ELF awareness in a Phonetics and Phonology course: exploring English language ideologies in teacher education[1]

Conciencia ILF en un curso de Fonética y Fonología: exploración de las ideologías sobre la lengua inglesa en la formación docente

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Abstract

Language ideologies are omnipresent in English language teaching and English teacher education. They reflect societal beliefs and practices about language use, learning, and teaching, often reflecting the power of Inner Circle English varieties and native English speakers. These ideologies do not reflect the reality of English in a globalized world and perpetuate discriminatory practices against non-native speakers of the language. English as a lingua franca (ELF) challenges those dominant discourses allowing for more pluricentric and diverse linguistic and educational frameworks. This study reports the findings of an exploratory case study conducted in a pre-service teacher education course on English Phonetics and Phonology in Colombia. The course was designed with an ELF awareness approach. Data gathering included virtual in-class participant observations, class video recordings, and individual semi-structured interviews to explore pre-service teachers' ideologies about English. Findings show that participants transformed their language ideologies by embracing the pluricentric nature of English and questioning the existence of standard English. However, they upheld some of their ideas about English language proficiency. The study highlights the need to introduce ELF- awareness in the language training of pre-service English teachers to foster their critical reflection and agency as future ELT professionals.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca, ELF-awareness, language teacher education, pre-service teachers, language ideologies.

Resumen

Las ideologías lingüísticas son omnipresentes en la enseñanza del inglés y en la formación del profesorado. Reflejan creencias y prácticas de la sociedad sobre el uso, el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de la lengua, el poder de las variedades de inglés del Círculo Interno y de los hablantes nativos. Estas ideologías no reflejan la realidad del inglés y perpetúan prácticas discriminatorias contra los hablantes no nativos. El inglés como lengua franca (ILF) cuestiona esos discursos, permitiendo marcos lingüísticos y educativos más pluricéntricos y diversos. En este artículo se presenta un estudio de caso desarrollado en un curso de fonética y fonología inglesas en un programa de pregrado en Colombia. Los datos incluyeron observación participante de las sesiones virtuales de clase, grabaciones de vídeo y entrevistas. Los resultados revelaron

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que la conciencia ILF ayudó a transformar y ratificar algunas de las creencias de los futuros docentes sobre el inglés, su pluricentricidad y propiedad, objetivos de aprendizaje y competencia oral. Los participantes desafiaron ideas preconcebidas sobre el inglés estándar y cuestionaron sus opciones didácticas. El estudio demuestra la necesidad de introducir la conciencia ILF en la formación del profesorado para fomentar su reflexión crítica y su agencia en la enseñanza del inglés.

Palabras clave: Inglés como lengua franca, conciencia de ILF, formación de profesores de lenguas, profesores en formación, ideologías lingüísticas.

Introducción

Globalization, recent advances in science, and economic and educational development have made English more present in many people's lives worldwide. Parallel to this growth, the realities of English use and the evidence of multiple varieties have challenged the view of American and British English as the foremost teaching target varieties (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2005). More people use English for varied purposes and with different speakers. These new forms of communication, oral, written, and multimodal, have demonstrated that English language teaching (ELT) often fails to prepare English learners to manage their communication demands (Matsuda, 2017). Despite the urgency of change, scholars stress that ELT and teacher education have remained almost invariable (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Deniz, Öskan & Bayyurt, 2016; Seidlhofer, 2001). The traditional frameworks that shape most ELT practices responded to English language Inner Circle cultures (Kachru, 1992) and their hegemonic pedagogies. They have stressed the differences in roles and attributes between native English speakers (NESs) and non-native English speakers (NNESs). NESs are represented as the true owners of the language and the culture, as well as the possessors of a higher quality to teach it to NNESs (Holliday, 2018). This belief is also present in the education of NNES who want to be English teachers. The imposition of Inner Circle cultures, language forms, and ELT methods marginalize local language use, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching methods (Barrantes-Montero, 2018; Holliday, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2016).

Contesting traditional views of English and stressing the necessity to recognize the actual dynamics of English use worldwide, English as a lingua franca (ELF) emerged as a new field of study. ELF theories reflect how English use occurs among multilinguals who have different linguistic repertoires and possess different cultural backgrounds. Issues such as shared English language ownership, the power of meaning negotiation in multilingual interactions, and the pluricentric nature of English grant NNESs a more powerful position in the linguistic scenario (Jenkins, 2000, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2005; Sifakis, 2019). Due to the new perspectives on English use and ownership, among other issues, ELF pedagogies have a positive influence on English teachers' education (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Deniz et al., 2020; Dewey & Patsko, 2017; Gimenez et al., 2018; González, 2024).

English teacher education in Colombia has reflected hegemonic ideologies concerning English use, ELT, and learning (González, 2020; Granados-Beltrán, 2022; Guerrero, 2018; Le Gal, 2018). Publications on more democratic approaches, such as ELF pedagogies, are still scarce despite their benefits. Initial publications focused on theoretical analysis of ELF, World Englishes (WE), and English as an International Language (EIL) as possibilities for contesting traditional beliefs related to language use and legitimization of Inner Circle varieties and allowing for the development of contextual practices (García, 2013; Macías, 2010). Mosquera-Pérez (2022) elaborates on the possibilities and challenges that transitioning from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to ELF may bring about. More recently, Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024) and González

(2024) have investigated the use of ELF frameworks in teacher education. Both authors agree on the benefits of ELF for transformative teaching practices as teachers gain awareness of their linguistic rights and their roles as valid English users challenging nativespeakerism ideologies. They also agree on the need for more research on ELF in teacher education and ELT in the country to support future teachers' agency and critical standpoints regarding English language diversity.

Aiming to contribute to the expansion of ELF-framed research in teacher education, this study fits within international and local research on the advantages of the inclusion of ELF pedagogies in English teacher education. Our primary focus is to explore how an ELF-awareness framework may influence pre-service teachers' ideologies about the English language. The study took place in an undergraduate English Phonetics and Phonology course taught in a teacher education program at a public university in Colombia. The study proposed the following research question: "To what extent does the integration of ELF awareness into a language teacher education course on English Phonetics and Phonology influence pre-service teachers' ideologies about the English language?" In this article, we present the concepts that have supported our study. Then, we describe the methodology used including the context, participants, data collection instruments, procedures for data analysis, and trustworthiness. Later, we report the findings alongside a discussion in the light of other studies. Finally, we present the study limitations, implications, and conclusions.

Literature review

In this study, we drew on the concepts of ELF and ELF-awareness and language ideologies. ELF has been defined as "the discourse produced in interactions involving speakers of different first languages" (Sifakis, 2019, p. 289), not only in face-to-face encounters but also in virtual-transnational spaces (Cogo, 2012). ELF represents a dynamic way of communication among multilinguals in which English is one of the resources they may use (Sifakis, 2019). ELF is not meant to replace EFL, but to be integrated with it (Sifakis, 2021). The work of Nicos Sifakis and Yasemin Bayyurt on the appropriation of ELF theories by teachers has added a new development to ELF research (Sifakis, 2019; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017). Drawing on Sifakis (2019), Morán-Panero et al. (2024) state the evolution of ELF as an "alternative way of approaching the teaching and learning of English in the classroom" (p. 8). Deriving from that framework, ELF aligns with the views of English language teacher education that move the focus from passive repetition of fit-all-settings methodologies to critical localized intellectuality (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

More recent developments on ELF, mainly emerging from Brazilian scholarship, have added to ELF a stronger political dimension. Considering critical pedagogy frameworks from Freire (Freire, 1974; 1996) and Latin American decolonial perspectives (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Quijano & Michael, 2000), ELF *feito no Brasil* (Duboc & Siqueira, 2020) expands the scope of ELF and relate it to issues of social justice, disregard of local epistemologies, and linguistic inequalities implied in the labeling of NNESs, among others (Gimenez, 2024; Gimenez et al., 2018; Jordão, 2023).

When teachers are aware of ELF, they transform their beliefs about language and teaching as well as their classroom practices (Sifakis, 2019; Dewey & Pineda, 2020). ELF awareness implies awareness of language and language use, generating changes "from the learning-teaching of preconceived norms to the creation of spaces for negotiation" (Jordão & Marques, 2018, p. 53). ELF-aware teachers recognize English as their own, which allows them to question language

norms, stress horizontal power relationships among language speakers, and construct new meanings in line with their learners' local and intercultural needs (Deniz et al., 2016; Jordão & Marques, 2018; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Mansfield & Poppi, 2012; Rose et al., 2020). ELF-aware pedagogy also contests native-speakerism (Holliday, 2018; Rose, McKinley & Galloway, 2020) and the dominant idea that NESs may control how NNESTs should use and teach the language (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Sifakis, 2014a; Sifakis et al., 2018)

Supporting teachers in their development of ELF awareness can occur through professional development initiatives (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017) or pre-service education (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Deniz et al., 2026; Gimenez et al., 2018; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er & Öskan, 2020). Sifakis (2019), states that "the benefits of linking ELF with the ELT classroom spring from a perception of the English language learner as an efficient user of English in their own right" (p. 290). Research has shown that the introduction of ELF-aware pedagogy may benefit ELT and learning if it is introduced earlier, at the initial stages of teacher education (González, 2024; Soruç, & Griffiths, 2021). Dewey and Patsko (2017) and Dewey and Pineda (2020) highlight the benefits for pre-service teachers as they challenge preconceived ideas about language accuracy, acknowledge linguistic accommodation and creativity, recognize the role of their first language (L1) in their multilingual exchanges, and start reflecting on future changes they could introduce in their ELT practice.

An important aspect of ELF-aware pedagogy in pre-service education is the fact that it allows student-teachers to see themselves as valid users and future educators of English. They challenge previous beliefs about NS language standards and accuracy (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015b; Gimenez et al., 2018; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018). However, the use of ELF-aware frameworks is not exempt from challenges. González (2024) reported that for some in-service teachers, ELF-aware teaching practices generate resistance. In addition to challenging pre-conceived language ideologies—particularly the native speaker (NS) model for learning and the emphasis on native or native-like English accents—such positions may pose a risk to English language teachers' job stability. Participants in her study reported that this risk was especially evident in private schools and language centers that openly promote the superiority of native English speakers (NESs) and Inner Circle English varieties. Some teachers' supervisors even viewed ELF-aware practices as political stances incompatible with their institutional policies.

ELF-awareness is defined as,

> …[t]he process of engaging with ELF research and developing one's own understanding of the ways in which it can be integrated in one's classroom context, through a continuous process of critical reflection, design, implementation and evaluation of instructional activities that reflect and localize one's interpretation of the ELF construct. (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018, p. 459)

ELF awareness goes beyond simply recognizing the existence of English as a lingua franca (ELF); it encompasses awareness of language and its use, instructional practices, and learning processes. It involves not only understanding how ELF functions, but also becoming critically aware of the ideologies, attitudes, and emotional responses associated with language use and variation (Sifakis, 2021).

According to Bayyurt and Sifakis (2015b), through thoughtful discussions, ELF awareness makes teachers conscious of their deep convictions about Standard English, the role of NSs, and

the importance of mutual intelligibility in interactions involving non-native speakers (Bayyurt and Sifakis, 2015b). By gaining ELF awareness, NNESs see themselves as legitimate users and educators of the language (Sifakis, 2009, 2014a, 2019) and uphold the conceptions that the language does not belong to any specific English-speaking country (Hsuan-Yao, 2008) and that language changes, adapts, and becomes pluricentric according to the environment (Cogo, 2012; Sifakis, 2019).

An ELF-aware perspective in language teacher education allows for thought-provoking discussions (Sifakis, 2019). It draws pre-service NNESs' attention to the challenge of colonial ideologies, making known the status of English and legitimizing student-teachers role as competent language users and future teachers (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Sikafis, 2014a, 2014b, 2019). Indeed, student- teachers benefit from ELF awareness introduction at the early stage of their training to experiment with ELF integration and question pre-occupied assumptions about the language itself and language education (Dewey and Patsko, 2017; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018).

ELF awareness represents a gradual transformation of attitudes that occurs along a continuum. Through this continuum, stakeholders experience a transformation of their beliefs, attitudes, and practices (Sifakis, 2014, 2019). Those changes include reflections on ELT practices, textbooks, tests, and curricula, as well as learning tasks, and are highly beneficial in the initial education of teachers as they "can both contribute to triggering teacher reflexivity and autonomy as well as generate pedagogical investigations that will inform ELF research" (Sifakis, 2019 p. 302).

For teachers, the continuum is defined by Sifakis (2019) as,

(a) Teachers know nothing about ELF (A shows no awareness) and do not integrate it in their teaching in any way (the B marker is also at the leftmost side of the continuum).

(b) Teachers know about ELF (A shows some awareness) but refuse to integrate it in their teaching because they disagree with this endeavour (B is at the leftmost side).

(c) Teachers know about ELF (A shows awareness) and do their best to integrate it in their classrooms, to the extent that their context (learners, target situation, sponsors, director of studies, etc.) allows (depending on the integration of ELF in their teaching the value of B changes).

(d) Teachers may know nothing about ELF (A shows no awareness) but may unknowingly integrate it in their classes (again, the value of B changes, depending on the integration of ELF in their teaching). (pp. 299-300)

Figure 1. The ELF awareness continuum
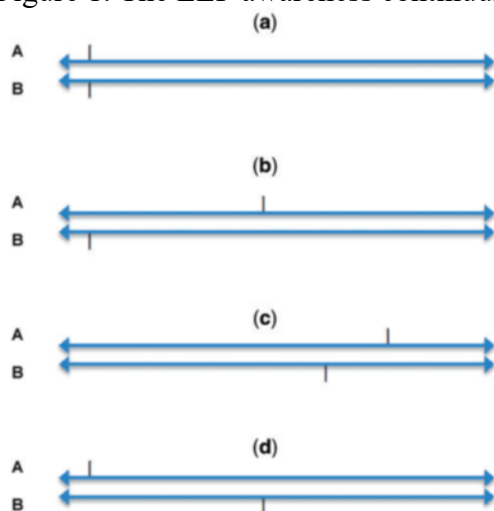
Source: Sifakis, 2019, p. 300.

ELF-aware pedagogies adopt an ecological perspective; therefore, a full understanding of the teaching context is paramount. In the ELF-awareness continuum, not all concepts may be entirely new to teachers and students.

In the analysis of using ELF-awareness in the development of the English Phonetics and Phonology course in a foreign language teacher education program, we explored student-teachers' language ideologies. Using Baker (1992) (as cited in Razfar & Rumenapp, 2012), as a framework, language ideologies "are the beliefs, ideas and values that exist as systems binding communities together" (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2012, p. 348). Ideologies are constructed through interactions across various levels of human activity, both individual and societal (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Ideologies reflect what is commonly perceived as "society's thinking" and are often linked to notions of common sense. The language ideologies that student-teachers hold about English may either undergo transformation or remain stable, as they are shaped and reinforced through their participation in social groups and broader societal discourse. Language ideologies may be implicit or explicit in human groups. If dominant language ideologies are not unveiled and contested, they become a crucial component of societal behaviors rather than an element of discursive awareness (Razzar & Rumenapp, 2012). The analysis of language ideologies is a powerful tool to understand classrooms, schools, and wider educational practices, and to support a more socially just society.

Methodology

This qualitative exploratory case study (Yin, 2014) used a critical perspective to understand, challenge, and transform beliefs, and empower communities that may be subordinate within their contexts (Bohman, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Richards, 2003). The study took place in an undergraduate course on English Phonetics and Phonology developed as part of a foreign language teacher education program at a public university in Colombia. The program prepares English and French teachers. In the course, the second author was the professor in charge, and the first author acted as a co-researcher and participant observer. The English Phonetics and Phonology course

included the suggested content of the teacher education program: General information speech sounds, the consonant and vowel systems of English, the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and patterns of intonation and connected speech. It also emphasized a critical approach to acknowledge linguistic diversity in English, but it did not include an explicit orientation toward paradigms such as WE, ELF, or EIL. The course was developed virtually due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

The course instructor complemented the linguistic aspect of the course with an explicit ELF integration (Kemaloğlu et al., 2024). The instructor framed the English Phonetics and Phonology course within an ELF-awareness approach, drawing on the principle of university autonomy as well as the foundations of critical pedagogy and localized practices (Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 2023). Additionally, her teaching was informed by the concept of "teaching in the cracks" (Schultz, 2017), which emphasizes democratic participation and student empowerment. As part of the class activities, students reflected on their actual English communication experiences, their beliefs about the English language, English learning and teaching. They also reflected on how famous Colombian and international multilinguals used English. The course instructor showed students the collection of English speakers' voices available Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) and the International Dialects of English Archives (IDEA) as a resource for some of the reflection activities. For one of the class sessions, we invited Professor Enric Llurda as a guest speaker to present some general ideas about ELF and nativespeakerism.

For this paper, we will focus on how four pre-service teachers shaped their ideologies about the English language taking part of the course. We selected them using a convenience sampling criterion (Yin, 2014) because they provided the richest data from the class and represented the different positions about English, as identified in the class discussions. They were actively involved in the class sessions and their reflection tasks were more detailed. Participants were three female students and one male student, identified by pseudonyms as Andrea, Paola, Maritza, and Manuel. All of them are Colombian, with ages ranging between 20 and 23. We provide below some basic information about them:

Andrea: In her childhood, she took extracurricular English classes in a private language center in Medellín. She lived with her family in the United States for some years. There, she attended a regular school. After returning to Colombia, she continued her English education at language centers before enrolling in a teacher education program. By the time of the study, she had gained professional experience in contexts where English was a requirement, including call centers and volunteer ELT programs.

Paola: Her interest in English emerged from engaging with music available on various online platforms and digital applications. She had never been abroad in an English-speaking country; however, she constantly talked to foreign English speakers, NESs and NNESs, because of her job as a hotel receptionist. She also used French in interactions with international customers.

Maritza: She had contact as a child at private primary and secondary schools in Medellín. Like Andrea, Maritza lived in the United States for two years attending a regular high school and learning the target language. After returning to Colombia, she attended advanced English classes at a private language center until she enrolled in the undergraduate program. By the time of the study, she worked on a language learning online platform teaching Spanish to foreigners.

Manuel: His motivation to learn English started before registering in the teacher education program. After he felt his English had improved, he obtained a full-time position at a call center that provided services to an American telecommunication company. He reported having telephone conversations with people from all over the United States, mainly NES.

The four participants signed a consent form that permitted us to use the class video recordings, written reflections, and interviews. They were also informed about their possibility of withdrawing from the study, the data management, storage, and use procedures, and the protection of their identity.

Data collection included virtual in-class participant observations, class video recordings, student-teachers' final written reflections, and individual semi-structured interviews. In the participant observations, the first author took field notes and interacted with the students to clarify or expand their ideas (Glesne, 2011). Video recordings allowed us to review the materials for a more detailed analysis of the participants' comments and reactions (Garcez et al., 2011; Duarte & Eisenberg, 2011; Penn-Edwards, 2004). As part of the course assignments, student-teachers submitted a written reflection exploring their beliefs about the English language, ELT, English language learning, and nativespeakerism ideologies (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Sikafis, 2014a, 2014b). The student-teachers' reflections were written in English. The excerpts are presented as written by participants. We did not edit them to preserve the authenticity of their voices and English use. We proposed semi-structured interviews using pre-established questions that were replaced, depending on the participants' responses throughout the process (Glesne, 2011; Richards, 2003). The interviews were conducted in Spanish to facilitate the participants' comfortable and accurate self-expression and communication of their thoughts. We transcribed the interviews and translated the selected excerpts into English.

To analyze the data collection instruments, we followed Miles et al. (2014) in the data categorization through codes and themes. We performed multiple individual readings and added notes and comments. We identified excerpts that could represent the participants' voices. Later, we compared our preliminary analysis looking for patterns and relationships that allowed us to propose the final categories. We performed methodological and data source triangulation to reduce the risk of biased representation and ensure trustworthiness (Miles et al., 2018). In the interviews, we provided the student-teachers with summaries of the content discussed to ensure that our appraisals as the course professor and participant-observer reflected what they said.

Findings

In this section, we describe how the four participants experienced some changes in their ideologies about the English language.

Awareness of ELF

The course design within an ELF-awareness framework allowed the participants to identify English as a globalized language. They realized that different users have English as a means of communication. In the class discussions, Paola reported her comprehension of English, through an ELF lens, as "a medium in which we can all meet". Analyzing how speakers from different linguistic backgrounds communicated using English was an opportunity to become aware of how

ELF theories granted NNESs an active role and the validation of their knowledge. Maritza agreed with Paola's comment about how she saw NNESs within an ELF-awareness approach. In her reflection, she described how she changed her past preference for NESs and the complaints about their accents. Currently, she has another opinion as she realized that communication among NNESs is easier, "I rather made a non-native turn because, at this very moment, I actually prefer having a NNES, like if he or she is Colombian. I prefer that because we can have better communication."

In Professor Llurda's session discussion, Paola shared her thoughts by saying, "You [Dr. Llurda] said something interesting to me, that speaking clearly, being able to send a message the best and the clearest way possible, is the most important point." In one of the final class sessions, she concluded that ELF-awareness allowed her to change her mindset because language learning, "is not about talking like a native speaker nor is it about talking the more Colombian you can. It is about talking the clearest way you can".

In a class discussion, Andrea stated that to endorse the NNESs' sense of linguistic validity, it is necessary to increase their linguistic confidence. Promoting more interactions with other NNESs is crucial to realize that constructing and negotiating meanings is part of ELF. After Professor's Llurda presentation, Andrea shared her insights affirming that it was the first time she heard about hearing about ELF. She defined the talk as "enlightening" because she realized that English must be defined through a globalized perspective.

For the student-teachers, reaching intelligibility and negotiating meaning among NNESs was a significant feature of ELF awareness. They highlighted that in a linguistic scenario where there are no hierarchies it is easier to embrace linguistic differences for differences neither privileging nor marginalizing any group of people.

English pluricentricity

Participants in the study reported realizing that English is not exclusively a language used in the Inner Circle countries. For them, discovering its extended use as one of the first languages or contact languages in many countries, was eye-opening. Reflecting on the ongoing comprehension during the class development, Andrea reported in a class session that English does not belong to the US or the UK. On the contrary, "it belongs to whoever in the world uses it as a bridge to communicate and learn about new cultures." Of the four participants, Maritza and Paola expressed their acceptance of English pluricentricity. Both expressed their new conceptualization beyond the power granted to the Inner Circle countries and English varieties. They said that their frequent contact with conversations with speakers of English from different countries, students, and customers who are NESs and NNESs, allowed them to appreciate the English language through a wider lens.

Languages, cultures, and identities are intertwined

Students understood that English served as a means of establishing contact among cultures. A key issue for them was the transformation of their previous belief that having traces of Spanish in their English pronunciation reflected lower language proficiency. Before the courses, they considered that famous Colombians who spoke English with a noticeable *paisa*[4] intonation or realizing certain

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[4] *"Paisa"* is a colloquial term used as a noun and adjective to refer to people from The Department of Antioquia and the central mountain region in Colombia.

English phonemes with Spanish features did not speak English well. They usually criticized their English language use and felt unmotivated to try to understand what they said. After researching famous international characters who do not have English as a native language and showing some traces of their first languages in their oral communication, students connected English use with culture. A major conclusion was that people may either experience some challenges in English oral communication or decide to keep accented English. In both cases, the language-culture relationship became evident. In the written reflection, Paola stated:

> What is important is what you say and how it makes you feel. If you feel you are being yourself and representing your culture, you are proud of your first culture as Colombian and proud of the second culture for being bilingual or multilingual.

In one of the class sessions, Maritza commented on the first language influence on the spoken English of international figures. "If they have a really strong accent, it does not mean they do not speak English. It is just part of their identity, and I think that is okay."

Tightly related to recognizing that ELF reflects the speakers' cultures, the idea of identity also appeared in the class analyses. In class conversations, participants stated that multilinguals should be proud of their language use because it reflects their identity. In the written reflection, Paola stated that being multilingual represented an advantage that made her proud. She wrote, "It is in ourselves not hiding our multilingualism because that is our identity, and we are those who give ourselves the credentials of considering our communicative skills [adequate]. She also stressed the need for English speakers to be aware and proud of the characteristic features of their oral communication because they reflect their sociocultural backgrounds. In one of the class sessions, Maritza expressed a similar idea. She said that being in contact with English speakers from different countries allowed her to appreciate some aspects of their culture because they were evident in their conversations.

From accent to accents

A significant transformation of student-teachers' beliefs was deconstructing the notion of the existence of "the American" or "the British" accent. In the case of Colombia, student-teachers are more familiar with and motivated to achieve an American native or native-like accent. The analysis of excerpts from the VOICE and IDEA inventories allowed student-teachers to notice some distinctive features of regional accents in the United States, Great Britain, and Ireland. That realization generated frustration because they reported a greater challenge for comprehension and oral communication. After analyzing the speech of two US speakers, Andrea said that she felt insecure about her English oral comprehension abilities. In the notes taken in one class observation, the first author reported her confusion because she could not identify the speakers as holding a "neutral American accent" or "standard American English". She wondered if they spoke another English variety. As the course developed, she started considering the acknowledgment of other English varieties as valid as American English. In the interview, she expressed her willingness to be exposed to various English varieties.

Despite Paola's openness to validate NNESs' accents, she said she preferred speakers who showed features of British English. She highlighted the influence of the British accent on European countries. In her analysis of an international figure, she underscored that Greta Thunberg was easy

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to understand because she sounded British-like. For her, "the British accent creates a high-class impression due to its formality, and the political, hierarchical, and economic power the UK has had throughout history". She refers to the British accent as "classy".

In the final interview, Andrea made evident her desire to sound like a NES. Although she was proud of her recognition of English plurality, that recognition meant the validation of different accents from the Inner Circle varieties. She said:

> I used to live or, maybe still do, obsessed with the idea that I had to sound pretty. And to me, "pretty" with a specific accent of a native English speaker. Either learn to speak like an American from New York, […] California, an Irish man from Dublin, or something like that.

NESs are the models to imitate

Despite the benefits that student-teachers expressed through ELF-awareness learning activities about the diversity of validity of English accents, the superiority of NESs was evident for them. Paola and Manuel insisted on the idea that the English language belongs to speakers from the Inner Circle countries, therefore, it is reasonable that NESs decide on accepting or rejecting NNSs' language uses and varieties. In one of the class sessions, in the warm-up activity, the professor invited students to talk about their job experiences using English. In the class discussion, Paola said:

> [NES] customers feel you are not going to understand them completely. And they do not really feel like many people here speak English because we do not speak the English they want to hear. They want to listen to the English they are accustomed to. It's their language.

Manuel described his experience as a customer assistant at the call center where he works, reporting that many customers asked about his location or nationality because they noticed his Spanish-accented English. Sometimes, these clients asked him to transfer the call to an US agent because they believed he did not speak English properly. The professor asked him how those situations made him feel. He said, "It is typically expected that NESs do not like Colombian-like English accents, so it becomes comprehensible to receive such offensive comments." In different class sessions, Manuel stated that he and other NNESs spoke "a less effective language". Manuel reaffirmed that NESs should be the model for English teacher education. Due to his frequent contact with American NESs, he stated that he had the opportunity to improve his pronunciation and listening comprehension. For him, the English language education he received in the teacher education program was insufficient or inadequate because it was the source of many misunderstandings.

Andrea and Paola also experienced problems in their jobs in interactions with NESs. Both student-teachers found a solution by imitating their interlocutors' intonation, pronunciation, or body language. They also commented that they deliberately hid any traces of their local Spanish accent. In her experience at a call center, Andrea encountered the same issues that Manuel reported. Customers who were NESs rejected their help, making her feel frustrated. However, by trying hard to sound like them, customers became kinder and treated her better. Like Andrea, for

Paola, imitating American NESs' intonation made those hotel guests friendlier, sharing jokes, and giving her better tips.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, we have explored how an English Phonetics and Phonology undergraduate course in a foreign language teacher education program shaped four pre-service teachers' ideologies about English. The findings demonstrate how the pre-service teachers' ideologies about the English language reflect a system of ideas that involve the language, its use, the perception of NESs and NNESs, learning, and teaching. The set of beliefs that student teachers expressed are in alignment with studies carried out in Colombia (González, 2024; Macías & Mosquera-Pérez, 2024; Macías et al., 2020; Viáfara, 2016) and in different countries about English ideologies and ELT among future teachers (Archanjo et al., 2019; Christou et al., 2022; Lee et al, 2018; Öztürk, 2021, among others). The preservice teachers' opinions are permeated by issues of power and local, national, and transnational educational, social, and political discourses about English that operate at different levels of society and their personal and academic lives (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Student-teachers experienced different moments of awareness about the English language under an ELF-awareness approach. They transformed some of their language ideologies and maintained others. Language ideologies are not easily identified or eradicated (Pennycook, 2000; Razfar & Rumenapp, 2012). The four participants' individual learning experiences and diverse contact with NESs and NNESs determined how some transformed their views of English and the power of NESs (Holliday, 2018). Although ELF perspectives allowed them to acknowledge the pluricentricity of English, the power of Inner Circle varieties and NESs dominated their views (Holiday, 2005; 2018). The participants' enactment of nativespeakerism in their opinions confirms Bouchard's (2020) conclusions about the resiliency of this ideology. Of particular importance was the role of their job demands and the prestige of having a native or native-like English accent because that determined if they were treated with respect or disdain. The power granted to the US and British English accents as markers of prestige and linguistic capacity remained almost unchangeable. Student-teachers challenged their language learning beliefs, questioned language norms, promoted horizontal power connections among language speakers, and increased possibilities for interaction and negotiation of meanings, as found by Deniz et al., (2016), Jordão and Marques, (2018), and Mansfield and Poppi, (2012).

The findings of this study are coherent with what other researchers have developed regarding the introduction of ELF awareness in teacher education (Deniz et al., 2020; Kaçar & Bayyurt, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Soruç & Griffiths, 2021; Zacharias, 2016) (Sifakis, 2019). Our study also confirms what Colombian scholars reported as beneficial for pre-service English teacher education in terms of the importance of raising awareness about English ideologies and the validation of identity as NNESs (González, 2024; Macías & Mosquera-Pérez, 2024).

Participants built up the perception that English is crucial for communicative purposes but also to foster cross-cultural understanding (Cogo, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2001). Additionally, ELF-aware-based reflections made some pre-service teachers a) recognize the valid influence of speakers' first language and cultural patterns in their English; b) perceive themselves and other English users as legitimate owners of the language; and c) set new English language learning goals that consider diversity in terms of users and varieties (Hsuan-Yao, 2008; Sifakis, 2009). The study

confirmed what Kemaloglu-Er and Bayyurt (2018) identified as subproducts of ELF-awareness in recognizing globalized and pluricentric features of the English language. Similarly, as Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018) and Soruç and Griffiths (2021) found, the four student-teachers accepted their cultures' positive impact on the English language. They insisted on acknowledging English language varieties beyond British and American English. Finally, in alignment with Deniz et al. (2020), Zacharias (2016), and Cogo (2012), the student-teachers in our study showed self-confidence and motivation to speak in English. ELF-related critical reflections allowed them to perceive themselves as legitimate language users and recognize English language pluricentricity and their English users' legitimacy and language ownership.

The study expanded previous research on the ambivalent feelings student-teachers experience about English and their language skills. This aspect has been informed in the literature only by Kaçar and Bayyurt (2018). Whereas student-teachers in this study advocated for NNSs' validation of different accents and language users through ELF awareness, as shown in Sifakis (2019), some of them kept the hegemonic idea of getting to speak English having a native-like accent (Bouchard, 2020; Holliday, 2005; 2018). This ambivalence in ELT viewpoints does not mean failing to introduce ELF awareness in teacher education. On the contrary, when ELF awareness permeates the classroom, it accounts for the gradual, and sometimes arduous, transformation of previous language ideologies pre-service teachers hold (Sifakis, 2019).

Despite the pertinence and contribution of the study expanding research on ELF and ELF awareness in language teacher education, this research has potential methodological limitations concerning the sample size and the class modality. This could have affected students' class participation and may have hindered the examination of participants' additional opinions and reactions toward the ELF-related issues under discussion.

Future research on ELF-aware-based courses in language teacher education may have a deep analysis of English Phonetics and Phonology within a wider ELF scope. For example, framing such course within the ELF Core Phonology framework (Jenkins, 2015) may reveal new understandings of ELT, as well as English learning and proficiency among future English teachers. Promoting more ELF awareness teacher education practices may enlighten pedagogical actions to contest native-speakerism and professional practices of marginalization of NNES teachers locally and worldwide.

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