practices to make language learning more appealing to students. The research helped me understand how teachers are intellectuals, able to build their own tools to adapt foreign language education policy in a restricted context.

5.2.2 Preschool teachers' agency process on the creation of language education policies

Urrego (2017) conducted a research study on how preschool teachers assert their agency to

become policymakers in Medellín. She first describes how language policies have changed over the years and how it is currently being implemented in schools. Many schools have an institutional curriculum which was created to follow national and local policies to teach different knowledge areas, but not every school's curriculum includes teaching English at the preschool level and this differs from what the Ministry of Education mandates. This was a multiple case study, with eighty one preschool teachers participating, together with one school coordinator and one policymaker from the Secretary of Education from Medellín. She also analyzed the different documents and policies by the Ministry of Education. Urrego used an inductive approach (Richards, 2003, as cited in Urrego 2017) for data analysis. Findings demonstrate how preschool teachers are exercising their agency regarding the participation in creating language education. Teachers were motivated by different reasons, such as globalization and giving their students a better education in order to help them get better education and job opportunities. These motivations were connected to teachers' personal beliefs about education and language learning and led teachers to create grassroot policies. Urrego says that policy creation takes place in the classroom and that is where policymaking should start. She remarks how every policy making process should start by recognizing the important role of teachers as policymakers and recognizing them as experts. Urrego's work (2017) is relevant to my study since it helps understand teachers' decisions for language policy processes and their role as policymakers.

5.2.3 Colombian teachers of English as agents in the implementation of English language policies in a multilingual country Villains or heroes?

Gonzalez (2023) take on teachers as agents in the implementation of English language policies in Colombia describes the role stakeholders and the media play in portraying English language teachers as responsables for the failure of students to reach English

proficiency. The author describes in detail why Colombian teachers, the majority of the time, fail to achieve language policy goals, which oftentimes make teachers seem like they perform poorly. Gonzalez explains how the government frequently allocates these challenges to Colombian teachers, challenges such as teacher's language proficiency, ELT methodologies used in class, the lack of sufficient qualified teachers as well as teaching conditions.

The author expresses that although teachers perform in challenging contexts, they get the job done. Many studies in Colombia have shown that teachers do not shy away from challenges but rather find creative and resilient problem solutions even though they are not supported by any professional development opportunities, fair salary and are treated with constant disregard of their capabilities.

5.3 Local studies

5.3.1 Apropiación de la política educativa nacional para el bilingüismo español-inglés en una institución educativa oficial no focalizada

Miranda's research (2020) focused on a teacher's appropriation of the National Bilingual Program in a non-focalized public school. The research design was case study and used classroom observation, interviews and document analysis. In the chapter, the author presented the case of teacher Antonio who was able to perform an agentic role by choosing what he found meaningful for his students to learn while he was also trying to reach the goals of the institutional education plan and the education policy. Miranda classified teacher's agency into curricular and extracurricular. In the former, she included adoption, adaptation, rejection and creation of micro policies, while in the latter, she identified teacher's initiatives such as a Bilingualism Group and finding scholarships for extra classes in languages institutes for his

students. In her analysis, the author identified how some features of the teacher's personal life played a role in his professional decisions and agentic actions. Miranda's research (2020) helps identify how teachers can both take and reject aspects of language policies and how agency connects with past experiences.

5.3.2 Appropriation of Colombian ELT policy in a targeted school. The creation of an “elite” yet still needy school in the public education system

Miranda (2021) explores ELT routines in the classroom that indicate the adoption, adaptation or rejection of the educational language policy in a focalized school. As focalized or targeted, the school counted on different resources and projects sponsored by the MOE. The author used case study research and employed ethnographic and discourse analytic methods. Interviews, observations and official documents were used to collect data. It was found that through the advantage of working for a focalized school, the participating teacher was able to get to know and understand the language policies and this had a positive impact in his practices. Nevertheless, although he acknowledges the good intentions of the policies and the advances made in official policy implementation strategies, the teacher also understands that there exist aspects that need to be improved in the educational system, such as the scarce time allocation and frequent class interruptions. The teacher's work demonstrates his role as an active agent as he uses the resources in the school but he adapts the curriculum according to the students' needs. Miranda showed that even focalized schools suffer from structural failures of the school system, which prevent them from attaining the official policy goals.

6. THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

In this section, I present the main concepts that guided the study: language policy, policy appropriation and teacher agency. For doing so, I explain the concept of language policy from a socio-critical perspective (Johnson, 2013), refer to sociocultural and ethnographic policy appropriation theories (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009) and consider teacher agency based on the ecological approach (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2015).

6.1 Language Policy

Language policy has been defined differently depending on the perspectives taken. Johnson (2013) synthesizes various definitions already in circulation and how these definitions hold up. Kaplan and Baldauf (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997 in Johnson, 2013) portrait language policies as a set of laws and regulations enacted by an authoritative body as part of a language plan. These regulations, rules, and practices are intended to achieve language change in societies, groups or systems. However, Johnson clarifies that language policies are not only enacted by an authoritative body but also by bottom-up movements or grassroots organizations. In his book, he includes Schiffman's definition of language policy as a cultural construct referring to linguistic culture that is the sum of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious structure and other cultural baggage of language from their background. For Schiffman (Schiffman, 1996, in Johnson, 2013), examining language policy without linguistic culture is trivial; he believes the latter is grounded in the former. Language policy is also viewed as an implementation and regulation of power. McCarty (McCarty, 2009, in Johnson, 2013) sees language policy beyond the dicotomy of top-down and bottom-up, but as

multilayered. She is more interested in language use in human interaction and negotiation, her definition includes a critical perspective of portraying policies as mechanisms that produce power, similar to Tollefson (Tollefson, 1991, in Johnson, 2013) who states language policy as the institutionalization of language to distinguish social classes; which help determine who has access to political power and economic resources.

In this research, I see language policy as a mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use or acquisition of language and includes different types and sets of dichotomies such as the genesis: top-down macro level policies or bottom-up micro level or grassroots generated policies, and the means and goals, either overtly expressed in written or spoken policy texts or intentionally concealed at the macro level or micro level. Language policy also includes explicit documents written or spoken, or implicitly occurring acts without official policy texts and in law (Johnson, 2013).

According to Johnson (2013), the combination of a critical focus on the power of language policy as a mechanism of leadership with an understanding of power of language policy agents is a balance needed in the field. Language Policy as a performance in the classroom can contradict official policy texts and discourses. Cincotta-Segi's (Cincotta-Segi, 2011, in Johnson, 2013) research reveals the importance of considering the multiple intentions and ideologies that engender policy text and discourse, as well as the multiple, unpredictable, and agentive forms of interpretation and appropriation unique to a particular context. The research shown in Johnson's book indicates that educators can make creative and agentive choices, which may or may not reflect macro-level policy texts and discourses and may in fact explicitly reject them. In other cases (Chimbutane, 2011; Yitzhaki, 2010, in Johnson, 2013), the beliefs and practices of individuals fall in line with dominant (policy) discourses

about language and, notably, align with imperialistic and marginalizing notions of what counts as a “good” or “useful” language in a society or school.

Relevant to the research presented in this report are the processes Johnson refers to: creation, interpretation, implementation versus appropriation, and instantiation.

6.2 Policy appropriation

Levinson, Sutton and Winstead (2009) introduce the concept of appropriation as a form of creative interpretive practice by different people involved in the policy process. For this, they understand policy as an ongoing social practice of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse contexts. Therefore, policy defines reality, orders behavior and allocates resources accordingly. Policy is then the cultural-textual expression of a political practice; it makes governing statements about what can and should be done (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009).

The authors recognize that traditional policy studies have focused on the process of implementation, but they decided to deepen on this concept and take a nearer view of the social practice that goes into the formation, the negotiation and appropriation of policy. The most popular interpretation appears to be one in which a person or a group reshapes and resignifies any previously existing cultural artifact in practice. In some traditions the concept of appropriation denotes a fundamentally individual process (Wolcott, 1991 in Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). Appropriation theory explains the mechanism by which concepts, norms, and values arise in a specific social community, in a different historical period, and then perhaps more widely distributed to the general public domain, and become a part of the cultural repertoire of a different social community. The term "negotiation" has a clear

political connotation, and they mean to acknowledge that policy is often negotiated between competing parties and interests in practice.

From the critical sociocultural perspective proposed by Levinson, Sutton and Winstead (2009), appropriation refers to “the ways that creative agents interpret and take in elements of policy, thereby incorporating these discursive resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action, their own figured worlds” (p. 779). Appropriation then sees policy actors as policy agents who do not blindly comply mandates from above, but as decision makers. In this sense, appropriation is necessarily linked to agency.

6.3 Teacher agency

Regarding agency and teacher agency, this study embraces the anthropological approach by Ahearn (2001) as well as Priestly, Biesta and Robinson (2015) work in teacher agency with their three-dimensional approach (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

In the text *Language and Agency*, Ahearn (2001, p. 112) defines agency as “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act”. Following Karp (Karp, 1986 in Ahearn, 2001), the author asserts that the main difference between an actor and an agent is that the former is rule-governed, while the latter exercises his/her power, engages in action and brings about changes to the world. Therefore, an agent is one that makes decisions which affect not only the agent but also others. Agency is not free will, however; agentive actions are partially shaped by the social structures in which they are performed (Ahearn, 2010) .

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) have affirmed that the concept of agency had not been clearly defined as an analytical category and proposed a three-dimensional approach to study agency. They argue that the accomplishment of agency should be understood as the combination of

three dimensions: the iterational, the projective and the practical evaluative, i.e. past, present, and future. The iterational represents the agents' life history, with selective patterns of thoughts and behaviors that have been incorporated into a person's conduct of life. The practical-evaluative dimension includes the cultural and material aspects in which agency is exercised, such as ideas, values, beliefs, discourses and language, as well as the resources and physical environment. The projective dimension is linked to intentions in a foreseen future and relates to plans for short or long term future. The analytical dimensions of agency focus on the influences of the past, projections of the future and the engagement with the here and now.

Priestly, Biesta and Robinson (2015) incorporate Emirbayer and Mische (1998) in the ecological approach they propose for the analysis of teacher agency. The authors take agency as shaped by the working conditions as well as the teacher's past life and motivations for the future. They state that agency is not restricted to the capacity of individuals; it is not something that people possess but it is something that people achieve in the interplay of individual capacities and their environment conditions. Their concept of agency focuses on actors and how they act by the means of their environment rather than just in their environment.

According to this, Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) take into account different aspects of teachers' past (iterative dimension), present (practical dimension) and future (projective dimension) to analyze teacher agency. In their analysis of agency, the teachers' practices in the classroom, their own experiences as students and how they conceive the future are all considered to provide a comprehensive situated understanding of agency. In Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) model, teacher agency is exercised by people who appropriate their own life stories as learners, are active members of a society as teachers, have their own perceptions of what learning and teaching is and of the favorable and limiting conditions of the context.

7. RESEARCH DESIGN

7.1 Type of study

This study focuses on teacher agency to appropriate the educational policy for English language teaching. For this, I followed a qualitative research approach. Keith Punch (2013, p.16) defined qualitative research as “an empirical research where data is not in the form of numbers” meaning that the research is based on something that is experienced rather than based on a theory that guides pre-established categories. The interest of this qualitative research is to understand the meaning that the participants have constructed and how they make meaning of their stories. In this type of study, the researcher is able to interpret and condense the life experiences of the participant’s natural context.

In order to understand and analyze agency, it is important to understand the subject's life stories -past, present and future- to make sense of the reality they create. Therefore, this study uses a narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2016) to focus on a teacher's life experience. Narrative inquiry can be best described as an approach to research that makes use of stories. The stories in this narrative research are short: they are excerpts of data extracted from the interviews that narrate experiences of the past and imagined future, include reflection, involve a temporal dimension, and embody action. In stories, the who, what, when, and where can be clearly identified (Barkhuizen, 2020).

As the main objective of this research is to analyze how teachers exercise their agency when facing challenges while appropriating the educational policy for ELT, getting to know the teachers’ background and practices, as well as their projects is of utmost relevance. The focus of narrative inquiry is to explore the individual’s life story, in this case a public school teacher, and explore her agentic role in language policies through the three

different dimensions of agency: iterative, projective and practical-evaluative.

7.2 Phases of study

This research is divided into three moments. The first part of the research was the selection of the participant, it was important to establish a criteria to find the right participant for this study. The participant should be a teacher working in a public school, also involved in language policy implementation projects with the MoE, and to have faced different challenges for the implementation and appropriation of the language policy. In order to be able and find the right fit for this research, I contacted two experts working with language policy, Carlos Alberto Mayora and Luz Stella Figueroa, who works with the Programa de Fortalecimiento de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras in the Secretariat of Education of Cali. Second, I collected the data. Three interviews with a public school teacher were conducted in order to know her experiences; through these, some policy and class curriculum documents were identified and collected. In the third phase, I decoded the data collected and found recurring issues and themes in a chronological order, this allowed me to make sense of the teacher's narratives and storytelling. As I started analyzing the data between interviews, I was able to confirm some of the initial findings and interpretations. In the final moment of this research allows one to construct an comprehensive interpretation of the role of the teacher as an active agent in the appropriation of the English language education policy.

7.3 Context

In Colombia, the language policy feeds from different rules and documents throughout the last decade. Colombia Bilingue has been preceded for different initiatives proposed by previous governments such as:

- Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (PNB) 2004-2014

The PNB's objective was to enable citizens to communicate in English so the country can enter the processes of global communication, as well as global economy and intercultural exchange. This initiative was expected to reach the goal of 100% of students completing high school with a B1 level in English in a 10-year period.

- Programa para el Fortalecimiento de Lenguas Extranjeras (PFDCLE) 2010-2014

The Programa para el Fortalecimiento de Lenguas Extranjeras objective was also to develop communicative skills in English for language educators and students to favor the inclusion of the country in the economic globalization from the year 2010 to 2014. This program promoted language teaching with innovative educational approaches and to reinforce the foreign language programs for future language educators impulsing the use of new technologies in the learning - teaching process. This program intended to boost the quality of the foreign language teaching programs and support teachers and students through virtual training to better the English level along with creative methodological strategies.

- Programa Nacional de Inglés (PNI) 2015-2025

The PNI goal is to contribute to achieving the goal of making Colombia the most educated country in Latin America and to reach the goal of making Colombia the country with the best level of English in South America.

- Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (2018-2022)

The National Bilingualism program aims for a communicative approach to learning foreign languages, a space where students and teachers are able to be part of the globalized world and help the development of the country. According to the MOE, the program guarantees better job opportunities for students and teachers, a future where they can access different international scholarships and even a better future in Colombia.

Following the recent wave of analyzing language policies in the micro-level and in order to investigate teacher agency, this research was undertaken in a school, with a teacher working in a public school in Cali. This school provides education from kindergarten to eleventh grade. It has around 1,385 students. The English program starts in middle school with three hours of class per week from 6th grade until 9th grade, the grades 10th and 11th have two hours of English class per week. The school has 5 foreign language teachers: two working in the morning and three in the afternoon. Class size is 43 to 45 students and there are between five to eight groups of each grade.

The classrooms are equipped with a board, a video beam, and individual chairs for each student. Classrooms' sizes vary, some classrooms are bigger than others.

The school is focalized by the MEN for the implementation of the National Program of Bilingualism. This means that it has received curricular (Standards, Learning Rights Suggested curriculum) and classroom materials (official textbooks), and that the English teachers have been part of the professional development programs (e.g. School to School program).

7.4 Participant

Teacher Sandra (a pseudonym) is forty six years old and she is from Cali, Colombia. She teaches English as a foreign language in the school and she has worked there since 2015. The teacher has a bachelor in foreign languages from Universidad del Valle in Cali. She got her master degree in Linguistics and Spanish, fulfilling her research work on the implementation of the first Program of Bilingualism (2004-2019). The teacher has taken part in multiple strategies for the implementation of language policies in Colombia provided by the MOE, such as School to School, Talkative conversation clubs given by native speakers and training to learn how to use resources in the classroom. Sandra has been a teacher for over 22 years.

7.5 Data collection instrument

The main instrument used to collect the data of this study was a set of three semi structured interviews. I also used documents as secondary data to further analyze the interviews.

7.5.1 Interviews

Three interviews were carried out to collect information regarding the teacher's background, education, and prior experiences (iterative dimension of agency), the context she works in, the challenges she faces and the practices she implements to overcome these challenges (practical-evaluative dimension of agency), and how her practices connects to her aspirations (projective dimension of agency) (Appendixes 1, 2, 3).

Interviews are both evocative and moving but they also allow clear analysis (Brinkmann, 2018). For this research, semi structured interviews are the most appropriate as they provide a structure to the conversation according to the information that is needed, but at the same time,

they are open to new descriptions or issues that the interviewee raises. Interviews also allow for short stories in a narrative form that depict participants' life experiences (Barkhuizen, 2020).

As mentioned above, three semi-structured interviews were used. The interview protocols and questions were carefully revised and discussed with the research advisor. The first interview looked for an introduction of the teacher and moved forward to the iterative dimension and life history. Questions were asked to understand and restorying her life experiences that took her to her working context and how these help to face challenges in her everyday professional environment. The second interview looked into the context the teacher is currently working in and the different challenges she faces in her professional field while appropriating the language policies. For this interview, she provided official documents of the public institution and her own. In the final interview the teacher expressed her projections and reflections on her action plans and attitudes towards the challenges she has experienced both personally and professionally. The interviews are sorted out in three sessions from thirty to forty-five minutes each.

Creating effective research questions was crucial for the development of the research, questions were carefully worded for the participants to feel comfortable choosing their own terms when answering the questions, as well as being carefully worded making them as neutral as possible avoiding influencing answers. Spanish was used in the interviews considering the teacher's first language as part of her identity.

7.5.2 Documents

The teacher provided in the second interview official documents such as the PEI (Proyecto de Educativo Institucional) that showcases the institutional action plan to identify the short term and long term goals for English as a second language in the institution. The teacher also provided her own action plan and material to appropriate language policies in the classroom. This helped to triangulate the information given in the interviews and understand the process the teacher does in the resources adaptation.

7.6 Data analysis

Thematic coding is frequently used in narrative inquiries (Barkhuizen, 2020) where the main objective is to establish potential themes that arise in the storyline (Benson, 2018). Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). In this research, thematic decoding and restorying narratives was important as I aimed for a condensed interpretation of the storytelling and meaning making of the experiences provided by the participant. These experiences were provided by the teacher in three different moments. Narrative analysis aims to keep the integrity of the data being collected where it draws bits of the data in order to create a coherent chronological plot with meaning that has relevance to the issue being researched.

For the data analysis, I first transcribed each interview and stored the files. I read and coded segments of the interviews by tagging them with codes. The analysis of the first and second interviews provided elements to add to the protocol of the second and third interviews respectively. This also served to check initial interpretations of the data. After coding, I recoded the data to merge codes, form families and identify recurring themes. This process

allowed me to construct meaning and make decisions on what themes were most relevant (Appendix 4).

7.7 Ethical considerations

There are clearly considerable ethical issues in qualitative research. In this research, I considered consent, integrity and confidentiality. The interviews were conducted with prior acceptance by the participant and the signing of an informed consent where the conditions of the research were explained to the subject and agreed upon. (Appendix 5). Integrity and anonymity were achieved through the use of a pseudonym and omitting key information that would lead to the identification of the participant.

8. FINDINGS

8.1 RQ1: What agentive actions does the teacher undertake to face the challenges at school?

8.1.1 Challenges of language policy appropriation

Teacher Sandra works with students from grades sixth to eighth of secondary level in a public school in Cali. In the interviews, she showcases her concerns over the level of English of sixth-grade students, since for most of the students it is the first real contact with the foreign language. She mentions that primary school teachers are not proficient in English and do not know the language policy, and therefore, most of them do not teach English, and for the ones that do, they do not do it very well.

For teacher Sandra, this means facing the challenge of dealing with the different levels of English in her sixth grade classes: “de grado sexto a grado once es el tiempo que tenemos en

los colegios públicos para poder hacer un, una labor con los pelados o un ejercicio con los pelados que les permita alcanzar esas metas que el Gobierno establece” (15-02-2022) (*See Appendix 6.1 for translation*). She goes on to explain that in the secondary level of education, students are in a difficult age, they are in their pre-teens or teen years, which means they are in a stage where they have low self esteem and therefore they do not want to participate in classes when it comes to performing in the foreign language in the classroom. Consequently, the challenge is not only providing them that first contact with the foreign language but also building trust and helping them grow confidence for them to be able to participate and engage in class:

uno tiene no solamente que enseñarles la lengua, sino también como empezar a fortalecerles a ellos como la confianza, la autoestima. Generar como ese ambiente agradable para que ellos se sientan libres de participar, dejando al lado la pena, dejando al lado la vergüenza, porque si no, entonces ¿cómo hacemos pues con una gente ahí sentada que no quiera leer? Que tú les digas, vamos a leer esta historia, entonces fulano lee hasta tal punto, y que te digan, no profe, yo no leo, no. Y se niegan, hay otros que se niegan, se niegan y no puedes hacer que lean. Entonces con esos pelados hay que hacer un trabajo, pues precisamente para eso. Entonces digamos que se pierde mucho tiempo en eso que podíamos ganar (15-02-2022). (*See Appendix 6.2 for translation*).

Besides, public schools such as the teacher’s usually have crowded classrooms. In the second interview (15-02-2022), teacher Sandra shared that her class size was around 42 - 43 students. Sandra thinks this number of students does weigh in the process of implementing a language policy.

For the teacher, besides class size and students' limited proficiency in grade sixth, time represents another challenge. Time limitation prevents a smooth progress of appropriating the language policy. For Sandra, it is very difficult to go back to the basics of the language such as the numbers, the colors, etcetera, as she believes that it takes too much time where it could be used in better activities and take advantage of the time designated for the English classes.

Sandra mentioned the breach between public schools and private schools in relation to instructional time and the different levels of English of the students. For her, it would not be possible to make a fair comparison between public schools to private schools:

los colegios privados nos llevan, digamos que cinco años de ventaja o más porque si le metes desde el preescolar, algunos que desde el preescolar le meten fuerte, pues obviamente nosotros siempre vamos a estar en desventaja ¿si me entendés? porque no vas a comparar un colegio público con un privado, pues porque no.
(15-02-2022) (*See Appendix 6.3 for translation*).

Teacher Sandra shows different perceptions about the language policy. Despite the several challenges mentioned above, she believes she is fortunate because her institution is focalized, meaning that it is prioritized by the MOE to allocate different resources. For the teacher, the fact that the subject area counts on an official educational policy, makes it privileged. However, she does not hesitate to criticize and indicate different flaws, as she still believes there are limitations in resources and infrastructure:

nosotros necesitamos más diccionarios, sería muy chévere uno poder ... tener un aula especializada de inglés. Un aula que contara con sus computadores para uno hacer ejercicios de audio, de escucha, o sea, esa parte creo que sí, pues que si nos falta. Yo

creería que, que si bien tenemos unos recursos que nos permiten hacer una labor diferente, a como quizás lo pueden hacer otros coles que no tienen ni siquiera un libro de texto, nos sigue faltando (15-02- 2022) (*See Appendix 6.4 for translation*).

It is important to notice that in the quote above, teacher Sandra is referring to the secondary level, since the primary level does not count with any of the resources mentioned. She understands the privilege for the subject area to have its own educational policy, yet it needs to be revised as it is far from the schools' context. Thus, these challenges boost Sandra's knowledge all together with her creativity to find alternatives and like so, fulfill her language policy objectives, these are further explained in the next paragraphs.

8.1.2 Agentive actions

Teacher Sandra uses the Learning Rights, as well as the Suggested Curriculum policy documents when planning the curriculum. The data in this research showcased the teacher's initiative and decision making to plan her courses and how she goes with what she believes is the best option for her students. For the teacher, it is clear that time limitation is a challenge itself, and it is why she selects part of the content in the official curriculum.

The teacher explains how she faces the different challenges mentioned before: class size, time limitation and students' low level. Besides these, the pandemic became a real test to teachers' and schools' creativity. During the total lockdown the world faced, the school went from the usual face to face modality to virtual classes. For many, this would be a clear limitation, nevertheless, when teacher Sandra talked about this experience, she did not see it as a difficult transition, but rather as an opportunity to navigate this new challenging situation. Therefore,

Sandra displayed several instances of agency in the interviews; as she mentioned in the excerpt, she adapted the curriculum to reinforce topics that, to her judgment, her students needed to. She mentioned:

nosotros nos basamos en los DBA. Usamos los DBA. Usamos pues los Estándares también. No, yo creo que nosotros miramos todo. De hecho, miramos incluso hasta el Currículo Sugerido. Nosotros en la planeación de, qué hacemos del área del aula, pues miramos qué cosas, nosotros no, no tomamos, obviamente todo como está ahí, no, pero sí como que nos orientamos de qué hay allí y vemos qué podemos pasar para, para la, para las cosas que hacemos en el colegio. Entonces yo creo que nosotros sí, sí, sí miramos y de verdad tomamos eso. Los DBA, los Estándares y el Currículo se hacen parte como de nuestro ejercicio, sí los consideramos (15-02-2022) (*See Appendix 6.5 for translation*).

Teacher Sandra's agentive actions are apparent in her planning. In her 7th grade class curriculum plan (Plan de aula), it was possible to see how she adapted an 8th-grade learning objective from the official Basic Learning Rights:

Teacher:		Subject:		Level		Term		Timing:	
Sandra		English		7 Th			I-2		60 hours
TOTAL WEEKS: 20		WEEKS FOR THIS ACTIVITIES: 10							
TITLE: TELL YOUR STORY									
BASIC LEARNING RIGHTS (DBA)	TIME	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	# Hours	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	ONGOING ASSESSMENT			
						EVIDENCES	ASSESSMENT		
I use my own general knowledge and experience about feelings and emotions to describe situations in the past orally I use my own general knowledge about past experiences to understand what I <u>listen</u> about it. I give examples using my personal opinions about subjects in class.	20 hours 20 hours 20 hours	-Students express their feelings and emotions using adjectives like tired, excited, scared and describe situations in the past.	60	1. Talking about the past 2. Giving and requesting information. 3.- Asking and answering questions about your life and the life of others. 4.- Writing and talking about a biography	Nearpod Whiteboard Internet resources Book Digital flashcards	1.-Facts about Frida Kahlo's biography 2.- Facts about Alan Turing's biography 3.-Written exercises	1.-Reading comprehension tests 2.-Oral exercises (Dialogue) 3.- <u>PLAN A:</u> Ss will talk about a famous person who has made a contribution to humanity. 4. - <u>PLAN B:</u> Ss will inquire about relevant news on the day, month or year of their birth, present it oral based on the Rubric.		

The 8th-grade Learning Rights can be seen in the image below:

DERECHOS BÁSICOS DE APRENDIZAJE INGLÉS

Grado 8°

5

Realiza recomendaciones a personas de su comunidad sobre qué hacer, dónde, cuándo o cómo, con base en situaciones cotidianas de su vida familiar, escolar o de su entorno. Por ejemplo:

Tomas: You should organize your free time.
Eduardo: Really? How?
Tomas: You can make a schedule.
Eduardo: Really, is it helpful?
Tomas: Yes. I do it and it really helps me to organize my time.
Eduardo: Thank you! I will try.
Tomas: I think that you really need to do it as soon as possible.
Eduardo: Can you help me to do it?
Tomas: O.k. Do you want to start right now?
Eduardo: It is O.k. I am free!
Tomas: First of all, you should know when you are free and what activities you have to do; then, you should plan the activities according to their importance.
Eduardo: Oh! That's a good idea! I am going to do a list of my pending activities.



6

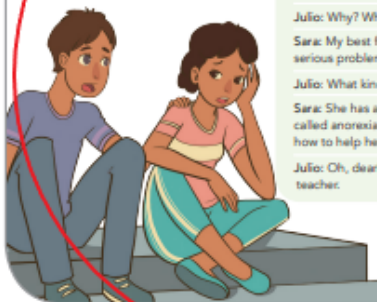
Hace exposiciones breves sobre un tema académico relacionado con su entorno escolar o su comunidad y tiene en cuenta: hechos relevantes, detalles concretos y vocabulario específico. Para esto, se ha preparado previamente y se ha asesorado con sus compañeros y profesor. Por ejemplo:



Good morning! My purpose today is to talk about language. Language is the ability to acquire and use the system of communication. There are about 5.000 to 7.000 languages in the world. When we communicate, we can use words, symbols, gestures, movements, or images. It means that language can be verbal (words: spoken or written) and symbolic (images, gestures, movements, symbols). In conclusion, we use language to interact with other people, to express our ideas, feelings and emotions.

7

Expresa sus emociones y sentimientos sobre una situación o tema específico de su entorno familiar o escolar, presentando sus razones de forma clara y sencilla. Para esto, se vale del vocabulario conocido. Por ejemplo:



Sara: I am really sad.
Julio: Why? What's up?
Sara: My best friend has a serious problem.
Julio: What kind of problem?
Sara: She has an eating disorder called anorexia and I don't know how to help her.
Julio: Oh, dear! Let's talk to our teacher.

8

Narra brevemente hechos actuales, situaciones cotidianas o sus experiencias propias, en forma oral o escrita. Para esto, tiene en cuenta la secuencia de las acciones, la claridad de las ideas y se asesora con sus compañeros y su profesor. Por ejemplo:



My first trip...
The first time I left my small town was when I went to the capital. We had a school visit to a local newspaper printing plant to understand the process of producing and printing the newspaper. When we finished the activity we went to a mall. It was exciting for me because I have never been to a mall before. There were some things which surprised me because I have never seen them, such as the electronic stairs and the elevator. I was afraid first but once I tried them, I really enjoyed it!

- 22 -

Colombia Bilingüe

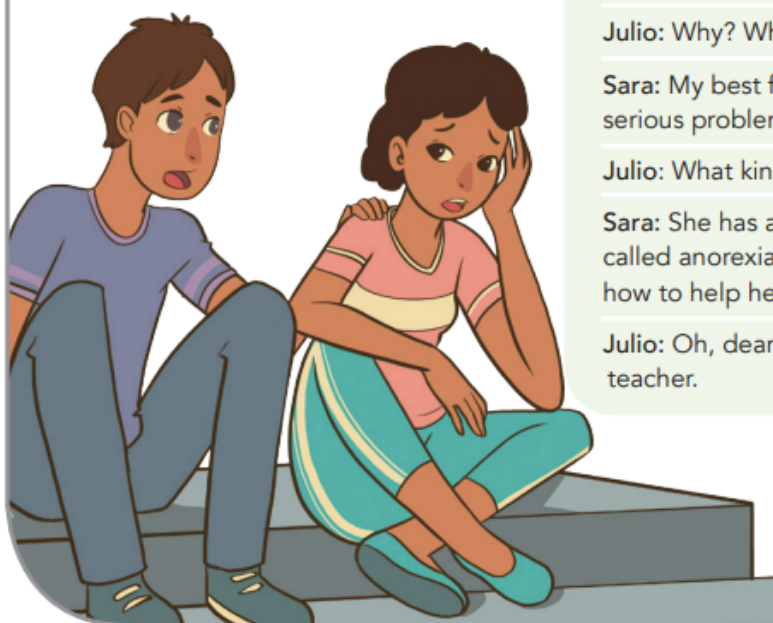
MINEDUCACIÓN

TODOS POR UN
NUEVO PAÍS

7



Expresa sus emociones y sentimientos sobre una situación o tema específico de su entorno familiar o escolar, presentando sus razones de forma clara y sencilla. Para esto, se vale del vocabulario conocido. Por ejemplo:



Sara: I am really sad.

Julio: Why? What's up?

Sara: My best friend has a serious problem.

Julio: What kind of problem?

Sara: She has an eating disorder called anorexia and I don't know how to help her.

Julio: Oh, dear! Let's talk to our teacher.

The approach teacher Sandra undertook was to adapt and make decisions over what she believes works better for her students taking account the conditions of the context. For example, the low level of English of her 7th grade class does automatically mean using the mandated content of the previous grade (6th grade). As it can be seen in the plan above, teacher Sandra used content of grade 8th instead. Her declaration that she and her colleagues adapted the MOE curriculum guidelines (“ nosotros...no tomamos... todo como está ahí... pero sí como que nos orientamos”) (See Appendix 6.6 for translation) was noticeable in the practice.

Besides the decision to adapt the contents of the grade curriculum plan, teacher Sandra also worked with students in different methodological strategies. She explained that due to the pandemic, in the school they decided to “semestralizar” the academic year: this meant working what it was meant for a year in just six months. Teacher Sandra shared that the school’s semestralization of the subjects implied that her students would have to study in one semester the classes that regularly would be for a school year. For her, this meant her students would not see English for the second part of the year, which would represent a delay in their language learning process. Therefore, taking advantage of the technology and the new virtual modality, she decided to implement an additional study space during the time opposite to their academic journey (“en contrajornada”) for the students to reinforce some topics or resit exams. An intern who was doing her practicum as a pre-service teacher aided her in this endeavor:

como profe yo soy libre de haber hecho, digamos que esos procesos de, de refuerzo o de recuperación de la manera que quisiera, yo pude haber dejado un taller resuelvanlo y vienen en este día y hacen un examen y ya, eso era válido. Pero me pareció que no, yo en su momento sí lo hice, dejé, les dejé un taller y había una fecha para presentar un examen. Pero cuando se dio la posibilidad de tener un acompañante alguien ahí como auxiliar, pues me parece muy valioso y pensé que no se podía desperdiciar esa posibilidad y que a los pelados les iba a servir mucho más si hacer mi taller, pero con el acompañamiento de alguien más, es decir, ellos tenían un tiempo para resolver, les di un período de de de tiempo para que lo hicieran. Creo que fueron una o dos semanas, luego se, se reunieron ya con la practicante y conmigo, entonces empezábamos, listo, bueno, cómo les fue en, en tal pregunta y entonces qué colocamos y Pepito, ¿usted qué puso? y Ta-ta y el otro, y entonces ¿quién tiene una opción diferente de respuesta?, eh póngala, escríbala en el chat, abra el micrófono y

dígala, abra la cámara y muestre el cuaderno, bueno en fin entonces listo, esta respuesta no es por tal cosa, la otra tampoco por tal otra, entonces la correcta, es la que tiene el fulanito acá, entonces íbamos como la misma vez jugando, explicando y resolviendo lo que ellos ya tenían allí. Entonces siento que, pues para los pelados eso es más valioso, que, sencillamente, dejarles un taller donde pueden pagarle a alguien que se los haga y ya. Entonces digamos que lo que me motivó es eso, fue pensar en que era mejor para ellos, que era lo más conveniente para ellos, y porque no se trataba de responderme a mí, sino de que tengan unas bases que les sirvan para más adelante ¿Me entiendes? Así sea poco, pero que lo poco que sepan lo sepan bien (01-03- 2022).

(See appendix 6.7 for translation)

Clearly, Sandra is interested in her students to learn and for them to learn well. She is interested in using all the resources at hand and enhancing them for the benefit of their students. The teacher has her students' best interest at heart.

During the virtual classes, teacher Sandra was able to work together with some of her peers from other subjects. She reached out to two of her colleagues with whom she felt more congeniality for them to work together, articulate the topics and create something that was easy for them and the students during the pandemic lockdown and virtual classes. She says:

Yo, digamos que con los docentes con los que tengo más afinidad, entonces más cercanía, entonces pues con ellos hice la propuesta de que miremos ¿yo qué estoy enseñando, vos que estás enseñando y el otro, ¿qué está enseñando? y ¿cómo podemos articularnos de alguna manera para que sea más fácil para nosotros y para los pelados también? (01-03- 2022) *(See appendix 6.8 for translation)*

Nonetheless, the intention to make the process easier for both the teachers and the students was at times deceiving as Sandra mentioned it required more time for the teachers to get together, do the articulation, and decide on the activities, the evaluation process, and everything in between.

Ese “más fácil” para nosotros, es a ratos un engaño, porque la articulación requiere mucho trabajo en equipo, mucho tiempo eh de mirar qué qué vas a hacer, cómo vas a organizar, cómo vas a evaluar, cómo vas a proponer las actividades, que con esa sola actividad evalúes las tres, las dos materias con las que estás trabajando articulado (01-03-2022). *(See appendix 6.9 for translation)*

In spite of all of that, Sandra declared they integrated the subjects successfully, the initiative worked well and they enjoyed it as the students did great. “creo que nos fue muy bien, nos gustó mucho, a los pelados también, entonces tuvimos un solo classroom, donde estábamos... Arte, matemática, inglés y ética... fue muy, muy interesante el trabajo que pudimos hacer por los pelaos (01-03-2022) *(See appendix 6.10 for translation)* And once again, it was possible to see how the teacher’s interest in her students played an important role in her decision making, teamwork and leadership to design new strategies for a challenging situation.

The analysis of the teachers’ narrative revealed that for Sandra’s teaching practices, the role of the school context played an important part in her performance. Thus, this will be further discussed in the following theme. In what follows, I present characteristics of the context key to the teacher’s agency in policy appropriation.

8.1.3 Characteristics of the school context

As stated above, the school where teacher Sandra works is a focalized institution, meaning that the MOE provides the school with different resources and directly offers official strategies for the implementation of the language policy. This institution has not only been a recipient of different specialized resources such as the student textbooks like English Please! and Way to Go, but it has also been offered teacher training in the use of the textbooks and in other areas.

Teacher Sandra has shared her experiences with training programs provided by the MOE such as Aliados 10 Inglés, School to School, and also, Conversation clubs for the teachers to enhance their speaking abilities in the foreign language. These trainings were initiatives by the MOE for the focalized public schools of the city. Aliados 10 Inglés program consisted of a bilingual school from another city supporting the focalized school. In this policy implementation strategy, teachers of the English area from the two schools got together to revise and discuss the curricula and teaching practices. In this way, teacher Sandra was able to exchange ideas with English teachers from other schools. Following the Aliados 10 Inglés program, came School to School where the MOE traced results of Aliados 10 Inglés and what was being done with those results. Sandra's perception on these practices were fairly positive as she believed it was an enriched experience where teachers could learn from each other. Sandra thinks these activities should be done more often as it improves the practices and teachers can support each other on their processes.

eso me pareció supremamente enriquecedor, había como una especie de mesas de trabajo también, eh muy chévere la verdad que a mí me pareció que eso fue

muy cómo te digo, bastante enriquecedor y como que te permite expandir un poquitico, ser más creativo porque ¡ay!, mira qué se está haciendo esto, entonces podríamos, de pronto acá, no sé, ajustarlo, adaptarlo y hacerlo de esta manera. Bueno, aparte también de conocer gente de otras regiones, que también son docentes de [colegios similares], bueno, la gente del privado también (01-03-2022). *(See Appendix 6.11 for translation)*

Aliados and School to School were meaningful official language policy implementation strategies the teacher took part in which helped her make an experienced educator. By this time, Sandra has come a long way for many years since her early years as a teacher, during this time different experiences and practices have molded the professional she is nowadays.

Through her short stories, it is possible to see the process it took for her to reach this point in her career. In her beginnings as a teacher, Sandra felt scared to start her practicum. She expressed how for her it was overwhelming to put into practice all the theory studied in her teacher education program. This is presented in more depth in the following paragraphs.

8.2 RQ2: How does the teacher's personal background affect her agentive actions?

8.2.1 Sandra's evolvment as a teacher

Sandra always had an interest in English as a foreign language. She recalled her attraction to rock music in English when she was younger. She bought many “cancioneros” (book songs) where she could see the song lyrics and the pronunciation, this fact brought her attention to the foreign language, English principally. For Sandra, having an interest in English as a foreign language did not mean wanting to teach. She got into her undergraduate studies with

different plans for her career, she wanted to be a flight attendant. The idea of teaching seemed like something far-fetched “O sea enseñar jamás se me había pasado por la cabeza (08-02-2022) *(See Appendix 6.12 for translation)* Her expectations with her education were very different from what it was intended to “yo no me veía enseñando, nunca había tenido un acercamiento con la enseñanza e ingresé a la carrera, pues por motivos diferentes (08-02, 2022) *(See Appendix 6.13 for translation)*.

Studying a bachelor’s degree in Foreign language teaching implied teaching practicum, a process that was daunting to Sandra “yo quería morirme porque no sabía cómo me iba a parar al frente de un salón y eso (08-02-2022) *(See Appendix 6.14 for translation)*.

This feeling overwhelmed her as it is something every undergraduate student has to do as a pre-service teacher. To her advantage, Sandra found peer support in her classmates since they had studied in a school with vocational studies in didactics:

Entonces una de mis compañeras de clase que sí era normalista y que llevaba pues trabajando mil años en enseñanza... Hice la práctica en su institución, en su aula de clase y a partir de ahí hice como ese click con, con la educación...como el mismo grupo de apoyo que tienes de entre los amigos que ya tienen más experiencia, entonces para mí realmente eso fue lo que me ayudó (08-02-2022) *(See Appendix 6.15 for translation)*.

In the previous quote, it is apparent that peer support played an important role in the development of Sandra’s skills and identity as a teacher. Her narrative shows her first time facing the teaching practice as a pre-service teacher as she felt pressured to stand up in front of a classroom.

This was not the only challenge she found then, however. Sandra started her practicum with preschool students and this alone represented a challenge itself, she found everything about her beginnings demanding.

No, pues todo... Yo no sabía, cómo los iba a saludar, o sea, cómo se hace con un niño de preescolar, o sea, ¿cómo los saludas? ¿cómo le decís? ¿cómo le hablás? Porque al grande, pues nada es como que, como contemporáneo, más o menos con uno, entonces, como que bueno, pero un niño, o sea, yo decía era como: ¡miércoles! aquí, ¿cómo hago esto? Además, porque ellos tienen como unos, unas rutinas muy establecidas y específicas en su día (08-02-2022) (*See Appendix 6.16 for translation*).

Sandra's higher education studies did not include pedagogy to work in preschool or elementary, therefore, she felt she had little or no competence to teach children. Starting her teaching practice became a challenge, even when working in Secondary. She recalls not knowing how to put all the theory into practice when asked about the biggest challenge in her transition from student to pre-service teacher.

yo creo que una de las cosas más duras es, pues, poner en práctica toda la teoría que adquieres, o sea, uno puede ser muy bueno en la lengua, tener un muy buen nivel de inglés, pero eso no significa ser un buen profe; ni que sabes llegarle a la gente, pues de la manera en la que en la que se requiere, ¿no? Entonces como que lograr ese balance.

Yo creo que para todos al inicio es difícil porque es como buscar ese... No sé cómo decir la palabra como ese... lugar de ¿qué profe soy? Pues porque todos salimos con el mismo título, y todos, tenemos, tenemos digamos que, entre comillas, unas capacidades para hacer, pero ¿qué calidad o qué profe soy? Es algo que uno va descubriendo en la marcha. Entonces todo eso que sé, todo eso que aprendí. Pero, ¡miércoles! ¿cómo llego, cómo pongo esto? O sea ¿qué ejercicio es más apropiado

para esta gente? ¿Cómo aprendes a conocer a los estudiantes que tienes y las necesidades que tienen? y ¿cómo bajas esa información de lo que tú sabes para que pueda llegarle y poder guiarlos de la mejor manera? Entonces yo creo que esa es una de las cosas que es desafiante, es como buscar ese lugar... O hacerse un lugar, no sé cómo decirlo... De profe, o sea, en esta carrera (08-02-2022). (*See Appendix 6.17 for translation*).

The exercise of teaching and acquiring experience played an important part in Sandra's process to face and overcome her challenges about her identity as a teacher and finding her place in her field.

The teacher has talked about events of her personal background that took part in her growth and her identity as a teacher. She believes that such events contributed to shape her character but previous to that she already had found her place as an educator.

8.2.2 Finding support

In her early years as a teacher, she had faced a very difficult personal situation as she lost [a very close person] at the time.

Eso para mí fue algo durísimo, eso fue algo, no, no, eso me pegó en ese momento tremendamente duro. Entonces, sin embargo, yo nunca me desvinculé del cole. Nunca pedí permiso, denme dos, tres días. No, yo, por el contrario, siempre me decía, no, yo si me quedo en la casa me da más duro. Entonces, cuando yo llegaba al cole, pues yo, esos niñitos los adoraba, entonces sabía que no podía llegar carita triste, ni acongojada, sino que cuando ya, yo podía venir llorando en la buseta, pero cuando llegaba al cole ya, chin, cari contenta; la teacher de siempre, y entonces ellos conmigo

eran supremamente amorosos. Yo siento que yo les tengo un amor. Ya hoy en día son unos adultos viejísimos, pero yo los quiero un montón porque siento que a mí me ayudó mucho el de estar todo ese medio día con ellos porque ellos me abrazaban y me besaban, teacher tan linda, no sé qué. Pero en el fondo ellos no sabían ni el bien que me estaban haciendo por el proceso que no estaba viviendo, porque pues ¿cómo le decís a un niño chiquito esas cosas? O sea, no. Pero claro, yo me dejaba. Yo me sentaba, yo me dejaba, ellos me ponían flores en la cabeza porque yo salía y los cuidaba en la hora del descanso, se me chingaban encima (...) eran super lindos. Todo eso fue muy bueno, y muy sano para mí. Estar allí, en ese entorno con ellos (08-02-2022). *(See Appendix 6.18 for translation)*.

In the quote above, the teacher recalls the event as tremendously difficult. She explains that even though she was going through a very hard period on her personal life, she never disassociated from school and the students, as she believed that “staying home would be harder” and she loved her students, therefore, she could not arrive to her class with a “sad face” or “distress”. The students helped her a lot to overcome that painful event in her personal life as, for her, both her professional and personal lives were different from one another. In our interaction during the interviews, we were able to identify this aspect as her coming into teacher mode, which was very interesting as she is one individual but she was able to separate or disassociate her personal matters to her professional responsibilities.

The teacher remarks that as this experience was very difficult for her, it helped shape her character, mature and change her attitudes. Her narrative in a storied form displays how her students unknowingly provided the support she needed at a specific time of her career. Support from others not only helped the teacher navigate the situation, but she also learned to rely on others to overcome demanding circumstances, similar to her beginnings in the teaching practicum. Throughout her life, Sandra has found support from her peers and students. And as

it was mentioned before, this assisted her process to be the teacher she is now. In this research it can be understood how her willingness to accept help and work with others have enhanced her teaching practices. She believes that working hand in hand with her coworkers and students is important to support each other in each other's processes. Just as when she participated in the Aliados 10 and School to School experiences.

Sandra has always worried about her professional development. Apart from her degree in foreign languages, she did a master's degree in Linguistics and Spanish, and has completed various professional development programs, some of them on new technologies and teaching practices.

Yo creo que siempre es importante, uno, no solamente encerrarse en un salón de clase y no más. No, yo creo que como profes uno tiene que estar abierto, tiene también que explorar otras posibilidades eh, que obviamente se van a ver reflejadas en la docencia y en la práctica que hagas. En la medida en la que uno pueda estar enterado de qué está sucediendo, creo que eso te expande mucho más la manera en la que puedas llegar a la clase y proponer y generar eh, situaciones de aula distintas, ¿no? (01-03-2022) (*See Appendix 6.19 for translation*).

Teacher Sandra has shown throughout this research her willingness to learn and to share, she has the best intentions for her students and she looks for ways in which she and colleagues can straighten their skills and benefit the students. She recognizes the intentions of the language policy and believes its implementation would be ideal but the goals are far from the reality the schools contexts face. While Sandra considers it is very difficult for schools and teachers to fulfill them, she sets particular goals and projections for her students.

RQ3: What aspirations guide the teacher's agency when appropriating the educational policy for English language teaching?

8.3.1 Teacher 's expectations: "Mira a mí me tiene sin cuidado si está en A, B, C, eso, ¿sí me entendés?"

According to Sandra, the language policy goals in the context of public schools in the country are ambitious. She mentions there are several factors like infrastructure, the lack of resources, time limitations, the number of students in the classroom, and the students' level of English that reduce the possibility to accomplish policy objectives. Not even the teacher's initiative, decision making, curriculum adaptation, methodological strategies, extracurricular activities, and use of technology can guarantee the accomplishment of objectives set by the MOE. Sandra believes that in order to get close to those goals, there needs to be a change from the officials creating the policies:

yo sigo pensando que son muy ambiciosos, yo sigo pensando que, ¿qué es el ideal? claro, pues el ideal es que tengamos gente bilingüe, pero, pero no creo que hay muchos factores allí que juegan y que hacen que sea tremendamente ambicioso lograr eso, al menos en nuestras instituciones oficiales, ¿no? Hay que cambiar muchas cosas para que pueda, pudiésemos llegar a, a, a tenerlo de esa manera, para que cuando los estudiantes se gradúen, lleguen a esas metas que se establecen (01-03-2022). (*See Appendix 6.20 for translation*)

Nevertheless, for the teacher, there are other aims that are beyond the official language policy goals: communication and enjoyment. Sandra believes being able to communicate is more important than being typecast in a level of mastery of the language. For example, oftentimes students can bump into foreigners on the streets and feel intimidated to use English. For

Sandra, this is a good opportunity for the students to approach them and say something about their city or neighborhood; in a nutshell, to communicate in the foreign language.

a mí me tiene sin cuidado si está en A, B, C, eso, eso ¿sí me entendés? A mí lo que realmente me interesa es que los pelados mínimamente pudieran comunicar algo, que al menos esos que yo tengo fuesen capaces de que si están caminando por ahí por San Antonio, porque por la zona en la que yo estoy hay mucho gringo, hay mucho, se hospeda mucha gente, pues así, que si se encontraran a alguien, tuviesen ese valor y ese arriesgarse a saludar sin pena a decir algo de ellos, a ser capaces de decir algo de su barrio, de su ciudad ¿Sí, me entendés? así fuera mínimamente, pero no que vean a un gringo andando por ahí y pongan cara de contento y se emocionen, pero ay, no como que bajó alguien de la luna, pues y yo, pobre terrícola, no soy capaz, no, ¿sí me entendés? si no cómo que mínimamente ellos hicieran algo como eso, más allá de que se está en qué nivel, no' (01-03-2022). *(See Appendix 6.21 for translation)*

Besides, Sandra thinks developing a fondness for English is key to her teaching and students' learning process "obviamente le cojan el gusto y el amor al idioma, o sea que pierdan esos temores" (01-03-2022), and she firmly believes the students will need English: "es necesario, lo van a necesitar y va a ser vital, más en la edad en la que ellos están de acá a que sean adultos y pues sí ahorita es necesario, imagínate por allá cuando sean más grandes." (01-03-2022). This is why, in her opinion, it is central that students like and learn the language.

Sandra acknowledges the work that needs to be done together with the official agents in policy making. In this sense, she believes teachers are not only implementers but also policymakers. In her opinion, interdisciplinary work is needed so the students use English not only used in language class but also in different areas:

los profes vayan a la misma par y apoyen ese lado del inglés entonces que en los salones hubiese esa ambientación, que desde las diferentes áreas así fuera una lecturita les colocaran ¿sí me entendés? Creo que eso serviría, quizás un poquito más, que ellos se sintieran como que no es la lengua para la clase de inglés sino que, que pudieran ver que es útil, o sea, me sirve y lo puedo aplicar en otras materias (15-02-2022) *(See Appendix 6.22 for translation)*

Teacher Sandra wishes her students understand that English is useful beyond the classroom and they can use it to communicate with others in different situations and circumstances.

9. DISCUSSION

9.1 When challenges and initiative boost informed imagination

This research hints at how teachers, acting as policy agents, can imagine and enact initiatives to overcome pressing challenges in the here and now, situated in specific contexts. Sandra engages in her school environment and responds to its demands creatively. Her agency is constructed by her engagement, first in her desire to learn and continuing education and then in the school demands. Her agency is achieved through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, and this transforms her own practices and those of her students (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

In the exercising of agency, teachers like Sandra make decisions in the here and now. Agency can only be acted out in the present moment, this being the practical-evaluative dimension of agency which involves making decisions and judgments among emerging demands, problems or situations (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). As it was seen in Le (2018) and Miranda (2020), this study also showed that teachers address pressing challenges using their built

judgment, repertoire of teaching skills and resources at hand. Both Sandra and the teachers in Hernández and Larena's study (2014), for example, adapted the curriculum to match it to students' needs. The challenges informed teachers face become the starting point to new practices.

9.2 The crucial role of the context

Miranda (2021) and Hernandez and Larenas (2014) show that schools suffer from structural failures from the system, which keep them from attaining language policy goals. Even though in their studies teachers use official policy documents, policy appropriation represents a challenge. Similarly, Urrego (2017) and Cruz Arcila (2018) deepen in the importance of context when implementing language policies. In this study, teacher Sandra asserts that the language policy is well written on paper but far from the realities of the schools. In Sandra's case, the analysis of her school context with its possibilities and constraints played a key role in the exercise of her agentic actions (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). Even though the teacher's institution is a focalized school and receives methodological resources to implement the language education, this was not enough. This makes it possible to reiterate that agents are able to make practical decisions in their presence of different challenges (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

9.3 From a scared pre-service teacher to a knowledgeable experienced in-service professional

Sandra's past history and experiences condition -although not limit- her present teaching practices (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Teacher Sandra has been teaching for a long time and her experience gives her enough teaching sources to improve her teaching practices while getting constantly informed (Urrego, 2017). For Sandra, her first approach to teaching made her feel scared and overwhelmed about what kind of teacher she wanted to be. Searching for

her identity as an educator made her feel at first she did not know how to teach but consistently looked for her place as an educator by finding support for her students and help from her peers. She found both comfort and learning in these interactions.

Now, based on her experience and her fear in her beginnings, teacher Sandra is able to respond and produce new behaviors helping to maneuver challenges in the present (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015; Miranda 2020).

9.4 Teacher's expectations do not always couple with official language policy goals

Similar to Miranda's study (2021), Sandra undertook actions to fulfill the learning objective she had set for her students. Teachers can partially project their students' future in relation to language learning use and learning and correspondingly act in the present. They set new objectives while sometimes also trying to attain the goals set by the policy makers (Miranda, 2020). Sandra's aims of her teaching transcend the expectations set by the official language policies, as she is interested in her students' real learning of the language. This is proof that even though the teacher does not agree with everything the language policy dictates as it alienates the real conditions of the contexts of the schools, she works on projections that ultimately better benefit the students' language learning process. The projective dimension of agency ((Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015) impacts the different decisions language teachers make and actions they enact.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The public school teacher responds agentively to many different structural educational challenges when appropriating the educational policy for English language teaching. Due to her constant professional development and engagement with official policy strategies, the teacher is able to identify the resources provided by the MOE and use them critically in appropriating the language policy.

Public schools in the country lack resources for the appropriation of the English teaching policy. The MOE works with teachers' training for them to be aware of the new resources and teaching practices but this does not seem to be enough. For the teacher in this study, there are many restricting factors that should be taken into account when creating a language policy as she does believe achieving the policy goals would be ideal, but they are far from the reality of the students' and school's contexts. Sandra has proven to create new strategies for her students to learn English but also a great interest in them to enjoy the process and understand that English is also something they can use outside of the classrooms. Her trajectory from her personal background to the professional in-service teacher she is now has helped her mature and grow up. Her trajectory has shaped her character to take action in different challenging situations in every context presented to her.

The teacher's policy perceptions are clear throughout the study whereby impulsed her agentive actions. The teacher was able to creatively respond to a globally challenging moment with the pandemic by articulating different subject areas and helping relieve stress to the students in this way, even though it meant to take on extra workload. The teacher's extra work with students in different time frames from her classes, the creation of different material for them to work on their language skills, the use she made of resources, the adaptation of

curriculums and articulation of areas are plenty of actions for a teacher to do in order to face the challenges and limiting factors.

This study shows the importance of conducting more research to investigate the variety of agentive actions teachers from different institutions enact to appropriate the language policy in challenging contexts and situations. Identifying a large repertoire of strategies can help future and in-service teachers in their practice.

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12. APPENDIX

12.1 APPENDIX: Interview 1

Protocol:

The interviewer greets the interviewee and asks the questions below. The interviewer will be open to ask follow up questions when appropriate.

Questions:

1. El entrevistador le pide a la maestra que haga una breve presentación sobre ella.
2. ¿Qué desencadenó su interés en una lengua extranjera?
3. ¿Cuál fue el momento que hizo darse cuenta de que esto es lo que podría seguir como carrera profesional?
4. En el momento en que comenzó a practicar su rol como profesora de inglés, ¿qué fue lo que encontró más desafiante de la transición de una estudiante de idiomas a un profesor de idiomas en ejercicio?
5. En su experiencia de vida como estudiante y aprendiz de idiomas, ¿qué considera que le ayudó a superar esos desafíos al hacer la transición de docente en formación a docente en ejercicio?
6. ¿Ha tenido alguna experiencia difícil en su vida personal, familiar o laboral? ¿Cómo superó esta situación?
7. ¿Considera que sus experiencias personales como la que menciona la han formado como docente de idiomas? ¿Cómo es eso?

8. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha sido profesor de inglés?

12.2 APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW 2

Protocol:

The interviewer greets the interviewee. The interviewer makes a short compilation of the first interview and introduces the next questions. The teacher provides the researcher lesson planning(s) and the school's English program. The interviewer is allowed to ask additional questions when appropriate.

Introducción: Hoy dedicaremos la entrevista a las prácticas pedagógicas y profesionales que hace en relación con los retos que le presenta la política educativa. Para esto, vamos a conversar sobre sus percepciones de la política educativa para la enseñanza del inglés, el contexto en el que se desenvuelve y sus prácticas relacionadas con los retos. En sus respuestas, me gustaría que ejemplificara con situaciones que haya vivido.

Preguntas:

1. ¿Está usted familiarizada con los objetivos del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo?
2. ¿Cómo se ha informado acerca de la política lingüística?
3. ¿Esto ha sido iniciativa propia o parte del plan del colegio donde trabaja?
 - Si no comenta sobre su experiencia en proyectos del MEN o la SEM, preguntar: ¿Ha estado usted involucrada en proyectos con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional o de Secretaría de Educación Municipal o Departamental relacionados con el Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuáles? ¿Por qué tomó la decisión de vincularse?

4. ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre la política? Puede comentar sobre tres aspectos:
- a) metas
 - b) estrategias de implementación de las entidades gubernamentales
 - c) retos que le plantea la política a los colegios
 - d) otros aspectos que desee comentar
5. ¿Cómo ha sido la experiencia de implementación de la política en su institución?
¿Qué se ha hecho en el colegio?
6. Comente sobre las oportunidades para implementar la política en su institución
términos de:
- infraestructura física del colegio
 - recursos didácticos con los que cuenta
 - recurso humano y dinámicas de trabajo de los profesores
 - gestión de los directivos docentes
7. ¿Qué guías o recursos de la política para la enseñanza del inglés integra en el currículo y la enseñanza?
- (Derechos de aprendizaje, Currículo sugerido, B(the)1 challenge, libros de texto oficiales English Please, Way to Go...)
8. ¿Cuáles son los mayores retos que usted ha enfrentado como docente para la implementación de la política en su institución?
9. ¿Qué acciones ha emprendido para enfrentar estos retos?

10. ¿Puede narrar una experiencia de una situación particularmente difícil para la implementación de la política en su institución y cómo logró superarla?

(Guía de la entrevistadora: asegurarse de que se mencione el problema, se describa la situación, porqué se considera un reto, qué opciones contempló para solucionarla, qué acciones emprendió y por qué evalúa esta situación como satisfactoria).

11. En la entrevista anterior, usted mencionó el apoyo que recibió de compañeros de la universidad para saber cómo enfrentar la enseñanza de niños y también el apoyo de los niños para superar una situación personal difícil. En ambos casos, hubo soporte del entorno social. En la institución en la que labora, ¿cuenta a menudo con apoyo de los colegas, directivos, padres o estudiantes para solucionar situaciones retadoras en la enseñanza del inglés? Por favor ejemplifica con una anécdota.

12. ¿Ha liderado proyectos, actividades o programas en su institución y/o por fuera de ella? ¿Qué proyectos? ¿Qué la motiva a liderar estos proyectos? ¿Qué aspectos de su personalidad cree que la llevan tomar este tipo de iniciativas?

13. ¿Se ha encontrado usted en situaciones en las que deba de crear contenido didáctico para la implementación de la política para la enseñanza del inglés? Comente sobre esto y comparta el material para ejemplificar.

12.3 APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW 3

Protocol:

The interviewer greets the interviewee. The interviewer makes a short compilation of the second interview and introduces the next questions. The interviewer is allowed to ask additional questions when appropriate.

Introducción: Hoy dedicaremos la primera parte de la entrevista a las prácticas pedagógicas y profesionales que hace en relación con los retos que le presenta la política educativa y así desarrollar un poco más en las ideas discutidas en la segunda entrevista. Luego nos enfocaremos en las aspiraciones y proyecciones que tiene para la apropiación de la política lingüística en la institución.

PREGUNTAS:

1. En la entrevista anterior, usted mencionó algunas de las capacitaciones ofrecidas por el Ministerio de Educación para la implementación de los libros en la institución, tales como: Aliados 10 y School to School, entre otras. ¿Podría expandir sobre estas capacitaciones? Aspectos para tener en cuenta:
 - Contenidos
 - Materiales
 - Actividades
 - Apreciaciones sobre la estrategia
2. ¿Considera usted que es necesario para los docentes de lengua extranjera involucrarse periódicamente en este tipo de actividades/capacitaciones ofrecidas por el Ministerio de Educación? ¿Por qué?
3. En la entrevista anterior, usted mencionó algunos retos que enfrenta para la apropiación de la política, entre ellos la interrupción de las clases, los bajos niveles de los estudiantes y el hecho de que los estudiantes realmente inicien clases de inglés a partir de secundaria. Para cumplir con los objetivos de la política a pesar de estos retos, usted mencionó que realizaba actividades extracurriculares con el apoyo de una

docente practicante en contrajornada. ¿Que la motivó a trabajar en contra jornada con los estudiantes y crear estos espacios de apoyo para ellos? ¿Le resultó fácil o difícil emplear esta estrategia? (¿Por qué?)

4. En la anterior entrevista, usted mencionó que utiliza guías y recursos de política como los DBA y el Currículo Sugerido para la planeación de la enseñanza del inglés. ¿Podría ejemplificar que toma, que descarta y que adapta de los recursos de la política lingüística que utiliza?
5. Actualmente atravesamos una emergencia sanitaria que nos llevó por un tiempo a las clases asistidas por virtualidad, de las cuales usted se mostró entusiasta ya que contaba con más herramientas de interacción pero también de trabajo colaborativo entre colegas. ¿Podría contar un poco más sobre la experiencia, por ejemplo, de quién fue la idea y cómo se organizó el grupo? También ¿qué productos realizaron y cómo lo usaron? ¿Usted cree que es posible que se siga haciendo este tipo de trabajo colaborativo ahora en la presencialidad?
6. Usted comentó sobre la semestralización de la asignatura en el año escolar, como una iniciativa de la institución. ¿La semestralización se implementa en todos los grados de básica secundaria o solo grados específicos? ¿Considera usted que esto tenga un impacto positivo o negativo en el aprendizaje del inglés y en la apropiación de la política? ¿Por qué? (En caso de que lo considere un reto, ¿cómo lo enfrentaría?)
7. ¿Cuáles son sus deseos y aspiraciones al enseñar inglés? (para usted como profesional, para sus estudiantes, para la institución, para la ciudad...)
8. ¿Qué estrategias piensa que puede emplear para lograr sus aspiraciones al enseñar inglés?

9. ¿Cómo prevé usted el alcance de los objetivos establecidos por la política lingüística en su institución en el futuro?
10. ¿Considera usted que su experiencia personal y profesional la han preparado para estas nuevas políticas lingüísticas y alcanzar el éxito de la misma? ¿Por qué?
11. ¿Qué importancia tiene la posición de su institución en los rankings de desempeño en lo que usted hace y proyecta hacer para la apropiación de la política?

12.4 APPENDIX 4: FINAL CODES, CODE FAMILIES AND THEMES

RQ	Family codes	Codes	THEMES
What agentive actions does the teacher undertake to face the challenges at school?	Retos para la apropiación de la política	Tipos de estudiantes	When challenges and initiative boost informed imagination
		Nivel inicial en secundaria	
		Necesidades de recursos	
		Tamaño de los grupos	
		Tiempos limitados	
	Acciones agentivas	Agenciamiento curricular	
		Estrategias metodológicas	
		Agenciamiento colectivo	
		Tiempo extra	
		Tecnología	
	Características del contexto escolar	Recursos especializados	The crucial role of the context
		Nueva modalidad de calendario académico	
		Institución educativa focalizada	

How does the teacher's personal background affect her agentive actions?	Desarrollo de la identidad docente	Impacto de experiencia personal en practica profesional	From a scared pre-service teacher to a knowledgeable experienced in-service professional
		Formación académica	
		Experiencia docente	
		Actividades de desarrollo profesional docente	
		Teaching practicum	
		Gusto por la profesión	
		Desarrollo profesional	
What aspirations guide the teacher's agency?	Apoyos	Apoyo en pares	Teacher's expectations do not always couple with official language policy goals
		Apoyo en estudiantes	
	Expectativa de enseñanza: "Mira a mí me tiene sin cuidado si está en A, B, C, eso, ¿sí me entendés?"	Comunicación en inglés	
		Gusto por el inglés	
		Necesidad del Inglés	

12.5 APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT



INFORMED CONSENT

Dear (Teacher's name):

You have been invited to participate in the study Exploring EFL teacher agency in language policy: The case of a schoolteacher's appropriation of the National Bilingualism Program, conducted by Verónica Araque and Norbella Miranda as her thesis supervisor. The objective of this research is to analyze teachers' agency in the appropriation of the educational policy for English language teaching in a public school in Cali.

This study will identify how teachers face challenges when appropriating the educational policy for English language teaching, how their personal history plays a part in their appropriation of the educational policy for English language teaching and how teacher's projections guide the implementation of the educational policies. Your participation is voluntary, it will consist of answering three 30-minutes interviews and providing classroom documents, including the syllabus and classroom materials.

Your participation in this research does not entail risks for your health or your person. It does not include compensation. The information obtained in the research will be confidential and anonymous. Once the research is finished and prior to its publication, the results will be shared and discussed with you.

If you have questions or queries regarding participation in the research, you can contact the researchers responsible for this study, Verónica Araque Cuellar under the direction of Prof. Norbella Miranda Nieves, who works at the Universidad del Valle.

Part of the normal procedure in this type of research is to inform the participants and request their authorization (informed consent). For this, we ask you to answer and return the attached sheet signed as soon as possible.

I thank you in advance for your collaboration, and I greet you cordially.

Being clear about the objectives of the study, the guarantees of confidentiality and the clarification of the information, I voluntarily agree to participate in the research, I sign the authorization.

APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT

I, with identification number, I agree to participate voluntarily and anonymously in the investigation Exploring EFL teacher agency in language policy: The case of a schoolteacher's appropriation of the National Bilingualism Program, by Verónica Araque Cuellar, directed by Mrs. Norbella Miranda Nieves, from the faculty of humanities of the Universidad del Valle.

I declare that I have been informed of the objectives and procedures of the study and the type of participation that is requested of me. In relation to this, I agree to participate in a series of interviews that will be carried out during the course of the study. I also declare that I have been informed that participation in this study does not involve any harm or danger to my physical or mental health, that it is voluntary and that I can refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without giving explanations or receiving any sanction.

I declare that I know that the information provided will be confidential and anonymous. I understand that the information will be analyzed by the researchers and that the answers and opinions cannot be personally identified.

Participant Name

Researcher Name

Signature

Signature

Date:

Date:

12.6 QUOTES TRANSLATIONS

APPENDIX 6.1

“from sixth grade to eleventh grade is the time we have in public schools to be able to do a work with the kids that allows them to achieve those goals that the Government establishes”

(15-02-2022)

APPENDIX 6.2

one has not only to teach them the language, but also how to begin to strengthen their confidence and self-esteem. [One has to] generate a pleasant environment so that they feel free to participate, leaving aside the feeling of embarrassment, leaving aside the shame, because if not, then how do we deal with people sitting there who do not want to read? [People whom] you tell them, we are going to read this story, then so-and-so reads to such an extent, and that they tell you, no teacher, I don't [want to] read, no. And they refuse, there are others who refuse, they refuse and you can't get them to read. So you have to work with those students, precisely on this. So let's say that a lot of time is wasted on what we could win over.

(15-02-2022)

APPENDIX 6.3

private schools are ahead of us, let's say five years ahead or more because if you start in preschool, some start from preschool, and work hard, well obviously we're always going to be at a disadvantage, do you get what I'm saying? Because we can't compare a public school with a private one, well, we just can't. (15-02-2022)

APPENDIX 6.4

We need more dictionaries, it would be very cool to be able to have a room just for English. A room that would have its computers for us to do audio exercises, listening, that is, I think we lack [this resource]. I believe that, although we have some resources that allow us to do a different job, as perhaps other schools that do not even have a textbook, we are still lacking [this resource]. (15-02- 2022)

APPENDIX 6.5

We rely on BLRs [Basic Learning Rights]. We use the BLRs. We use the Standards as well. No, I think we look at everything. In fact, we even look at the Suggested Curriculum. We, in the planning of, what do we do in the classroom area, well, we look at what things, we don't, we don't take, obviously everything as it is there [in the official documents], no, but we guide ourselves from what is there and see what we can use for, for, for the things we do at school. So I think that we do, yes, we do look and we really take from there. The BLRs, the Standards and the Curriculum become part of what we do, yes, we consider them. (15-02-2022).

APPENDIX 6.6

we don't, we don't take everything as it is there, no, but we kind of guide ourselves from what is there.)

APPENDIX 6.7

As a teacher I am free to have done, let's say, these reinforcement activities in the way I wanted, I could have left a workshop to solve it and come on this day and do an exam, and done, that was valid. But it seemed to me that no, at the time I did, I left, I left them a

workshop and there was a date to present an exam. But when the possibility of having [a practitioner] arose, someone there as an assistant, well, it seemed very valuable to me and I thought that this possibility could not be wasted and that the students would find it much more useful than if I would have given them a workshop, but with the help of someone else, I mean, they had time to solve, I gave them a period of time to do it. I think it was one or two weeks, then they met with the practitioner and me, then we started, ready? Well, how did it go in that question? and then what do we answer and Pepito, what did you answer? and Ta ta and the other, and then who has a different answer, eh, put it, write it in the chat, open the microphone and say it, turn on the camera and show the notebook, well then that's it, this answer is not correct because of this, the one here is not [correct either] because for such another either, then the correct one, is the one that so-and-so has here, then we were like the same time playing, explaining and solving what they already had there. So I feel like, well for the students, that is more valuable than simply leaving them a workshop where they can pay someone to do it for them and that's it. So let's say that what motivated me is that, it was thinking about what was best for them, what was most convenient for them, and because it wasn't about answering me, but that they have some bases that will be useful for later, do you know what I mean? Be it little, but what the little they know they know well. (01-03- 2022)

APPENDIX 6.8

I, let's say that with the teachers with whom I have more affinity, more closeness, so with them I made the proposal that we look at what I am teaching, what are you teaching and the other, what is he teaching? And how can we articulate ourselves in some way so that it is easier for us and for the kids as well? (01-03- 2022)

APPENDIX 6.9

That "easier" for us, is at times a deception, because the articulation requires a lot of teamwork, a lot of time, looking at what you are going to do, how you are going to organize, how you are going to evaluate, how you are going to propose the activities, that with that activity you evaluate the three, the two subjects which you are articulating. (01-03-2022).

APPENDIX 6.10

I think it went very well for us, we liked it a lot, the students too, so we had only one classroom, where we were... Art, mathematics, English and ethics... the work we were able to do for the students was very, very interesting.” (01-03-2022)

APPENDIX 6.11

That seemed extremely enriching to me, there was a kind of work table too, eh, very cool, the truth is that it seemed to me that it was very, as I say, quite enriching and it kind of allows you to expand a little bit, be more creative because, oh, look what is being done, then we could, maybe, I don't know, adjust it, adapt it and do it this way. Well, apart from also meeting people from other regions, who are also teachers at [similar schools], well, people from the private sector as well. (01-03-2022)

APPENDIX 6.12

I mean teaching had never crossed my mind” (08-02-2022).

APPENDIX 6.13

I did not see myself teaching, I had never had an approach to teaching and I entered the academic program, well for different reasons” (08-02, 2022).

APPENDIX 6.14

I wanted to die because I didn't know how I was going to stand in front of a room and that” (08-02-2022).

APPENDIX 6.15

Then one of my classmates who had studied at school with emphasis in teaching, and who had been working in teaching for a thousand years... I did the internship at her institution, in her classroom and from then on I clicked with, with education... like the same support group that you have among friends who already have more experience, so for me that was really what helped me. (08-02-2022).

APPENDIX 6.16

No, well everything... I didn't know how I was going to greet them, I mean, how do you do it with a preschool child, I mean, how do you greet them? what do you say? How do you talk to them? Because to the older kids, well... is like contemporary, more or less with one, then, like, well, but a child, I mean, I said it was like gosh! here, how do I do this? Also, because they have, like some, very established and specific routines in their day. (08-02-2022).

APPENDIX 6.17

I think that one of the hardest things is, well, to put into practice all the theory that you learn, that is, one can be very good in the language, have a very good level of English, but that does not mean being a good teacher, or that you know how to reach people, well, in the way that is

required, right? So how do you achieve that balance? I think that for everyone at the beginning it's difficult because it's like looking for that... I don't know how to say the word like that... place of what teacher am I? Well, because we all exit the university with the same degree, and we all have, we have, let 's say, in quotes, some skills to do, but what quality or what teacher am I? It is something that one discovers as one goes along. So all that I know, all that I learned. But, gosh! how do I get there, how do I put this? I mean, what exercise is more appropriate for these people? How do you get to know the students you have and the needs they have? And how do you download that information of what you know so that it can reach them and be able to guide them in the best way? So I think that this is one of the things that is challenging, it is like looking for that place... Or making a place for yourself, I don't know how to say it... As a teacher, that is, in this career. (08-02-2022)

APPENDIX 6.18

That for me was something very hard, that was something, no, no, that hit me tremendously hard at that moment. But I never left the school. I never asked for a leave, give me two, three days. No, on the contrary, I always told myself, no, if I stay at home it makes it harder for me. So, when I got to school, well, I adored those little kids, so I knew that I couldn't get there, with sad face, or heartbroken, I might come crying on the bus, but when I got to school, (chin), happy darling; the usual teacher, and then they were supremely loving with me. I feel I love them. Nowadays they are adults, but I love them a lot because I feel that spending all that half day with them helped me a lot because they hugged me and kissed me, beautiful teacher, and other things. But deep down they didn't even know how good they were doing me because of the process I wasn't going through, because, well, how do you say those things to a child? I mean, no. But of course, I let them. I sat down, I let them put flowers on my head because I went out and took care of them during break time, they hung off me, they were super cute. All of that was very good, and very healthy for me. Being there, in that

environment with them. (08-02-2022)

APPENDIX 6.19

I think it's always important, one, not just lock yourself in a classroom and no more. No, I think that as teachers you have to be open, you also have to explore other possibilities, eh, which will obviously be reflected in your teaching and in the practice you do. To the extent that one can be aware of what is happening, I think that expands much more the way in which you can get to the class and propose and generate, uh, different classroom situations, right? (01-03-2022)

APPENDIX 6.20

I still think that they are very ambitious, I still think that, what is that the ideal? Of course, the ideal is for us to have bilingual people, but I don't think there are many factors at work there that make it tremendously ambitious to achieve that, at least in our public schools, right? Many things have to be changed so that it can, we could get to, to, to have it that way, so that when the students graduate, they reach those goals that are established. (01-03-2022)

APPENDIX 6.21

I don't care if [the student] is in A, B, C, you see? What really interests me is that the students can communicate the bare minimum, something, that at least those that I have are capable of walking around in San Antonio, because there are a lot of foreigners in the area where [they are], there are a lot, a lot of people stay, well, that if they met someone, they would have that courage and [take the] risk to say hello without shame to say something about themselves, to be able to say something about their neighborhood, their city. You see? even the minimal, but not that they see a foreigner walking around and smile and get excited, but oh, [surprised]

like someone came down from the moon, well, and I, poor [me], I am not capable, no, you see? but, how could they minimally do something like that, regardless of what level they are at, right?. (01- 03-2022)

APPENDIX 6.22

the teachers go at the same pace and support English, so that in the classrooms there was that kind of environment, that from the different areas, even if it was a short reading, [the teachers would give] them, you know? I think that it would be useful, perhaps a little more, for them to feel that it is not the language for the English class but that they could see that it is useful, that is, it helps me and I can apply it in other subjects. (15-02-2022).