

Have English Teachers Transformed Their Identity to Build a More Effective Language Awareness?

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Abstract: In this article we examine how English teachers' identity including their feelings, practices and cognitions influence their language awareness. Working within the framework of teachers' identity and language awareness, teachers' narratives were used to collect data and then, a content analysis was carried out through the *ATLAS.ti* software, using some deductive dimensions based on both approaches. Results suggest that English teachers' identity is constructed based on their feelings and experiences which have led them to put grammar at the center of teaching, but they are not aware of their practices and of the role of the language to convey meaning and social competence. It is argued, then, that teachers need to be exposed to professional development programs that focus on conscious knowledge about language and the importance of that knowledge in teaching and learning.

Keyword: Teachers' Language Awareness

Introduction

Language teacher identity and the way educators reflect upon the language are crucial factors in the field of language education. In this regard, English teachers play a key role in implementing procedures that grasp the nature of the language as a means to teach it in context. However, despite the importance of including and valuing the work teachers do in bilingual education, there is still an urgency for listening to their voices, what they feel, their practices and cognitions and indeed, the way they deal with the language. The current analysis focuses on the way teachers' identity influences their language awareness. Both dimensions are necessary, since teachers' identity is not consistent, and so, language awareness is an emergent issue in language teaching. Therefore, it is fundamental to promote motivated attention to language use and enable language learners to incidentally gain awareness of how languages work, to convey meaning (Bolitho et al., 2003). This article presents the results of 12 narratives written by English teachers working in public schools in La Dorada Caldas, a municipality in Colombia.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine how English teachers' identity including their feelings, practices and cognitions influence their language awareness. The following research questions guided the analysis:

1. What would count as important for English teachers' identities?
2. What is the awareness teachers have about teaching English?
3. In what ways teachers' identity and language awareness relate in the participants' narratives?

Teachers' Identity

Teachers' identity has been a significant topic worldwide. It is said to be mediated by a variety of factors such as teachers' feelings, practices and their cognitions. Research on teachers' identity has demonstrated that identity is not a static process; instead, it is a dynamic construction that involves external and internal factors. For instance, Wu (2022) states that it is fundamental for policies and stakeholders to consider factors such as: teachers' experiences, their motivations, their conceptions and feelings to promote identity transformation in education.

In respect to teachers' feelings, Barahona and Toledo (2022) suggest that the transition to a developed language teacher identity takes too long and is configured by multiple feelings and complex situations in practice, that go from joy and happiness to frustration and self-doubt. Similarly, the authors, Choi (2022), and Satyro (2022) claim that to be legitimized, teachers deal with contradictory experiences; on one side, they feel extremely motivated for inspiring their students, on the other side, they feel frustrated due to their contextual factors, then, language teacher identity studies reveal that each teacher's identity is not unique nor constant. Undoubtedly, the way English teachers construct their identities while they face contextual factors and external pressures responds to complex and multiple ways, which might be considered alternative constructions of good practices to those established by policy (Cruz-Arcila, 2020).

Likewise, and in relation to teachers' practices, teachers around the world have been developing ways to reflect themselves and their practices to impact their students' lives, which is why it is pivotal to involve those educators in professional learning spaces to help to develop their identity as well as some agentic actions for their pupils in class (Nguyen & Ngo, 2023). In line with the previous statements, a study aimed to examine teachers' professional identities in the early years of teaching, the authors Flores and Day (2006) conclude that most of the new teachers consider themselves more traditional and teacher-centered, and that the way these teachers have evolved in their practices has been mainly a consequence of their effort to adapt their teaching to their contexts and realities, then, involving their practices and their understanding of their jobs has been one of the greatest challenges they have to face every day. Another crucial factor of teachers' identity is the one related to what they think, believe and do, it is to say their cognitions. In this regard, Borg (2009) highlights teacher cognition research must be considered as a fundamental contribution to deeper understand the process of becoming an English teacher, and their professional development. Finally, the cognitions or conceptions teachers have about the language is an item of interest for teachers' language awareness, which is an area of research and a teacher development activity that involves what teachers know or need to know about language and their practices. Additionally, it studies the ways in which teachers' beliefs might have an influence upon their teaching (Andrews & Svalberg, 2017).

Language Awareness

The literature on language teacher education, where English is taught as a foreign language, has commonly focused on issues such as communicative language teaching or methodologies that are based on the acquisition of the native language, and all those approaches tend to minimize the role of awareness in second language acquisition (Llurda et al., 2017). In an attempt to balance the knowledge of the language and communicative practices, the language awareness approach provides a powerful source to help students and teachers to reflect on the language in an exploratory way. This suggests a subtle attention to forms and considers the language as part of a wider social

struggle remarking the importance on learners having to explore the ways in which language works, in order to reveal social competence (Carter, 2003).

Adopting a language awareness theory is based on the work of authors that consider that teachers' knowledge about language and the potential importance of that knowledge in teaching and learning is now an area of attention and concern worldwide, especially in relation to debates about teacher professionalism. For example, Andrews (2001) carried out a study with non-native-speaking teachers of English for examining the way in which teachers' language awareness affects their pedagogical teaching. The researcher claims that teacher language awareness is a pivotal concern to the language teacher educators, and that its key influence is on the way in which input is made available to learners. He similarly suggests that the interrelation of awareness and engagement of the teachers would benefit greatly the understanding of English teachers' cognitions and practices.

Additionally, Borg (1994) explores the implications of language awareness for teachers and teacher training, arguing that a reflexive training methodology is an effective way to develop in teachers the kinds of consciousness that language awareness as a methodology presumes.

Method

This qualitative study used a biographical-narrative approach and a deductive reasoning technique through the use of *ATLAS.ti* 25. A Qualitative study would examine a phenomenon in education in a more precise way because the procedures adopted by this method might provide a broader, more comprehensive and diverse view of the process through data collection techniques that usually involve close contact and interaction between the research and the research participants (Dzogovic & Bajrami, 2023). Furthermore, biographical-narratives are to shed light on the lived experience of a particular person and comprehend the cognitive, affective and action dimensions; it is also a dialogical process, a privileged way of constructing understanding and meaning (Bolívar & Domingo, 2006). Additionally, it helps to explore experiences of the teachers, aiming to understand their identities and beliefs about teaching English.

The phases that characterize the qualitative analysis process using *ATLAS.ti* 25 are described below.

This research process was guided by a systematic method that analyzed the narratives through a deductive approach to revise theories related to teachers' identity and language awareness approach, and to make sense of newly collected data. First, the narratives were loaded into the software, and the documents were read to understand their content and context.

The second step consisted of a coding process line by line to assign labels to meaningful segments of the narratives that could capture or represent the existing theories, two dimensions were created from the criteria of the established framework: Teachers' identity and language awareness. After that, a series of codes were assigned by using open, axial and selective codes. Finally, two data visualization tools were used to understand the results in a better way, consisting of a code-document table that reported the main dimensions, the defined codes and their embeddedness, and a Sankey diagram to show co-occurrences between the codes and their corresponding dimensions.

Participants

The participants were 12 in-service English teachers who work for public high school institutions in the municipality of La Dorada Caldas. The current study was approved by Secretaría de Educación de Caldas with respect to the ethical considerations of the study. Participants were all communicated that their answers and beliefs were going to be a source of data for the research. They were given the option to either accept or decline their participation. They all agreed on taking part of the study. Table 1 below introduces a brief description of each participant.

Table 1.
Participants

Participants	Educational Degree	Teaching year	English level	Age	Teaching Grade
T 1	M.A.	15	C 1	43	10 th 11 th
T 2	B.A.	15	A2	45	6 th 7 th
T 3	M.A.	3	C1	34	10 th 11 th
T4	B.A.	1	B1+	22	7 th 8 th
T5	M.A.	20	A2	48	7 th 8 th
T6	M.A.	15	C1	36	10 th 11 th
T7	B.A.	10	A2	36	6 th 7 th
T8	M.A.	26	B1+	50	6 th 7 th
T9	B.A.	28	A2	58	6 th 7 th
T10	M.A.	10	C1	32	9 th 10 th
T11	M.A.	15	B1	43	9 th 10 th
T12	B.A.	22	B1	51	10 th 11 th

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out by visiting public schools in La Dorada Caldas and having informal conversations with participants. They wrote biographical narratives based on some guidelines given by the researchers focused on the development of their identities and their language awareness. In the first part, they wrote about the reasons they had to study their undergraduate academic program and the feelings they experienced as pre-service and as in-service teachers. In addition, they also wrote about their conceptions and beliefs regarding the way they have addressed the teaching of the foreign language from their early years of teaching until the moment of the data collection.

Data Analysis

ATLAS.ti software 25 was used to select, organize and analyze the information. The approach for data analysis was deductive since it was based on pre-existing dimensions based on the theories of language awareness and teachers' identity, and also to guide the interpretation of patterns among the codes. Open, axial and selective codes were used to interpret the themes which at the same time were used to describe the way teachers have evolved in their practices. Analyzing co-occurrences was a valuable tool for qualitative data analysis since it helped to identify patterns and relationships between codes and to relate them in a spatial way in this research. It is to say that co-occurrence analysis refers to focus on instances where two or more codes occur together in the same data context. This process played a key role in drawing insightful conclusions that emerged from the narratives where main interpretations were made based on the connections amongst codes. Likewise, the code co-occurrence analysis tool facilitated a deductive research approach while identifying new directions for this research. Table 2 presents the main dimensions as well as the defined codes and their embeddedness. This refers to the number of times quotes were linked to a code. This allowed the understanding of the context in which the items appeared and the relevance of the topics for further analysis.

Results

Table 2.
Main dimensions and codes emerging from the analysis

Dimensions	Open codes	Axial codes	Selective codes
Teachers' Identity	Teachers' cognitions /beliefs	Reasons to study their undergraduate academic programs N=12	English as a language of opportunities Gr=1 Humanistic reasons Gr=5 Motivated by music and videos Gr=2 Without conviction-no reasons Gr=4 Communicative skills Gr=1
		Students' needs N=12	Reading comprehension Gr=9 Meaningful learning Gr=2 Teaching affected by contextual factors Gr=7
	Practices	Now as in-service teachers N=12	Teaching led by positive attitudes towards teaching Gr=5
			Through playful activities Gr=4 A specific skill – reading comprehension Gr=1 Grammar skills Gr=1 Learning styles and how to teach Gr=4
	Teachers' feelings	Positive feelings as in-service teachers N=12	Teachers' attraction to teach by passion Gr=1 Teachers' attraction to the language due to its opportunities Gr=1 Low level / weak English Gr=5 Teachers' monotonous activities Gr=5
		Negative feelings as pre-service teachers N=10	Related to their own weaknesses N =5 Related to their teachers N =5
Language Awareness	Language User Gr=24	As preservice teachers N=12	Related to their own weaknesses N =5 Related to their teachers N =5 Focused on their level and how it could affect their professional performance
	Language Analyst Gr=46	As in-service teachers N= 12	Analyzing grammar Analyzing the influence of cultural aspects
			Teachers' knowledge of the way the language works Gr=10 Teachers' cultural language awareness Gr=2
	Language Teacher Gr=48	As pre-service teachers N= 12	Importance to teaching strategies Importance to accuracy
		As in-service teachers N=12	Teaching meaningful learning Gr=2 Teaching to students according to contexts and needs Gr=1 Teaching to students the way the language works Gr=9

Note: Gr: embeddedness: number of quotes that have been codified by a code. N: number of participants.

The next paragraphs explain the implications of the embeddedness among the quotes and the codes.

As seen in the first analysis that emerged from the narratives, based on embeddedness showed as regards to the teacher's identity and their cognitions, teachers participating in the study showed to have 2 conceptions: the first, as their reasons to study a B.A. in Languages (English) as mainly humanistic (5 out of 12): However, 4 out of 12 entered to the undergraduate academic program without a calling but obliged by circumstances, either due to their families or because they could not enter to the program they wanted which is very common in our contexts. Other 2 teachers were guided by external and social factors like music or English importance in the world. Just one teacher saw English as a language of opportunities.

Now, as in-service teachers, most of their cognitions are guided by their students' needs, it is worth saying that the participants in this study have been concerned with reading comprehension as a fundamental purpose to fulfill students' needs. Indeed, 9 out of 12 participants set reading comprehension as their main purpose to prepare students for

facing challenges such as national tests and only 3 out of 12 mentioned meaningful learning and communicative skills as part of students' needs.

Regarding practices as in-service teachers, 7 out of 12 teachers consider that their actions have been affected by structural factors but at the same time, 5 of them have revealed positive attitudes towards teaching. By examining the embeddedness of the quotes regarding teachers' feelings as pre-service teachers, 10 out of 12 pre-service teachers gave a great value and appreciated classes in which their educators drew attention on diverse appealing strategies to teach English, 2 of the participants mentioned aspects related to their own interests such as passion for teaching or seeing English as a language of opportunities. Conversely, the analysis of the embeddedness showed that 5 out of ten teachers had some discomfort towards their own weaknesses related to their English level; 5 teachers indicated that they disapproved teachers who developed monotonous classes, 2 teachers did not mention anything related to the issue.

In relation to language awareness and its domains, for instance: Language user embeddedness showed that 9 out of 12 participants had low level of the language before studying the career, which might affect their performance and their future decisions; 3 of them showed high proficiency of the language.

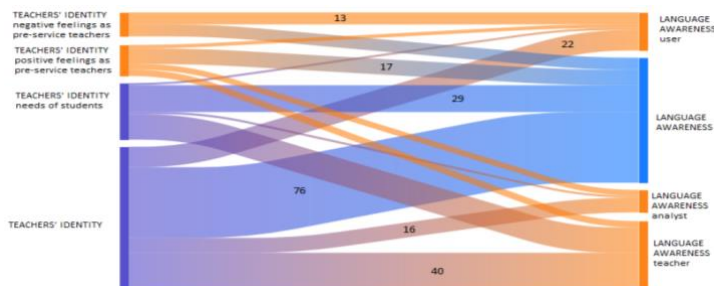
According to embeddedness in language analyst, 10 out of 12 participants revealed in their narratives a particular tendency to analyze grammar and the role this component plays when learning a foreign language. At the same time, 2 of the teachers considered cultural aspects of the language as an important aspect to be considered when teaching.

Finally, by examining the embeddedness of the quotes of language teacher, 9 out of 12 participants showed admiration for educators that taught and had great knowledge of didactics to teach the foreign language when they were pre-service teachers. Similarly, 3 participants recognized the importance of having educators who possessed accuracy and great knowledge of the language, and that is quite similar to the things they are doing as in-service teachers at the present time. Likewise, 9 out of 12 claimed that they have been teaching their students issues related to the structure, 2 of them focused their practices according to contexts and needs and just 1 educator emphasized on meaningful learning.

Co-occurrence Analysis

Figure 1 (Sankey diagram) below shows the co-occurrences between the main dimensions: Teachers' identity and Language awareness, and the relationships or how they co-occurred between them and with the open, axial and selective codes that emerged in the initial analysis.

Figure 1.
Sankey Diagram.



As seen in the diagram above, participants' identity was strongly influenced by their language awareness. Open, axial and selective codes belonging to those two main dimensions were related to each other. The next excerpts are useful to illustrate what narratives revealed and give some examples taken from the quotes that co-occurred to provide insights into recurring patterns.

Excerpt 1 presents two quotes that exemplify the co-occurrence between the two main dimensions of the study: Teachers' identity and language awareness. As seen in the Sankey diagram those dimensions overlapped 76 times.

Excerpt 1

Examples of teachers' identity and Language awareness dimensions overlapping in two teachers.

Before		As pre-service teachers		Now as in-service teachers	
Original	English	Original	English	Original	English
"El paso por una escuela normal fue decisivo para determinar que estaba en la ruta correcta y fui construyendo una devoción especial por acompañar al otro en su proceso de exploración del mundo" Docente 3	"My time at a pedagogy school played a key role to make clear that I was on the right path. Thus, since that time on I started passionate about accompanying others in their process of exploring the world." Teacher 3	"Al enfrentarme en la universidad a una formación más rigurosa y amplia de la lengua me fue imposible desconocer la tarea tan magna que había realizado mi maestra y traté en mi rol como docente de aplicar la mayor cantidad de pautas adquiridas por ella" Docente 3	"When I faced a more rigorous and comprehensive language education at the university, it was hardly possible to ignore the large task my teacher had done, then, I tried in my role as an educator to apply most of the guidelines that I have learned from her." Teacher 3	"Nuestros estudiantes pasaron de encontrarse estáticos en un pupitre a movilizar sus sentidos y a, valiéndose de la realización de actividades lúdicas y divertidas a construir desde sus propias exploraciones las ideas que estimularían sus acciones transformadoras a futuro, y ello surgió a partir del cambio de conciencia del maestro en la búsqueda de opciones para garantizar procedimientos más efectivos al interior del aula." Docente 3	"Our students shifted from being passively sitting in a desk to engaging their senses through ludic and entertaining activities, building ideas from their own explorations that could stimulate their transformative actions in the future. That was possible because of the teacher's own transformed awareness to look for more effective classroom procedures." Teacher 3
"Fui influenciada a estudiar lenguas y el poder transmitir ese conocimiento a más personas, educar correctamente con pasión y no simplemente por dictar una clase o por ganar un sueldo." Docente 4.	"I was influenced to study languages and transmit knowledge to more people, to teach with passion and not just for attending a class or getting a salary." Teacher 4	"La profesora xxx fue quien hizo coger cariño por el idioma, aprenderlo correctamente y haber aprendido en 6 meses lo que tal vez se debió aprender en 6 años, una docente que verdaderamente se preocupa porque los alumnos aprendan y enseñar de una forma muy didáctica y creativa." Docente 4	"Teacher xxx was the person who motivated me to learn English correctly, she taught me the things I should have learnt before in just 6 months. She was the kind of teacher who was interested in her students' learning, she also used didactic and creative ways to teach."	"La lengua inglesa no se basa solo en enseñar o hablarlo, la lengua inglesa también es necesaria saber cómo funciona, su fonética, gramática, hay que saber el por qué ocurren las cosas y por qué se maneja de esta manera, para así poder tener un buen entendimiento del idioma y enseñarlo correctamente." Docente 4	"English should not be only taught to develop speaking skills, but it is also necessary to know how the language works, its phonetics, grammar. We need to know why things occur and the reasons to use it in a particular way, so that we can understand better the language and teach it correctly." Teacher 4

As observed in this first excerpt, the two teachers who had previous positive motivations and a real calling to study their undergraduate academic programs, represent those teachers who often choose to become educators because they are guided by a sense of fulfillment knowing in advance that they have to contribute to well-being of a society as Vandeyar (2017) asserts, teaching implies inspiring students and seeing the class as an act of human compassion, and as a great possibility to make a positive impact on people and society. It was remarkable that both teachers recognized as pre-service teachers the great role their educators had as exponents of didactic strategies to convey students' meaningful learning which is pivotal for them today to model their teaching practices. The likely outcome of the two teachers in excerpt 1 showed that they

recognized the necessity of developing some degree of teachers' language awareness to reflect upon their teaching practices and the way language functions in various contexts, but without having an awareness of the crucial role the analysis of the language plays from a more critical perspective. As Lindahl (2019) affirms, embedding instruction about language within the teacher education curriculum may help new teachers to enable the connections amongst user, analyst, and teacher domains of teacher language awareness rather than maintaining disconnections between theory and practice.

An important observation in our study was that teachers' positive and negative feelings have served as a way for participants to make decisions in terms of practices when teaching English in public schools.

Excerpt 2 below shows two quotes that exemplify the co-occurrence between language awareness and the axial code; positive feelings, they overlapped 17 times as seen in the Sankey diagram.

Excerpt 2

Examples of language awareness and the positive feelings overlapping in two teachers

Original version	English
"Mi profesora de inglés fue extremadamente inspiradora para mí porque ella me enseñó las maneras más dinámicas para enseñar la lengua." Docente 3	"My English teacher was extremely inspiring to me because she taught me the most dynamic ways to teach the language." Teacher 3
"En el tiempo que estudié me encantaba aprender sobre las estrategias para enseñar el idioma de manera más llamativa y motivante para los estudiantes." Docente 7	"At the time I studied, I really loved learning about strategies to teach the language in a more appealing and motivating way to students." Teacher 7

Excerpt 2 exhibited positive feelings towards learning didactic strategies as an essential component for effective language teaching that involves more engaging and motivating ways to approach diverse learning styles and students' needs. In line with this idea, Andrews (2001) affirms that selecting materials and convenient tasks in terms of their students' needs and learning styles are key factors for teachers' language awareness.

Excerpt 3 below presents two quotes that exemplify the co-occurrence between the open code language user with the axial code negative feelings; they overlapped 13 times.

Excerpt 3

Examples of language users and the axial code negative feelings overlapping in two teachers

Original version	English
"No me gustaba que a veces me sentía frustrada por no estar al nivel de mis compañeros, a veces me daba pena hablar en inglés, sentía que debía estudiarlo más." Docente 7	"I did not like when I was somewhat frustrated for not having the same level of my classmates. I remember I used to be ashamed of speaking English, then, I felt I had to study more." Teacher 7
"Me sentía terrible al inicio de mis estudios porque yo era estudiante de colegio público y en la universidad los docentes prestaban mucha atención a los más avanzados." Docente 6	I felt terrible at the beginning of my studies because I was a student from a public school, and at the university teachers paid too much attention to the most advanced classmates. "Teacher 6

Excerpt 3 showed two participants negatively affected by their low level of English as students at the university. Since they had negative feelings towards that, it affected the way they used the language and impeded them to feel confident to participate in classes. As Krashen (1982) explained in his theory, the affective filter is a mechanism that could influence the acquisition of a second language. It means that affective factors such as low motivation, low self-esteem or anxiety might impede a learner from using the language appropriately. Similarly, that aspect mirrors what Svalberg (2012) affirms, which is that language awareness should embrace the complex factors that involve learning a foreign language, such as language anxiety due to the way students feel when using or studying a language.

Excerpt 4 below presents two quotes that exemplify the co-occurrence between the dimension language awareness and the axial code students' needs; they overlapped in 29 quotes.

Excerpt 4

Examples of language awareness and students' needs overlapping in two teachers

Original version	English
"Para mí lo más importante es que los niños adquieran las bases del inglés, y lean para que así vayan aprendiendo muchas palabras. Lo más necesario para ellos es irlos preparando para el examen del Estado en 11." Docente 7	"For me the most important aspect is that students acquire the foundations of the foreign language and being involved in reading activities, thus, they keep on learning many words. The most necessary aspect for students is preparing them to take SABER 11 test." Teacher 7
"En mis clases insisto en la gramática y en la comprensión lectora, pues no se debe desconocer el enfoque que tienen las pruebas externas (ICFES), también les oriento a incrementar el vocabulario." Docente 9	"In my classes I insist on grammar and reading comprehension as well, it is important to recognize the approach the external tests have (ICFES). I also lead the students to increase their vocabulary." Teacher 9

As seen in the examples above, two teachers considered reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary as part of their students' needs. This is probably due to the requirement to take the standardized test (SABER 11°), administered by the Colombian government. As consequence, English teachers have been using grammar as a strategy for developing reading comprehension in their students but without having an awareness of the most convenient ways to teach this component of the language as a means for analyzing critical stances.

Excerpt 5 below shows two quotes that illustrate co-occurrence between the dimension teachers' identity and the open code, language teacher; they overlapped in 40 quotes. It is important to clarify that language teacher is based on familiarity with a range of procedures and possession of sufficient theoretical knowledge to make appropriate decisions about using those procedures when teaching English (Andrews & Svalberg, 2017).

Excerpt 5

Examples of teachers' identity and language teacher overlapping in two participants

Original version	English
"La docente que más influyo fue la que me motivaba cada día más, la que me dio pautas para enseñar la lengua a través de estrategias más dinámicas," Docente 7	"The teacher who influenced the most on me was the one who motivated me every day, and she gave me the guidelines to teach the language through more dynamic strategies." Teacher 7
"Pues bien ahora mis clases empiezan con vocabulario, después formamos oraciones, y tratamos de contar lo que acontece en la vida de los estudiantes a partir de un tema gramática sin que ellos lo noten." Docente 6	"Well, now my classes begin with vocabulary, then we form sentences, and we try to tell what happens in the students' lives based on a grammatical topic, but the students are not aware they are using that issue." Teacher 6

Excerpt 5 suggests that the two teachers have been concerned with techniques, apparently to foster the knowledge of the language in their classes, despite of the fact that they recognized the role their educators had as promoters of learning didactic strategies, they probably select a variety of activities without having an awareness of the most convenient approaches according to their contexts and their students' needs. Related to this, Llurda et al., (2017) claim that English teachers have different ways of making aware the process of the language they use, but it is fundamental for them to have a least a minimum knowledge of the steps and procedures that guide their teaching decisions.

Excerpt 6 below presents two quotes that illustrate the co-occurrences between the dimension teachers' identity and the open code language user; they overlapped in 22 quotes. According to the theory of language awareness, language user is related to the

teacher's language proficiency and determines the teacher's adequacy as a model for students (Andrews & Svalberg, 2017).

Excerpt 6

Examples of teachers' identity and language user overlapping in two teachers

Original version	English
"Opté por estudiar idiomas sin saber que debía usar el inglés para poderme comunicarme, lo cual resultó ser complicado porque, aunque poseía un nivel básico este no era el ideal para comunicarme e interactuar en las clases, los vacíos en gramática eran enormes." Docente 12.	"I decided to study languages without knowing that I should have used English to communicate with others which became so complicated; because I had a basic level, and this one was not the ideal to communicate and interact in classes. I had huge gaps of grammar." Teacher 12
"Los resultados de la prueba ICFES fueron decentes y eso me dio la oportunidad de ingresar al programa de Lenguas Modernas. Que equivocado estaba al pensar que sabía o era bueno en inglés. Estaba en cero. No entendía nada. No sabía nada." Docente 1	"The results from the test ICFES were decent and this provides me the opportunity to enter the Modern Languages program. But I was wrong when I thought that I had knowledge or that I was good at English. I was in zero. I did not understand anything, nor did I know." Teacher 1

As seen in excerpt 6, the two teachers saw themselves as low proficient language users at the beginning of their undergraduate academic programs. At that time, they had certain awareness of their difficulties communicating in the foreign language, therefore they may struggle with their professional identity and their confidence in their language abilities. For example, Ellis and Collins (2009) declare that the ability for some learners to use the language effectively depends on the experiences they had with the language itself and on the quality of the input available to them.

Finally, excerpt 7 below presents two quotes that exemplify co-occurrence between the dimension teachers' identity and the open code language analyst; they overlapped 16 times. Language analyst is dependent on the teacher's language systems knowledge base and referring to the ability to understand the workings of the target (Andrews & Svalberg, 2017).

Excerpt 7

Examples of teachers' identity and language analyst overlapping in two teachers

Original version	English
"Lo que más me agradaba era aprender de cómo funciona la lengua, las clases en las que se articulaba la gramática a otras habilidades como la lectura." Docente 11	"What I liked most was learning how the language functions, I also liked classes that linked grammar to other abilities, for example, reading." Teacher 11
"Es necesario que el docente conozca muy bien las bases de la lengua extranjera para poder transmitirlos a los estudiantes y tener también un excelente uso del idioma a nivel oral para poder impartir sus clases y estar con frecuencia usando la segunda lengua durante el proceso." Docente 2	"It is necessary that teachers know well the foundations of the foreign language to transmit it to their students, but they also should have an excellent proficiency to teach their classes and use the foreign language during the classes frequently." Teacher 2

The information above corroborates through the examples that most of the teachers have been highly interested in issues related to the way the language functions, but despite the importance teachers give to grammar, they have been teaching the structure in an isolated way. It might be that participants have taught this component of the language strangely disassociated with the other basic skills or without meaning for students; then, teaching grammar does not mean to polish communicative competence, on the contrary, as Lock (1996) highlights, the primary aim of a functional grammatical analysis is to understand how the grammar of a language serves as a resource for making and exchanging meanings.

Discussion

In this last session we summarize the findings. We will go back to the three questions addressed at the outset.

The first question was concerned with the teachers' identity and what counts as important for them. One of the things we could say is that teachers' feelings, including those related to their language proficiency, have shaped their identities and have informed them about the decisions they make today with their practices. This study also sheds light on how teachers struggle with their professional identity when they experience inadequacy or inferiority compared to others. It means that teachers' self-perception and how they are perceived by others, including their educators, might influence their practices in the classroom and the way they consider the teaching of the foreign language.

On the other hand, teachers' positive feelings referred to an eager interest for learning didactic strategies to teach the foreign language and the way it works are important factors for English teachers in order to configure their identities. However, although teachers are concerned with techniques to foster knowledge of the language, they probably have adopted repetitive techniques without having an awareness of the most convenient approaches to transform their experiences into meaning.

Regarding teachers' cognitions and what they believe their students need, they consider reading comprehension as a fundamental skill to develop on their students; due to that, they assume the teaching of grammar as a valuable tool to mitigate the gap they have in terms of their proficiency, but also as a way to help students develop linguistic and reading competence.

The second question was concerned with the awareness teachers have about teaching English. On this regard, it is our view that teachers in general, lack of language awareness which would encourage to reflect about the language, teaching and learning. Then, it is reasonable to suggest that they possess some degree of this component, but it is just an emerging knowledge because their cognitions could be aligned with teaching grammar or promoting practices to increase reading comprehension, but essentially as a requirement to achieve competencies set by the national tests in Colombia. Teachers see grammar as the center of their practices as a remedial work for overcoming contextual factors and language policies; however, this pivotal component of the language should serve as a resource for making and exchanging meanings and as a tool to foster the social character that language involves.

The final question was concerned with the teachers' identity and language awareness. It is noticeable that both dimensions share common information. In general, language teachers have an emerging awareness of the way they assume teaching. They use teaching practices that might correspond to the techniques conducted by the language awareness approach. However, it is noticeable that they have been using different grammar techniques to try to overcome the complexities of teaching English. This aspect mirrors what Kumaravadivelu (2006) claims, which is that it is the presence, not the absence of the concept of method that assemble teachers to adopt an eclectic method because they reflect on the limitations of established approaches that do not fit their specific classroom needs and their unique teaching context; then, educators turn to eclectic methods as a practical solution.

What this study brings to the forefront is that language awareness approach might be presented as one significant innovation that would help teachers to reflect upon their global understanding of their didactic strategies as well as their identity. Regarding language awareness, some authors confirm that in an effort to promote reflection upon the language that goes beyond the teaching of isolated strategies lies the component of this construct that serves as a means to enhance appreciation of the language and its diversity as a human faculty in the construction of social life (Cots et al., 2007).

Finally, there is clearly a need for further investigation, particularly in the area of teachers' language awareness, which is not clearly recognized in some contexts where communicative approaches tend to underestimate the importance of conscious awareness of the language. An important observation made by the authors in this study is that English teachers need to be involved in professional development programs that focus on the interface between what teachers feel, know and need to know about language to positively impact their teaching and their students' learning of the foreign language.

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