

**PRIVATE EFL EDUCATION: NEOLIBERAL AND COLONIAL INFLUENCE
THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

ANGY NATALIA BOHÓRQUEZ CARLOS

**UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES
MAESTRÍA EN ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS
BOGOTÁ D.C, COLOMBIA
2025**

**PRIVATE EFL EDUCATION: NEOLIBERAL AND COLONIAL INFLUENCE
THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

ANGY NATALIA BOHÓRQUEZ CARLOS

Thesis Director

Jair Ayala Zárate, M.A.

A thesis submitted as a requirement to obtain the degree of Magíster en Enseñanza de

Lenguas Extranjeras

**UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES
MAESTRÍA EN ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS
BOGOTÁ D.C, COLOMBIA
2025**

Derechos de Autor

“Para todos los efectos, declaro que el presente trabajo es original y de mi total autoría; en aquellos casos en los cuales he requerido del trabajo de otros autores o investigadores, he dado los respectivos créditos”. (Artículo 42, parágrafo 2, del Acuerdo 031 del 4 de diciembre de 2007 del Consejo Superior de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional).

Este trabajo de grado se encuentra bajo una Licencia Creative Commons de **Reconocimiento – No comercial – Compartir igual**, por lo que puede ser distribuido, copiado y exhibido por terceros si se muestra en los créditos. No se puede obtener ningún beneficio comercial y las obras derivadas tienen que estar bajo los mismos términos de licencia que el trabajo original.

Acknowledgements

Along the process of writing my thesis and pursuing my master's degree, I could rely on wonderful people who gave me their support and made me feel understood.

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude towards my advisor, Jair Ayala, who always helped me with my research process and encouraged me to believe in my ideas. With his guidance and advice, I could overcome several challenges that made me grow as a researcher, teacher, and person. Also, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the teachers in the master's program, their knowledge and passion for education had a great impact on me.

Additionally, my family and friends were key in this journey. Thanks to my family for being there for me all the time, and my mom who is always my biggest supporter. To my dear friends and coworkers, thank you for constantly cheering me up; my team: Diana, Jenny, and Alejo, you are absolutely the best. Special thanks to Angela Romero for her friendship and help in my moments of crisis, I have no words to express how grateful I am.

Finally, I want to thank Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, my *alma mater*, for the scholarship that allowed me to pursue my master's degree, I will forever be thankful for this opportunity.

ABSTRACT

The panorama of English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning in private language institutes has experienced a rapid growth during the last few years. In this environment, teachers have undergone multiple dilemmas regarding their roles, identities, hiring and working conditions, among others; in turn, this unveils a possible influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism in policies that overlook and/or reinforce the problematic events seen there. This research aims to examine, through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model proposed by Norman Fairclough (1992), how neoliberalism and internal colonialism influence the institutional policies of a private language institute in Colombia.

As a result of the analysis, neoliberalism was identified, revealing how EFL teaching is seen as a commodity/service, learning is a solely individual process, teachers are described as *providers of a service* and *educators for neoliberal purposes*, and students are viewed as *customers*. In the same way, internal colonialism was unveiled in the use of colonial mechanisms such as epistemic violence, whitening, homogenization/assimilation, and the presence of standardization and native speakerism. It is concluded that key aspects such as the role of teachers and students, working and hiring conditions, and the presence of contextual EFL methodologies and perspectives that allow teamwork must be considered in the creation of EFL policies in private language institutes.

Keywords: private language institutes, neoliberalism, internal colonialism, policies, critical discourse analysis

RESUMEN

El panorama de la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en institutos privados de lenguas ha experimentado un rápido crecimiento durante los últimos años. En este entorno, los profesores han experimentado múltiples dilemas en cuanto a sus roles, identidades, condiciones de contratación y de trabajo, entre otros. A su vez, esto devela una posible influencia del neoliberalismo y del colonialismo interno en políticas que pasan por alto y/o refuerzan los hechos problemáticos que allí se observan. Esta investigación pretende examinar, a través del modelo de Análisis Crítico del Discurso (ACD) propuesto por Norman Fairclough (1992), cómo el neoliberalismo y el colonialismo interno influyen en las políticas institucionales de un instituto privado de lenguas en Colombia.

Como resultado del análisis, se identificó la influencia del neoliberalismo, revelando cómo la enseñanza de EFL es vista como una mercancía/servicio, el aprendizaje es un proceso exclusivamente individual, los profesores son descritos como *proveedores de un servicio* y *educadores con fines neoliberales*, y los estudiantes son vistos como *clientes*. Del mismo modo, se desvela el colonialismo interno en el uso de mecanismos coloniales como la violencia epistémica, el blanqueamiento, la homogeneización/asimilación y la presencia de la estandarización y el *native speakerism*. Se concluye que aspectos clave como el rol de profesores y alumnos, las condiciones de trabajo y contratación, y la presencia de metodologías y perspectivas contextuales de EFL que permitan el trabajo en equipo deben ser considerados en la creación de políticas de EFL en institutos privados de lenguas.

Palabras clave: institutos privados de lenguas, neoliberalismo, colonialismo interno, políticas, análisis crítico del discurso

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	9
Introduction	9
Statement of the problem	11
General Research Question	17
General Research Objective	18
Specific Research Objectives	18
Rationale	18
CHAPTER II: Theoretical Foundations	20
Literature Review	20
Theoretical Framework	26
Neoliberalism	26
<i>Defining Neoliberalism</i>	26
<i>Neoliberalism in EFL Education</i>	30
<i>Neoliberalism in Colombia</i>	33
Internal Colonialism	35
<i>Colonialism vs Coloniality</i>	35
<i>Internal Colonialism: Origins and Uses in Education</i>	41
Critical Discourse Analysis	45
<i>What is Discourse?</i>	45
<i>Discourse, Ideology, and Power</i>	47
Policies	50
<i>Educational Policies</i>	50
<i>Language Teaching/Learning Policies in Colombia</i>	57
CHAPTER III: Methodological Design	60
Research Paradigm	61
Type of Research	62
Theoretical Perspective	64
Setting	66
Researcher's Role	68
Data Collection Instruments and Procedures	70
CHAPTER IV: Data Analysis and Findings	72

Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Framework	72
Process of Data Analysis	85
Findings	86
<i>The Market-Based Objective of EFL Private Education</i>	86
<i>EFL Teaching as a Commodity and the Identity of Its Participants</i>	93
<i>EFL Teaching and Learning: An Individual Process</i>	104
<i>Internal Colonialism’s Influence in EFL Private Education</i>	111
CHAPTER V: Conclusions	120
Conclusions	121
Implications	127
Limitations	128
Further Research	129
References	130

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Neoliberal Actions.....	28
Figure 2 Ideological Strategies and Colonial Mechanisms	38
Figure 3 Three-dimensional conception of discourse	47
Figure 4 Policy into practice: a model	51
Figure 5 Onion’s model	55
Figure 6 Fairclough’s Three-dimensional Framework of Analysis	74
Figure 7 Description.....	76
Figure 8 Interpretation	82
Figure 9 Explanation	84

CHAPTER I

In this chapter, I present the generalities of the research. In this sense, relevant and contextual information will be displayed in the introduction. In addition, the statement of the problem will be given, alongside the research questions, objectives of the study, and rationale in order to provide the justification and central focus of the study.

Introduction

Over the last six decades, English has been considered the *lingua franca* par excellence, being the language selected by communities all over the world to interact and communicate with each other (Canagarajah, 2013). It is common to be surrounded by discourses that place the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) as an imperative aspect in the education of children, teenagers, and adults all over the world (Gazzola, 2023). This measure is taken in order to accomplish the goals and meet the requirements of the globalized society we live in, such as the case of Colombia (Saavedra, 2024; Feria Quintero, 2024; ICEF Monitor, 2015). Focusing on the Colombian context, as de Mejía (2009) mentions, English has been placed at the center of the social, economic, political, and educational panorama since the Second World War.

In this sense, as the Colombian Ministry of Education (MoEd) states, being bilingual is essential in the globalized world (2006). Due to the importance of bilingualism in education (understood as speaking Spanish and English), the MoEd has promoted various educative policies to foster EFL learning (Guerrero-Nieto, 2008). It should be noted that the latest programs and plans, such as *Bilingual Colombia*, have maintained this view of English as key to education. In fact, as Correa and González (2016) emphasize, these programs set high goals in terms of English level of proficiency in order to allow students to achieve appropriate communication skills and have access to jobs and professional opportunities.

Accordingly, to keep up with the expectations of society and the global market, kids, teenagers, and adults have reached out to available *language institutes* that can provide EFL teaching that allows language learners to reach their goals. In this scenario, the emergence of private language institutes is seen as an appealing choice to learn the different English language skills. These institutes are recognized by Colombian policies, such as the Decree 4904 of 2009, and placed in the category of *education for work and human development* “Educación para el trabajo y el desarrollo humano” (ETDH) defined as:

Institutes that contribute to an integral and permanent education process complementing, updating and training in academic or labor aspects through the supply of flexible and coherent programs with the needs and expectations of people, society and demands of the labor market, productive sector, and the characteristics of the culture and surroundings. (MoEd, 2009, p.2)

In recent years, there has been an exponential increase in the presence of language institutes. As stated before, due to the global position of English as a *lingua franca*, the market of private language institutes has experienced an enormous growth in the last few years. In addition, as Morales Topacio (2015) mentions, the global boom of these institutions “can be attributed to its capacity to compensate for the limitations of formal schooling and support achievement of students aimed within formal education” (p.148). Hence, language institutes are welcoming not just adults who seek to improve their professional skills and increase their income via EFL learning, but also children and teenagers who see limitations in the teaching of English at their schools or universities and who must demonstrate certain levels of proficiency as part of their schooling system. This boom can be identified in the Colombian context as some of the most popular language institutes had a gross income of approximately 200 million COP in 2022 (Fajardo, 2024).

As a result of the growing number of language institutes in Colombia, research should be done in order to acknowledge the implications and realities experienced and emerged in this context. Therefore, the present study seeks to highlight the importance of addressing these new realities in which education and English language teaching (ELT) have found new places, methodologies, and ethos. Given the above, I will subsequently provide insights regarding some issues I have identified in ELT in private language institutes, which are worth exploring.

Statement of the problem

In order to delve into the statement of the problem, it is important to acknowledge where I speak from to comprehend the context in which the problem was identified. As De Figueiredo and Martinez (2019) claim, “Unmasking one’s own locus of enunciation (and/or that of others) thus means being conscious of and explicit about the geographical, historical, bodily, and ideological context from which one is speaking” (p.2). On this occasion, I find it necessary to emphasize this aspect due to the unique geo-political influences historically seen in Colombia and its institutions, and the aspects influencing my point of view. In this sense, as the authors explain, there is a recognition of our localized knowledge and experiences, which may differ from those seen in other parts of the world.

One important aspect that should be highlighted to understand my point of view is the presence of public schools/institutions in Colombia. Growing up as a part of a lower-middle/working-class family, my only opportunity at education was studying at a public school in the capital of the country. Such situation is not uncommon in Colombia, as Cerquera-Losada et al. (2023) describe, 78.44% of students in public institutions come from low socioeconomic status. Even if the data show a preference by medium-high class families for private schools (This can be linked to aspects such as the quality of education and

cultural, symbolic and social disadvantages, as Cárdenas et al. (2021) mention), public schools allow thousands of children to receive formal education all over the country.

In spite of the challenges that can be found in public schools, this space was key in my education and personal development. Throughout my school years, I was part of a very diverse environment, not only in terms of classmates with different economic, social, and cultural backgrounds, but also related to teachers and methodologies seen in class. Due to my permanence in the same institution from kindergarten to 11th grade, I was able to see how different the teachers and their chosen methodologies could be. To provide an example, regarding the EFL subject, I could identify teachers who followed a traditional grammar-based methodology to teachers who selected project or task-based approaches; from teachers who relied on textbooks to teachers who never used one. If there is one aspect that I must point out, is the freedom they had to select their own way of teaching a lesson..

A similar situation happened in my experience at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (UPN). Being able to study a Bachelor of Education degree at a public university, and feeling privileged due to the challenge of being accepted into an undergraduate program in Colombia, I could experience the diversity of methodologies chosen by teachers in the different subject matters studied. As a matter of fact, I have been asked multiple times what English textbook I used to learn English with, and I have not been able to provide names because, in my experience, these materials were never used in class at UPN. Moreover, standing from a critical perspective, the university promoted a contextualized, diverse and meaningful way to teach EFL (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, n.d.-a). Overall, from my experience at public institutions, the freedom to choose the most appropriate methodologies, approaches, activities, etc., is a really important aspect in education.

Keeping in mind the basics learnt at the bachelor's program, I have tried to maintain a critical perspective regarding ELT in different scenarios. Following my arrival at a private language institute, my beliefs and opinions about language teaching were confronted by a series of strict rules and procedures stating the *how to* in different areas: assessment, use of materials, methodology, student-teacher interaction, among others. Suddenly, my knowledge regarding EFL teaching was ignored, disregarded, and replaced by an instructional way of teaching and a *clerk* perspective (Quintero-Polo & Guerrero-Nieto, 2023) of being a teacher. In consequence to the conflicting environment around me, I started to recognize various dilemmas linked to a strong neoliberal influence in these language institutes.

As stated before, one of the first and most important difficulties I faced while teaching EFL in a private language institute was the perspective of the teacher as a *clerk*. One common characteristic found in institutes is the use of a textbook to guide the classes and teach all the topics seen in the classroom. As Soto-Molina and Méndez (2020) assert, foreign publishing houses such as Cambridge, McGraw Hill, MacMillan, Pearson, Oxford, and Longman have a strong presence in Colombia, enhancing the use of textbooks that specify what grammar and cultural topics must be studied and taught. In this sense, the first impact of working in this environment is the perception of oneself as a clerk, whose job is to elucidate the content already chosen by the publishing houses. Regarding this state, in their research related to English language teachers' subjectivities, Quintero-Polo et al. (2022) asserted that:

language teachers experience a constant tension between their understanding of language pedagogy, language research, and language learning and the commands of the neoliberal norms of performativity (Englund & Frostenson, 2017) concerning the use of product-oriented instructional strategies and techniques to assure excellent quality results (...) Teachers' success is measured in terms of how effectively they transmit pre-established language knowledge to students. (p.112)

The previous concern identified in my day-to-day experience can also be seen in the experiences of several EFL teachers working in private language institutes and schools. Through different research projects, Colombian teacher-researchers (Rendón Alfonso, 2019; Quintero González, 2022; Charris Angulo, 2017) have observed how teachers' identities are shaped due to the influence of neoliberal traits often found in private education. Here, neoliberalism is understood as a theory of political economic practices and an ideology that advocates for free-market, individualism, profit, and privatization. (Harvey, 2005; Katznelson, 2023; Nikpouya & Zareian, 2024). Through the use of narratives and interviews, EFL teachers have acknowledged their changing identities linked to "service" and assuring the customers' satisfaction; to being one kind of teacher while being observed by their boss in class, and following their "inner teacher" the rest of the times; to adapting other administrative roles to avoid the repetitive procedures established for the classes, and to feeling as a "robot with emotions" (Quintero González, 2022).

Alongside the shaping of our identities, I observed the emphasis given by the institutes on the teachers' English proficiency, disregarding the pedagogical competencies and undergraduate degrees to teach. In the field of private language institutes, it is widely known that the hiring requirements are strongly focused on English skills based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). As Mackenzie (2020) showed in his analysis of online job posts, the EFL teachers sought the most are the ones with a high level of proficiency, overlooking teaching experience or teaching license:

An analysis of professional factors revealed that, in 30.5% of ads, the only educational qualification required for an English teacher was an ELT certification that can be obtained in one month or less, and 4.2% of ads stipulated that "no experience" was needed (...) Disturbingly, 23.1% of ads refer to nativeness, which highlights the continued presence of native-speakerism in the profession. In addition, a number of

posting request applicants to be either from the United States or Canada, or to have a U.S. accent (pp.15-16)

In this sense, EFL teachers have been confronted by a general preference for teachers whose biggest value relies on their CEFR level and native-like language performance. In this sense, as Montoya and Correa (2024) reported through their multimodal discourse analysis, language institutes show some major preferences for the so-called native English speaker teachers (NESTs) over non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) regardless of their pedagogical training and skills. In addition, as Ramírez Ospina (2015) finds in her master's research, private language institutes favor NESTs and even non-licensed Colombian teachers due to their language proficiency and their receptiveness to follow and adapt the methodologies employed in these institutes.

Furthermore, it is not unusual for EFL teachers working in private language institutes to endure tensions due to the market influence in the language teaching field. The aforementioned problems, among others, uncover some impact of neoliberalism. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) assert, the deskilling of teachers by assigning them administrative tasks and a routinized methodology in the classrooms is strongly related to the neoliberal idea of productivity, which in turn, “relates directly to efficacy and efficiency and translates into economic profits” (p.196). This notion is linked to the previously mentioned clerk identities recognized by me and other EFL teachers in these institutions.

In a similar manner, neoliberalism comes hand in hand with internal colonialism in private language institutions. Following the findings of Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023), the hiring and idealization of foreign teachers is used by institutes as a way of standing out in the market and highlighting the importance of having high proficiency levels above other skills. This was evidenced in the aforesaid challenges teachers face, which

expose that language skills are valued above pedagogical skills. In this sense, EFL teachers are experiencing a series of problematic events due to the influence of neoliberalism and colonialism in private language institutes.

Taking into account the previous research articles and projects, and the experiences and challenges lived by EFL teachers, one main aspect is highlighted in several of these documents: the importance of policies in private language institutes. As stated by multiple researchers (Quintero González, 2022; Rendón Alfonso, 2019; Ramírez Ospina, 2015; Montoya & Correa, 2024) national policies, such as the National Bilingual Program (NBP) and Colombia Bilingüe 2018–2022, are significantly influenced by neoliberal and colonial perspectives, adapting foreign models, relegating teachers to an instructor role, and focusing on language proficiency in order to be competitive in the globalized world. In consequence, the mentioned ideologically laden discourses are continuously perpetuated and influence language institutes' education.

Worryingly, the policies directly implicating private language institutes seem to be almost nonexistent and vague. In the Colombian context, policies such as the Law 115, 1994; the Decreto 4904, 2009; and the Colombian technical norm (NTC) 5555 establish the general requirements for the institutes ascribed in the *Educación para el Trabajo y el Desarrollo Humano* (ETDH). Nevertheless, only the NTC 5580 currently focuses on private language institutes and their parameters. In addition, this policy does not refer to all the necessary aspects that must be considered in this field. As a consequence, as Ramírez Ospina (2015) denounces, due to the gap in the policy requirements “The private language institution’s stakeholders appear to take advantage of their possibility to (re)interpret and (re)create educational policies (EP) in the processes of LEP [Language Education Policy] implementation” (p.43)

In this sense, an important matter arises concerning the private language institutes' local policies. As stated above, due to the influence of national policies and the laxness and lack of information related to language institutes' parameters, stakeholders in these institutions are allowed to *(re)interpret* and *(re)create* their own policies. Consequently, institutional policies may carry several features of neoliberalism and internal colonialism that, in turn, affect the work experiences of teachers, as seen in the mentioned research and in my own experience

Overall, my research problem arises from the relevance of private language institutes, teachers' experienced dilemmas, and the role of institutional policies. As seen above, the presence of language institutes is exponentially growing day by day, increasing the importance of identifying the events and problems that occur in these new spaces. As a result of the research already done and my own experience in the field, different problematic situations have been distinguished (deskilling and shaping of teachers' identities, preference for NESTs, emphasis on language over pedagogical skills, etc.) which reveal a strong influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism. In the same way, said difficulties are suspected to be supported and introduced by lax institutional policies. All in all, this research aims to analyze the institutional policies of a language institute and their connection to neoliberalism and internal colonialism. Given the main matter at hand, in the next section, the research question and objectives will be presented.

General Research Question

- How do neoliberalism and internal colonialism shape a local private language institute's policies?

General Research Objective

- To unveil the ways in which the institutional policies of a local private language institute are shaped by neoliberalism and internal colonialism.

Specific Research Objectives

- To examine the institutional policies following a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach.
- To evidence the influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism in the institutional policies of a local private language institute.
- To decipher the characteristics that should be included in local private language institutes' policies.

Rationale

In this section, I will highlight the main reasons why this research is necessary for the community, one of them being the growing number of private language institutes and the implications related to it. As stated before, the presence of language institutes has been increasing exponentially in the last couple of years in Colombia. For instance, after examining the data provided in the *Sistema de Información de las Instituciones y Programas de Educación para el Trabajo y el Desarrollo Humano* (SIET), I could identify a total of 633 private institutions that are legally approved to offer language programs in Colombia (SIET, n.d.). In this sense, research should be done regarding these environments where a growing number of people are learning EFL.

Furthermore, the present research should be done to acknowledge the features presented in the language institutes' institutional policies that may influence EFL teachers. As it was mentioned previously, based on my own experience, and the one of many teachers in my surroundings and in the aforementioned research projects, our day-to-day practices are

affected by influences from neoliberalism and internal colonialism. Moreover, as Ramirez Ospina (2015) mentions, these institutions often take advantage of the lack of clarity regarding policies for ETDH and make implementations of their created norms that lead to the creation of stereotypes, deskilling of teachers, and discriminatory practices. All in all, local policies in this field should be analyzed to identify possible neoliberal and colonial factors that affect EFL teachers' identity and working conditions.

Additionally, it should be noted that this study highlights the importance of analyzing educational policies. Policy making is an important pillar in education, and involved in this process, the analysis of the current panorama should be done. In this regard, not only governmental organizations, but also key stakeholders such as teachers, must be included in policy analysis to gain a wider and all-inclusive perspective on the realities that occur in the implementation of these policies (Ishak, 2023). Accordingly, this research is based on one of the axes of the *Maestría en enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras* at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, which involves theory and pedagogical construction related to topics such as policy making, in order to critically transform teachers' beliefs and training (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, n.d.-b).

Provided the importance of talking about policy making, this research will delve into the panorama of private language institutes' local policies analysis, an area in which no exploration has been done. Several studies have been found involving private language institutes (Rendón Alfonso, 2019; Quintero González, 2022; Charris Angulo, 2017; Roa Herrera, 2021; Ramírez Ospina, 2015); however, they mainly focus on teachers' identity construction or the hiring preferences of the institutes. Even though the authors have mentioned the importance of policies in the institutes, no in-depth analysis of these norms has been carried out. In this sense, research should be done about the institutional policies that affect not only EFL teachers but also the entire community in private language institutes.

CHAPTER II: Theoretical Foundations

In this chapter, I will introduce the main theoretical constructs to carry out the research. First, an overview of research studies related to the principal concepts in this paper will be done. After that, key aspects of neoliberalism and internal colonialism will be seen in order to comprehend their role in the study. Finally, the main concepts in relation to policies and critical discourse analysis will be introduced.

Literature Review

In order to describe what knowledge has been recently established related to the topics in this study, I will present six national and international research studies. In this sense, studies carried out in private language institutes will be introduced in addition to research done regarding neoliberalism and colonialism. Also, findings and advances concerning critical discourse analysis will be seen. Furthermore, the role of policies in EFL education will be highlighted through the research mentioned above.

With respect to recent research studies regarding language institutes, the topic of teachers' identity construction is often found. The narrative study *Exploring EFL Teachers' Activity and Identity Construction through the Path of Private Institutional Policies* by Rendón Alfonso (2019) aimed at unveiling how EFL teachers construct their identities while working at a private language institute and how they negotiate the institutional policies in their practice. As a result of the data analysis, the researcher identified how institutional policies, which dictate the established protocols and methodologies that ought to be followed, impacted the teachers' creation of an "artificial" identity. Nevertheless, teachers dismissed these impositions while not being observed in class or opted for doing administrative work as ways to negotiate or fight the institutional policies.

On the whole, Rendón's study provides an in-depth view of the construction of teachers' identities while working at language institutes. As the author mentions, her research shows "how teachers construct or reconstruct their identities in terms of language, language pedagogy and language learning as well as individuals in the frame of a language institution." (p.12). In addition, the findings contribute to my research not simply by acknowledging teachers as key actors in education who are affected in this specific working environment, but also by recognizing the influence institutional policies have on the identity construction and daily experiences of the teachers. Regarding the latter, even if the study highlighted the impact of these policies, this was demonstrated through teachers' narratives, but no analysis of the documents was developed, which is one of the principal objectives in my research.

Along with the previous study, Quintero González (2022) exposes a direct relationship between teachers' identities and neoliberalism. In the research paper *Delving into Colombian EL teachers' identities from their voices in neoliberal times: A narrative study* Quintero showed how, in a private institute influenced by neoliberalism and globalization, EFL teachers (re)constructed their identities through life stories. As a conclusion of the research, it was seen how teachers found in themselves a robot-like identity, standing in a passive role with the only objective of following business and marketing purposes, but wishing to embrace a more critical human-like identity. In addition, the author examines the influence of the National Bilingual Program (NBP) regarding the instrumentalization and standardization of English and puts emphasis on the importance of teachers' experiences in policy-making processes.

As shown above, Quintero Gonzales' contribution lies in the effect ideologically laden discourses have on teachers' identities. The author's findings provide useful information for my research by exposing the impact of neoliberalism on policies and, therefore, the effects the ideology has on teachers' identities while working at language

institutes. In the same fashion, my research aims at recognizing the relationship between neoliberalism and private language institutes; however, unlike the mentioned study, I will not put an emphasis on national policies, such as the NBP, but on local policies at one language institute.

Correspondingly, the influence of neoliberalism on policies has been studied all over the world. In the research *Multilingual Education for Sale: The Neoliberalization of Language Education Policy*, Katznelson (2023) aims to decipher how neoliberalism is manifested in the discourses of language education policies in California, USA. Through the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA), the author discovered how the rebranding of “bilingual education” to “multilingual education for all” in policies concealed a focus on language learning for economic benefits and on the privileged social classes instead of attending to minorities that need access to equal bilingual education. In this sense, as my research intends to do, Katznelson demonstrates how the language used in policies manifests a series of inequities and power relations behind a discourse used in a vague and general way.

In addition, Katznelson discovered how “California language education policies in the 21st century have reproduced colonial relations of power that continue to serve dominant interests while further disenfranchising marginalized groups” (p.73). This was seen by the use of mechanisms such as: the infiltration of business-domain vocabulary, the sloganization of terms native to the field of language education policy, and the commodification of multilingualism and colonialism. Similarly, my research aligns with the aims of Katznelson’s study, as CDA is used to discover not just neoliberal influences in educational policies, but also the influence of colonialism and the market in language education.

Overall, Katznelson’s research serves as an important reference as CDA is employed to identify the role of neoliberalism in educational policies. One contributing factor to my

research is the authors' use of the multidimensional analysis of texts approach proposed by Fairclough. Through the use of this approach, Katznelson develops a step-by-step procedure to analyze written documents, which benefits my analysis by offering an illustration of how to carry out this procedure. Nevertheless, it should be noted that while Katznelson directs the analysis towards the identification of neoliberal traces, I will additionally ponder on the construct of internal neoliberalism and its possible influence on educational policies.

Moving to the global south, neoliberalism has also had an impact on English language teaching policies and programs. Focusing on the Chilean context, Romero (2022), in her research *The Neoliberal Blow to English Language Teaching: Deconstructing the Teacher Academy Program in Chile*, presents how the implementation of the Teacher Academy (TA) program perpetuates the neoliberal agenda. In this program, teachers from elite private schools *re-educate* public school teachers in order to teach EFL in their own context (public education). To achieve the aim of the study, Romero analyzed documents (newspaper articles, videos, open letters, and official information from the Ministry of Education), following the Sen's capability approach (CA) framework (which focuses on what individuals can be and do). As a result, the researcher showed how market-driven policies portray public school teachers as *in-capable* and in need of learning from capable private school teachers in a program that does not consider the inequalities in education.

The study's findings are in accordance with my research's aim, which involves the use of policies influenced by the market and the privilege put on the elite's perspective of language education. As the author mentions, in educational settings, "rather than empowering teachers to (co-)construct and create suitable teaching practices for their educational contexts, they are perceived as recipients of good teaching that cascades from the elite world" (p.31). In this sense, Romero's study provides a background regarding how neoliberalism affects educational policies in the global south. In the same train of thought, the procedures

employed by the researcher shed light on how to maintain a critical perspective in document analysis. In my research, the same critical perspective will be held; nevertheless, the context and methodologies used will differ.

In accordance with the power given to elites and foreign entities, the presence of colonialism is also a major interference in Colombian policies. In the case study research *English for Peace? Coloniality, Neoliberal ideology, and Discursive Expansion*, Hurie (2018) sets the objective of analyzing the ideologies and discourses behind the policy *Colombia Bilingüe* and its relations with the peace process the country was going through in that moment. As a result of the analysis of the policy, class observations, and interviews with Colombian and foreign teachers who were part of the program, Hurie observed how the discourse of teaching *Inglés para la paz* (English for peace) masked the interference of the USA in the country. Also, the analysis showed the privileged position of the global north in material creation, teaching processes, evaluation, and even the inclusion of American organizations, maintaining dominance over EFL education and disregarding the importance of our context and history.

Regarding the contributions to my research, Hurie's analysis sets a precedent in identifying the influence of colonialism in EFL education. As a part of the theoretical framework, the author includes important references and concepts such as internal colonialism, coloniality of being, coloniality of power, and coloniality of knowledge, among others. This theoretical background will be included in my research as a way of understanding possible colonial influences in the policies of a private language institute. Additionally, even though I will ponder the same key concepts (Neoliberalism and Colonialism), the research will be developed in a different context (private, not public education), using different data (institutional policies, not observations, interviews, or national policies), and with a different analysis procedure (CDA, not decolonial theories).

Finally, Colombian policies have also been analyzed with the help of CDA. Escobar Alméciga (2013) presents in the research *Identity-Forming Discourses: A Critical Discourse Analysis on Policy Making Processes Concerning English Language Teaching in Colombia*, the analysis of the policy *Educación: Visión 2019* by the MoEd. After following Fairclough's intra-textual and inter-textual levels of analysis, Escobar identified how "standardization, homogenization, and simplification of the notion of language are being fostered in the quest for power and control, consequently overthrowing the value of local knowledge, difference and diversity." (p.57). As mentioned in the previous studies, the market-driven purpose of learning EFL and the undermining of our context, knowledge, and languages stand out in EFL official policies.

Taking into account my research, Escobar's study allows me to understand the use of CDA for policy analysis and to recognize the presence of possible categories that can be found. Firstly, the author highlights the importance of using strategies such as re-contextualization, generalization, prominence, and nominalization to develop the linguistic and semantic analysis of the text. Also, as a result of the analysis, two categories were found: being bilingual equals speaking a standardized variety of English; and being successful equals learning English in order to advance in a globalized and homogenous world, even if Colombia lacks conditions of equality. These results will be taken into account in the development of my research; nonetheless, different categories may emerge considering Escobar's analysis of policies made by the MoEd and my objective of analyzing policies that belong to the private sector.

All in all, the studies previously mentioned helped me to contextualize my research, identifying the contributions made nationally and internationally in my areas of interest. In this sense, I could see the way researchers have produced new information regarding the state of EFL teachers at private language institutes, the influence of neoliberalism and colonialism

in language policies, and the use of CDA as a useful tool for exposing hidden themes in discourses. Alongside this information, the next section will provide insight into the topics mentioned before in order to enrich my research and the theories that support it.

Theoretical Framework

Neoliberalism

Defining Neoliberalism

Defining what neoliberalism is results in a challenging task due to the wide variety of points of view that must be considered. According to Plehwe (2009, as cited in Nikpouya & Zareian, 2024) “neoliberalism encompasses a range of intricate and multifaceted perspectives, lacking a concise and universally agreed-upon definition within the realm of political philosophy” (p.207). These perspectives involve economic, political, and ideological aspects that display the effects of neoliberalism in the background of modern society. In this sense, next, I will provide a brief contextualization of neoliberalism and its origins.

In order to understand key ideological notions of neoliberalism, it is important to highlight its roots in liberalism. Liberalism, understood as a political philosophy, supports the main belief that freedom is the fundamental principle in people’s lives (Useche, 2002). Based on the ideals of economists, politicians, and philosophers such as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, liberalism adopts a set of principles, such as: First, society must be composed of free processes that are not restrained by institutions such as the state. Second, freedom is above what society can deem as good or bad; everyone has the same rights and deserves to express his/her opinions, in the end, the “market of opinions” will support the truth. Finally, and most importantly, the market is the ultimate expression of freedom, following a *laissez faire* perspective, a society will work by itself, without state intervention, by allowing individuals to acquire private property and having a free market in which competition between participants will ensure a natural regulation and distribution of wealth (Useche,

2002; Ariza Traslaviña, 2019; Escalante Gonzalbo, 2015). All in all, these ideals will be the base of the new liberal ideology that will appear decades later.

Despite the popularity of liberalism during the XIX century, its downfall was triggered by a series of pivotal events. The economic and social crisis, coming hand in hand with the First World War and the Great Depression in 1929, led to elevated rates of poverty and unemployment, and a general distrust towards liberalism (Gerstle, 2022). Based on the chaos that reigned at the time, economists such as John Maynard Keynes proposed a new form of political-economic organization in which, even though market processes were still encouraged, regulatory measures were taken and public services were provided by a Welfare State, this will be later known as “embedded neoliberalism” (Harvey, 2005; Abdelal & Ruggie, 2009). Nevertheless, despite visible economic growth, this organization would face the rise of a renewed liberalism at the end of 1970.

Neoliberalism, as we know it today, was born from the mindset of a group of scholars who wished to resurrect classic liberalism’s notions. As Gerstle (2022) states, during the Colloque Lippmann, held in Paris in 1938, and the first reunion of the Pèlerin Society in Switzerland in 1947, a group of economists, historians and philosophers such as Herbert Hoover, Walter Lippman, the Austrians Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, and members of US universities like Milton Friedman, planted the seeds of a new (Neo) liberalism that reinstalled a hardened free market focus. The group stated their unconformity with the state’s involvement in the market due to possible abuse of power and corruption. Even though the seeds of this new vision were planted in the 30’s and 40’s, it was not until the 70’s that neoliberalism was widely spread and then heavily implemented through the election of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA. As Harvey (2005) claims, this implementation was characterized by privatization of public services, reduction

of taxes, strengthening of free market, rate of interest's raise, and the "deregulation of everything".

Although neoliberalism sets its roots in liberalism, a main difference can be found in the role of the state. According to Escalante Gonzalbo (2015), classic liberalism was based on the *laissez faire* theory, which claimed that the state should not, in any way, be involved with the market since this one is able to regulate itself. However, neoliberals assert that, even though the state must not affect or interfere with the free market, it will be needed to support and expand the market's aims. In this sense, as Useche (2002) mentions, political and economic decisions taken by powerful administrations, such as Reagan's, that have influenced countries all over the world are:

Figure 1
Neoliberal Actions

Total support to market's power	Companies freedom from any restriction imposed by the state, this implies unregulated prices and international trade of capital, goods and services.
Cutbacks in public spending	In areas such as education, healthcare, social security, among others.
Deregulation	Reduction of government regulations that can affect private benefits, even if this impacts on job security and the environment.
Privatization	Sale of companies, goods, and services of the state to private investors.
Elimination of "public goods"	These goods have been replaced by "individual responsibility".

Note. Neoliberal actions. Adapted from *Neoliberalismo, educación y desarrollo económico en Colombia* (p. 84), by A. J. Useche, 2002, *Civilizar* 2(2).

In addition to the political and economic perspective of neoliberalism, this theory carries ideological qualities. According to Themelis (2021a), who based his notions on the

proposals of Marx and Engels (1978/1984), and Althusser (1971), an ideology is a representation of the relationship between individuals and their production of ideas, conceptions, and consciousness related to their real conditions of existence. In this respect, Holborow (2012) emphasizes 5 characteristics of an ideology that can be found in neoliberalism:

- “a one-sided representation
- articulated from a particular social class but constructed as a world-view
- part-believed and part-rejected
- influenced by real world events
- coextensive with language but distinct from it.” (p. 29)

First, as the author mentions, “Ideological representation starts from the real but sees the real through a certain lens” (p.29). This can be reflected in the way neoliberalism is based on market relations, and this perspective influences a specific world-view and human interactions. Second, as mentioned by Harvey (2005), neoliberalization is linked to the restoration of class power, this class being constituted by the owners of the capital and the members of the corporate and financial world. Third, the control of neoliberalism is not absolute; opposition to its ideals may emerge in society. Fourth, as seen before, neoliberalism emerges from a series of economic crises and political interventions lived in the ruling era of “embedded liberalism”. Finally, although ideology is not completely verbal, it can appear in language use.

All in all, defining neoliberalism implies the recognition of political, economic and ideological features. As previously presented, political philosophies, such as liberalism, were key in the conception of the principles later seen in neoliberalism. In addition, a series of historical events, involving political and economic aspects, influenced the creation of the

theory. Furthermore, based on the characteristics of the neoliberal worldview and its origins, this can be recognized as an ideology. In this sense, neoliberalism is defined in this research as a theory of political economic practices and an ideology that advocates for free-market, individualism, profit, and privatization.

Neoliberalism in EFL Education

The impact of neoliberalism has been traced to all areas in everyday life, as is the case with education. As Melanson (2023) asserts, with the implementation of education policies since 1990, the protection of public goods was displaced by the aim of economic growth. With this in mind, “various reforms have emerged that share overarching similarities in the sense that each seeks to reorganise education in line with market ideas and practices.” (Savage, 2017, p. 152). This process is known as marketization, which involves practices such as: decentralization, the transfer of powers and responsibilities to the market, the deregulation of educational institutions, competitiveness in the schooling system, and the privatization of education (Torres, 2007). Ultimately, with the influence of neoliberalism, policies have impacted the reformulation of education framed on the market.

In the same fashion, the market-based practices mentioned above implanted the concept of *human capital* in the education field. As Savage (2017) mentions, human capital can be defined as the “Skills, knowledge and experience possessed by an individual or population of people, understood as a measure of their economic value.” (p. 148). With this in mind, the freedom neoliberals support makes individuals accountable for their own success (or failure) in different areas of their lives, depending on the skills they acquire. As a result of this demand, education plays a decisive role, seen by people as the giver of knowledge that will enable them to “advance” in society. As Holborow (2015) explains:

Education, now an enabler of human capital development, becomes the crucial driver of the economy, a power-house of economic potentiality from which anything non-functional, not measurable in monetary terms or not immediately economically useful, is expelled. Educational products compete on the market for student consumption and then the knowledge that students acquire is sold on as human capital on the wider employment market. (p. 16)

In relation to the human capital premise, language has been seen as a necessary skill in the market in accordance with processes of globalization. Although the term globalization is understood in different ways, it can be acknowledged as “the deepening interconnectedness of economies (exports/imports), cultures, and people throughout the world as a result of technological advancements, cross-border commerce, and the movement of capital, labor, and information” (Ortega, 2024, p. 71). In this process of interconnectedness through economy, policies, culture, mass media, etc., the knowledge of English is seen as a requirement for social mobility (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008). Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that the increasing need to learn English as a foreign language poses a threat to native languages and cultures around the world (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008; Guerrero-Nieto, 2009; Ortega, 2024).

As a result of the growing necessity of learning English in a globalized world, EFL teaching has been impacted by a commodification process. In order to understand how commodities work, it is necessary to comprehend the notions of *use-value*, and *exchange value*. Based on the proposals of Karl Marx, when an individual is involved in the production of a good or a service, the result of the labor is a “thing” that has a *use-value*, which means it has a utility/it is useful for someone. E.g., if a person makes a shirt, this shirt is useful for someone who needs to find something to wear. Even if the product can be useful for the producer (I can wear the shirt I made), it is not always the case. When the product does not

have a utility for the producer, but it can be exchanged for something else and be received by someone who needs it, it is said that it has an *exchange-value*. E.g., If I make a shirt, but I do not need to wear it, I can exchange it for money to someone who needs my product. The product that is made just with the purpose of exchanging it, is a *commodity* (Simpson, 2023; Winn, 2021; Holborow, 2015; Petrovic & Yazan, 2021).

Applying the terminology mentioned above to the field of language education, EFL teaching is considered a commodity in neoliberal times. Based on a neoliberal perspective, where education works as a market, lessons and courses are being offered in order for students to acquire the necessary skills, or human capital, in the present globalized society. In terms of teaching and learning a foreign language, a teacher (producer) offers a service (teaching EFL) in the form of a product (lesson) which is exchanged and has a use-value for a student (consumer) in order to learn/acquire language skills; in this process we can see how the teaching of EFL (in the form of lessons) is commodified (Simpson, 2023; Block, 2018). Furthermore, when talking about services and commodities, as Simpson (2023) mentions:

For the sake of clarity, I see the service and the commodity of commercial ELT as indivisibly one. Students cannot ‘have’ the lesson without the teacher there to teach/serve them (or indeed without the efforts of other staff beyond the classroom), and the production of the lesson therefore, and the ‘service’ of paying someone to do something for you, are therefore one and the same. It is to be understood therefore, that in referring to the lesson as a commodity or product, I am referring to a commodity or product which is a service – an unfolding product in which the student plays a participatory role, rather than a commodity of a more corporeal kind such as shirts, shoes, or shellfish. (p. 41)

In this respect, the functioning of EFL teaching as commodity in a market environment comes hand in hand with specific “trends” such as the precarity in working conditions and the deskilling of teachers. Taking into account Simpon’s (2023) and Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo’s (2023) reflections, the Commercial ELT industry, which includes private language institutions, presents conditions and trends that may differ from those seen in official schools. On the one hand, we identify the precarity of working conditions, which involve short-term contracts and low wages. On the other hand, this environment results in the deskilling of teachers whose assignments fall into a routine hackwork, placing them as the “suppliers of a product” or “clerks” who are good at following the rules and procedures set by a textbook and/or the institute. All in all, teachers can be subject to questionable work conditions and be downplayed without taking into account their teaching skills.

To sum up, neoliberalism has built a market-based system in EFL education. In this regard, EFL teaching is seen as a service/commodity which is provided by a producer (teacher) in order to satisfy the needs of a consumer (students). In this process, the marketization, privatization, and deregulation of education are palpable. Also, English is seen as a necessary skill to advance in a global society. Additionally, sectors such as commercial EFL teaching observe a strong adherence to neoliberal-market-driven procedures, which negatively influence teachers and education in general.

Neoliberalism in Colombia

The presence of neoliberalism in Colombia has been marked by the implementation of various policies and programs. According to Useche (2002), and Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023), neoliberalism was introduced to the country under President Virgilio Barco’s administration; however, it was fully implemented by President Cesar Gaviria in 1990. The country’s debts and the promise of prosperity led to the adoption of the models proposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which resulted in an international trade

reform program, known as “Apertura Económica”. With the execution of the program, the country underwent the creation of policies in all economic and social aspects involving the citizens.

The neoliberal policies applied in Colombia can be categorized into 4 groups: economic openness, decentralization, deregulation, and privatization. As mentioned by Useche (2002), the importation of American products and the supposed “overprotection” of the national industry resulted in economic crisis, bankruptcies, and unemployment in Colombia. In addition, the power, functions, and resources of the state were distributed all over the country. Also, control over the prices in public services and a low regulation of commerce were promoted through policies such as the laws 49 and 50 (1990), and laws 7 and 9 (1991). Finally, the services and state-owned enterprises run by the government were handed over to private companies. To sum up, neoliberalism influenced the country and enhanced the focus on the market through the implementation of different policies.

Concerning the educative system in Colombia, policies have involved the privatization and decentralization of education and highlighted the role of the market in EFL learning. Through the implementation of policies such as Decree 2496 (1990) and Law 60 (1993), the process of decentralization of education towards the different regions in Colombia started. Also, with policies such as Law 715 (2001) the state is made responsible for the inspection and monitoring of education, but not necessarily its supply (Useche, 2002). Regarding language teaching/learning, in policies such as “Decennial National Plan of Education 2006-2016” and the “National Bilingualism Program 2004-2019” decentralization, global economy, and the interest of international organizations such as the OECD and the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID) are identified (Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2023; Ariza Traslaviña, 2019).

To sum up, neoliberalism has impacted Colombian policies and programs for more than 30 years. The inclusion of this political and economic theory and ideology brought about a series of changes in laws, which led to a lack of regulation, the ownership of public services by private companies, and significant attention to the market. In regard to education, even though the necessity of supplying education all over the country was acknowledged, the state stopped being its sole provider. Additionally, neoliberal traits have also been identified in the creation of EFL policies, which are developed with the purpose of meeting the interests of economic groups. In this sense, education, specifically bilingual (English-Spanish) education, has been subjected to neoliberalism in the Colombian territory.

In conclusion, neoliberalism is an ideology and an economic and political theory that favors the free market and is reflected in education and EFL teaching. From the origins of this ideology, freedom and the power of the market have been identified as influences of classical liberalism. Throughout the years, the implementation of policies based on neoliberal ideals affected educational Colombian settings in the form of decentralization, privatization, marketization, and deregulation, among other processes. Also, the commodification of EFL teaching has impacted the perspective of the student as a consumer and the teacher as producer of a service. All in all, the recognition of neoliberalism and its effects helps us to understand the purpose and aim of this research.

Internal Colonialism

Colonialism vs Coloniality

In order to understand the background and origins of internal colonialism, it is important to acknowledge the concept of *colonialism*. According to Maldonado-Torres (2007) “Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire.” (p. 243). To offer an example, during the late 15th century, Europe led one of the biggest

waves of expansion, which resulted in the domination of American territories and its people. In this colonial process, not just geopolitical divisions were made, but also social organization and structures were imposed, and total control and disposition of natural resources, production, labor, and identity were held (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Ortiz Ocaña, 2024). In short, colonialism denotes the domination and control of one nation over another.

Nonetheless, even if colonialism leads us to think about past historical events, its consequences are still present to date; this is further developed in the concept of *coloniality*. This concept, worked by sociologist Anibal Quijano, arose from colonialism with the new world order established by Europe and heightened by neoliberalism and capitalism; however, it does not need colonialism to survive. In the words of Gómez-Quintero (2010), coloniality can be defined as an ideological system or ‘power pattern’ that, supported by social sciences, involves the naturalization of racial and social hierarchies and the control and exploitation executed by one group over the other. Also, the impositions it brings have deep, unwavering, and long-lasting consequences. Indeed, they are everywhere in our daily lives, and they are related to control over knowledge, labor, authority, human relationships, etc. (Castañeda-Peña, et al., 2023; Guerrero-Nieto, 2023; Ortiz Ocaña, 2024). As Maldonado-Torres (2007) explains:

Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday. (p. 243)

Moreover, coloniality is represented in three categories: coloniality of power, coloniality of being, and coloniality of knowledge. These categories, introduced by researchers and sociologists such as Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, Santiago Castro-

Gómez, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Edgardo Lander, Ramón Grosfoguel, and Catherine Walsh, among others, reflect the different areas in which coloniality can be found. In this sense, next, I will present a brief description of each category.

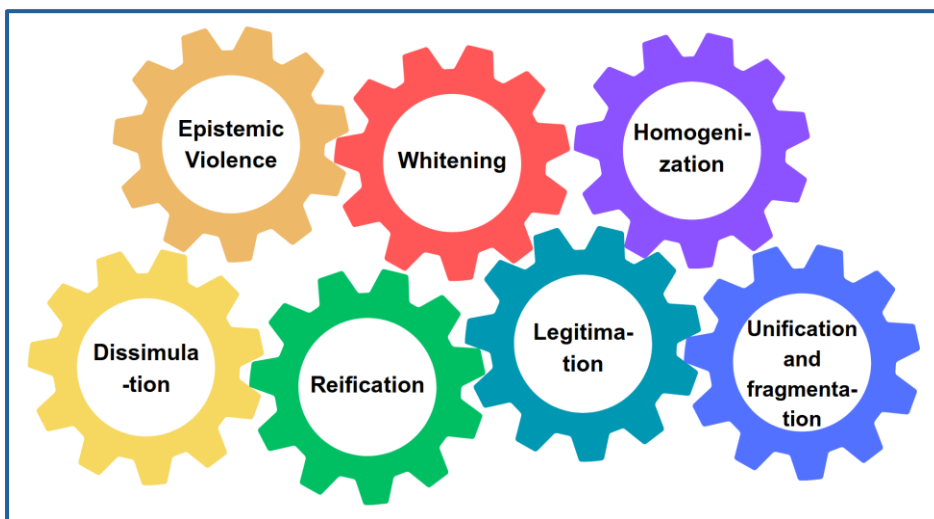
First, *coloniality of power*, based on the proposals of Anibal Quijano, is seen as “a pattern of global domination from the modern/capitalist world-system originated with European colonialism in the early fifteenth century” (Gómez-Quintero, 2010, p. 3). This pattern is based on two central axes: 1. A domination system based on intersubjective social relations and related to the naturalization of the idea of “race”, alongside a classification system based on the ideas of class, and gender/sex. 2. A domination system of material social relations, in which capitalism influences the labor exploitation of people. Therefore, the coloniality of power ensures the exploitation, domination, and control of people through the naturalization of Western ways of thinking.

Second, *coloniality of being* presents how, through a domination process, human beings assume a “subordinate” position and the consequences that come with it (Lloyd, 2023). According to Maldonado-Torres (2007), and taking into account the proposals of Frantz Fanon, “Invisibility and dehumanization are the primary expressions of the coloniality of Being.” (p. 257). Through exploitation, domination, and control, a human being is left with helplessness that is followed by the question: Why go on? and, as Maldonado-Torres explains, this question is answered with *the cry*, understood as the reflection of our own existence. At the same time, as Fanon declares, this *cry* leads to the acknowledgement of the condition of *the damné* (the condemned): “*The damné* or condemned is not a ‘being there’ but a non-being or rather, as Ralph Ellison so eloquently elaborated, a sort of an invisible entity” (pp. 256-257). In general, the coloniality of being unveils the consequences of living under domination and the questioning of one’s identity and existence.

Finally, *coloniality of knowledge* refers to the imposition of a representation and knowledge system by the colonizer and the prohibition of other systems (Ortiz Ocaña et al., 2018; Gómez-Quintero, 2010). The repression imposed with the objective of acknowledging just European cultures and epistemology implies the denial of historical knowledge that emerged from other communities, and, as Ortiz Ocaña et al. (2018) say, its categorization as something *mystic, irrational, and archaic*. All in all, the coloniality of knowledge involves the naturalization and globalization of one epistemic and cultural system, invalidating other ways of knowing.

Furthermore, as Correa and Guerrero (2024) mention, in our everyday lives, colonial mechanisms are being constantly used by dominant groups. As a result of extensive research, and taking into account the contributions of Pulido-Tirado (2009), Ávila Pacheco (2010), Zárate Pérez (2014), Thompson (1984), and Janks (2010), the authors identified the following series of mechanisms and strategies implemented to perpetuate the colonial worldview:

Figure 2
Ideological Strategies and Colonial Mechanisms



Note. Ideological Strategies and Colonial Mechanisms. Adapted from *Traces of Coloniality in Colombia's Linguistic Landscape: A Multimodal Analysis of Language Centers' English*

Advertisements (p. 8), by D. Correa & C. H. Guerrero, 2024, *Revista Brasileira De Linguística Aplicada* 24(2).

The mechanisms implemented to enhance the colonial worldview involve the use of *epistemic violence*, *whitening*, and *homogenization/assimilation*. Through *epistemic violence*, oppression is exerted by not allowing a community to have access to knowledge sources that are outside of the hegemonic and traditional. In a similar manner, the current world system is characterized by the *whitening* of central parts of our lives, imposing the white points of view over the non-white ones. Lastly, from a cultural perspective, when colonial domination takes place, the differences and richness of one culture are displaced by the colonial ones, resulting in the *homogenization/assimilation* of cultural aspects.

In a similar manner, the authors incorporate the strategies proposed by Thompson (1984), which are used to spread and reinforce ideologies. First, relations of domination are established via the process of *legitimation*. This strategy can be identified through the use of the following:

1. Rationalization: Provide an argument followed by a set of reasons to justify something.
2. Universalization: Use of statements made by privileged groups to present themselves as interested in serving the interests of the majority.
3. Narrativization: Use of different ways of constructing “stories” that supposedly represent the ways of being of whole groups.

Second, with the process of *dissimulation*, the main motivations and meanings given by dominant collectivities are concealed. As Correa and Guerrero (2024) describe, this strategy is implemented with the use of three discourse strategies: *euphemism*, *displacement*, and *trope*. The first strategy, *euphemism*, is used to replace and disguise a negative

connotation with pleasant expressions. Meanwhile, *displacement* refers to the transfer of positive or negative values when the meaning of a term is changed intentionally. Lastly, *trope* involves the use of figurative language such as metaphors, synecdoche, and metonymy.

Third, *reification* is employed to present a situation as permanent and natural. As Janks (2010) describes, this strategy is developed with the use of *naturalisation*, *externalisation*, and *passivisation and nominalisation*. First, *naturalisation* presents social events as something common and natural. Next, *externalisation* refers to the process in which “social rituals, customs, traditions and institutions become fixed and immutable” (p.39). Finally, *passivisation* (converting active voice to passive voice) and *nominalisation* (turning a verb into a noun) aim to erase and ignore the people doing an action and their agency.

Lastly, Janks (2010) presents the *unification* and *fragmentation* strategies used to unite or divide people. On the one hand, *unification* brings individuals together through a collective identity. On the other hand, *fragmentation* divides people in spite of their similarities and unity. Additionally, as the author explains, the concept of unity is related to both strategies. While unity allows a group to create a sense of belonging, it is also applied to fragmentation as it creates a difference between two collectivities: ‘us’ and ‘them’. These processes can be built and identified through language use.

In conclusion, colonialism and coloniality, even if they are different concepts, come hand in hand. With the implementation of colonialism, one nation exerts control over a community, which, at the same time, suffers the consequences of this process not just along the duration of the control, but for a longer period of time. Colonialism leads to coloniality, which involves the exploitation, domination, and control of people, dictating how they must behave, think, act, and relate to each other. This ends up in the naturalization of said dictations and the appearance of a subjectivity linked to the conception of *the damné*.

Additionally, a diverse series of strategies and mechanisms is applied through language use with the objective of reaffirming the influence of colonial and ideological notions. All in all, these concepts are of great importance while analyzing the colonial influences in the policies of a private language institute.

Internal Colonialism: Origins and Uses in Education

Despite recognizing the importance of colonialism and colonality, it is necessary to mention the principal concept (for my research) in this category: *internal colonialism*. When approaching the subject of colonialism, it is common to link it with external colonialism that relates to, as mentioned above, the control of one nation over another; however, we can also find a similar process carried out by the same members of a specific nation. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) state regarding internal colonialism, “It refers to the way in which local elites treat their own compatriots as inferior.” (p. 191). In this way, economic, political, social, and cultural aspects play an important role in the control, dismissal, and rejection of the less privileged communities in a society.

Regarding the origins of the notion, black communities and their super-exploitation are involved. The concept of internal neoliberalism was popularized by the Mexican sociologist Pablo Gonzáles Casanova; nonetheless, this concept emerged in the center of political, economic, and racial turmoil in the USA left by decades of racism and colonialism. As Iborra-Mallent and Montañez-Pico (2020) affirm, the idea behind the notion goes back to the American Civil War in the 19th century, which, ironically, left the Afro-American population in the midst of a series of problems as a result of the abolition of slavery. These problems arose due to the use of new mechanisms (fraudulent contracts, legal persecution and criminalization, indebtedness, lack of access to economic and educational opportunities, and to the ownership of land, among others) in order to count on black people as labor force.

These new forms of ‘modern slavery’ resulted in massive migration and the super-exploitation of Afro-Americans in the USA.

Due to this situation, the desire to establish a self-governing territory appeared. According to Iborra-Mallent and Montañez-Pico (2020), in the early 20th century, the idea of emerging as a ‘black nation’ was developed by the movement Back to Africa and attracted Marxist politicians and activists such as Harry Haywood, who defended the idea of self-determination in his book *Negro Liberation* (1948):

One can say that the Black Belt¹ is a kind of “**internal colony**” of American imperialism, made to function mainly as the raw material appendage of the latter. The character of the oppression of the Negro people in no sense differs from that of colonial peoples. The economy of the region is not controlled by the Negro capitalists. Its immediate direction is in the hands of white local capitalists and landlords, who act as the outpost command for the real rulers, the financial dynasty of Wall Street. (p. 146)

Even though the proposal of a self-governing territory was not carried out, Haywood provided the first appearance of the term internal colonialism. In addition, it is important to recognize the use of similar notions in the black community inside and outside the USA. As Grosfoguel (2018) states, contributions to the idea of one community being oppressed by its same nation are seen in the work of: W.E.B. Dubois in 1945; St. Clair Drake and Horace C. Cayton in the same year with the term “black colonies”; Harold Cruse in 1962 when talking about “domestic colonialism”; and Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in 1967 with their book *Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America*, among others. All in all, the

¹ The Black Belt is understood as a zone in the South of USA with a significant number of African-American slaves before the American Civil War. After the war finished, they continued to be a strong presence in the area, representing more than 50% of the population. (Iborra-Mallent & Montañez-Pico, 2020)

recognition of the origin of the term internal colonialism is crucial to understanding its meaning and historical relevance.

Bringing the use of the concept to the field of Colombian education, it can be linked to the implementation of a wide variety of language policies. As Guerrero-Nieto (2023) affirms, “the way language policies have been implemented since independence is evidence of internal colonialism where the elites have produced different legal mechanisms to perpetuate the oppression towards their own people.” (p. 39) Particularly, the author painstakingly shows in her document *Language Policies in Colombia: The Inherited Disdain for our Native Languages* (2009) how, even after the independence from the Spanish empire, language policies favor the Colombian elite and disregard and abandon native languages such as the creole from San Andrés islands, the *Palenquero* from San Basilio de Palenque and the 66 indigenous languages we have. In addition, not only do the policies not protect the native languages, but they also impose English as the main language to be learnt:

While during the colonial years Spanish was favored and perceived as the language of modernization and progress, English is the language associated with those characteristics today. And yesterday, as today, indigenous languages and creoles are treated as second class languages. (...) It is too early to predict the outcomes of the national bilingualism program set by the MEN, but it is worrisome to see how this project is repeating the same patterns of inequality, discrimination, marginalization, and segregation that were used to impose Spanish more than five hundred years ago. (pp. 21-22)

Additionally, inside the EFL teaching field, internal colonialism can also be identified. As Mackenzie (2020) and Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) expose, native speakerism reveals how, while following the belief that native speakers will always

have better linguistic skills (which equals being better teachers), Colombian teachers are seen as inferior and, in the majority of cases, have worse salaries and working conditions. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) mention, “Native speakers have better salaries, are assigned the most challenging courses (under the false premise that they are better equipped to do so), do not have to carry out clerical chores, and are not asked to work double shifts” (p. 203). In this way, internal colonialism affects Colombian EFL teachers, being treated as inferior while ‘competing’ in the field with native speakers.

To sum up, internal colonialism reveals the way dominance over people and their categorization as ‘inferior’ constitutes a process that did not finish with the independence from European empires. As seen above, in different countries around the world, communities such as the African Americans were subject to continued colonialism from the members of the same nation. In addition, in the Colombian context, communities whose native language differs from Spanish suffered (and continue to do so) from the lack of interest and protection at the hands of the national government. Moreover, English has been placed at the center of bilingual policies, and this, alongside the presence of native speakerism, contributes to the panorama of Colombian EFL teachers seen and treated as inferior by the state and private institutes.

In conclusion, internal colonialism is understood as the domination, control and neglect of one community at the hands of a privileged group. This form of colonialism contrasts with external colonialism as the power is not held by a different nation; however, its consequences resemble the problems that go hand in hand with coloniality, such as the control over power, knowledge, and identity shaping. In addition, internal colonialism has been identified in the Colombian territory and the field of bilingual education, through the disdain for native languages and the preference for native English-speaking teachers. Bearing

this in mind, the aforementioned characteristics related to internal colonialism will be used in the analysis of a private language institute's local policies.

Critical Discourse Analysis

What is Discourse?

Taking into account that one of the main constructs of the present research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it is necessary to define what discourse is. As Block (2014) explains, discourse can be understood from different perspectives. On the one hand, from a linguistic perspective, this notion is associated with the study of oral or written texts “discourse in this sense is about aspects of spoken language such as the use of fillers and turn taking and in written texts, the use of hedges and cohesion.” (p. 15). On the other hand, from the perspective of social sciences, discourse is related to the production of knowledge through language and the possibility of perceiving how this knowledge is embedded in society. Likewise, Gee (1990) makes a difference between discourse and Discourses, giving the latter a more social and ideological meaning:

(‘discourse’ with a little ‘d’, I will use for connected stretches of language that make sense, like conversations, stories, reports, arguments, essays; ‘discourse’ is part of ‘Discourse’ — ‘Discourse’ with a big ‘D’ is always more than just language).

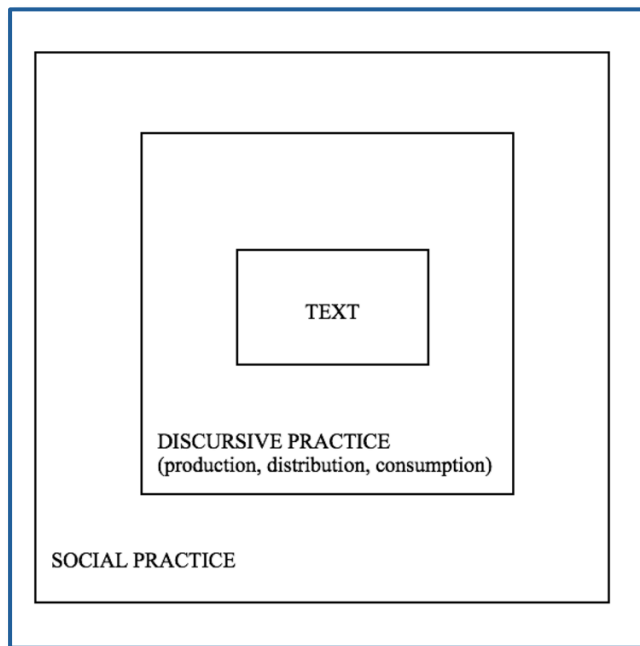
Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. (p. 142)

Additionally, a distinction can be made between discourse and language. Taking into account the observations made by Statham (2022), discourse is commonly used interchangeably with language; however, in critical linguistics, language refers to the structures and rules found in the grammar, semantics, and phonological levels. Discourse,

meanwhile, addresses what happens when language is used in different social, political, and cultural contexts. In this sense, when using the concept of discourse, we refer to “how language is used ideologically in the social organisation of society (...) and we are questioning the principles which are legitimised through language use” (p. 8). In sum, discourse goes beyond the enunciation of sentences; it shows how it is used in context and the knowledge behind it.

In the same train of thought, Norman Fairclough, key author in this research, also acknowledges the social aspect of discourse. As the author mentions, it is common for the concepts of language and society to be explained each one by its own, just being connected in some circumstances. However, within the framework of CDA, they have an internal dialectical relationship, as Fairclough asserts, “Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena.” (2015, p. 56). In this perspective, when people communicate, it has a social background and social effects. As a consequence of this relationship, the term *discourse* is used to refer to the use of language as a social practice. Additionally, the concept of *discursive event* alludes to specific ‘instances’ of language use.

When focusing on discursive events, Fairclough lays down three dimensions (*text*, *discursive practice*, and *social practice*) which will provide the basis of his framework of analysis. First, we can identify the dimension of the *text*, understood as “the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event” (2010, p.112). Then, this text is subject to a process of production, distribution, and consumption, which will be known as *discursive practice*. Finally, as mentioned before, the discursive event involves the use of language in society, in specific situations and under organizational and institutional circumstances; this dimension is known as *social practice*. Fairclough represents these dimensions in the following way (1992, p.73):

Figure 3*Three-dimensional conception of discourse*

All in all, discourse has been defined and interpreted in different ways depending on its use and the field in which it is ascribed. From a linguistic perspective, discourse is connected to characteristics of oral and spoken language. Alternatively, social sciences attribute higher importance to contextual aspects such as the use of language in society and knowledge production. Nevertheless, both fields are taken into account in the analysis of discourse, as is the perspective taken by linguists such as Fairclough. Bearing in mind the theoretical background of the concept and the objectives of this research, discourse is understood as the use of language in everyday life, considering the ideological meaning it carries and the effects it has on society.

Discourse, Ideology, and Power

As previously mentioned, acknowledging discourse involves the ideological use of language, and taking into account the objective of analyzing discourse in order to find neoliberal and colonial traces, it is important to recognize how power and ideology are related to discourse. According to Pardo Abril (2013), in the field of Critical Discourse

Studies (CDS), it is key to understand the role of ideology and power in discourse. At the same time, this relationship is connected to the adoption of a critical perspective, which has its roots in the Frankfurt School, and refers to:

A sociopolitical commitment in the construction of a different society through the observation of experiences and discursive configuration of domination, discrimination, control, and power reflected in the structures and social processes of individuals and historically interacting and meaning maker groups. (Pardo Abril, 2013, p. 67)

Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the impact of power in society. As Statham (2022) explains, and based on the proposals of Fairclough, power in itself is not bad; nevertheless, it is criticized when exercising power over others results in damage to people due to a wide variety of situations and causes. Also, power is not necessarily conducted by force from one institution over a community; instead, “this view recognizes power as persuasive and emanating from consent within society.” (p. 6). Moreover, as the author mentions, the principle of *hegemony*, widely seen in the work of Antonio Gramsci, shows how a group can persuade its members to follow and accept specific cultural, moral, and economic ideals. Overall, power can also be exerted through language used for persuasive purposes.

In the same fashion, discourse is actively used to legitimize ideological principles and justify actions and decisions. Considering that discourse, as mentioned before, deals with the use of language in specific socioeconomic, political, and cultural contexts, the language used may be influenced by ideology. As Statham (2022) states “Ideology has come to be viewed slightly more broadly as a belief system possessed by social groups who operate in a range of ways, including linguistically, to maintain and legitimize their power and influence” (p. 10).

It is also important to mention that, even if ideologies can be found in language use, it is not necessarily “easy” to recognize, but a series of steps are needed to find the indirect ideological control it has (Van Dijk, 1996; Fairclough, 2010). Overall, ideology and power are connected and can be found through an analysis of discourse.

In this sense, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposes a critical perspective on how to unveil the ideologies hidden in discourses. As Fairclough (2010) explains, ‘ideological-discursive-formations’ (IDFs) can be found in social institutions, which in turn, lead to ‘naturalizing’ the ideologies in order to be accepted as something ‘normal’ or ‘common sense’. As a consequence, the goal of CDA is to ‘denaturalize’ them from a critical perspective. Van Dijk (2015), exposes the main characteristics of CDA in the following properties:

- It focuses primarily on social problems and political issues rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside their social and political contexts.
- This critical analysis of social problems is usually multidisciplinary.
- Rather than merely describing discourse structures, it tries to explain them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.
- More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society. (p. 467).

Highlighting the multidisciplinary property mentioned above, and focusing on the Colombian context, Escobar Alméciga and Castañeda-Peña (2015) identify some research studies involving CDA. Some of the topics addressed in the studies are: the functionality of discourse markers; the role of social media in learning processes; the resistance, adaptation and negotiation of identities in learning, and the construction of said identities; the portrayal

of teachers in official discourses; and the role of policymaking in the shaping of identities, among others. Nonetheless, the authors highlight the need for more research to be done regarding discourse analysis in EFL learning settings with the objective of “contributing to the academic community with the assertions that may ensue in regard to language knowledge, social constructions, and dynamics of power and control.” (p.17)

In conclusion, CDA serves the purpose of revealing the hidden ideology used in discourse that may influence the exercise of power by a specific institution. As seen above, power is not necessarily exerted by force, but elite entities can exert it through influencing and persuading people. This persuasion is done via naturalized language use in discourse, which hides ideologies that are later accepted by a community. CDA is a key element to examine how relations of power are developed in discourse.

Policies

Educational Policies

Following the previous information regarding neoliberalism and internal colonialism, and taking into consideration the power exerted through the use of discourse, policies can be identified as the backbone of the control exercised by policymakers in the educational field. The methodologies, objectives, materials, procedures, etc. to be implemented and followed are laid out in the policies of an institution. In this way, these establishments inform their stakeholders of the aims that are set and the necessary operations to achieve them.

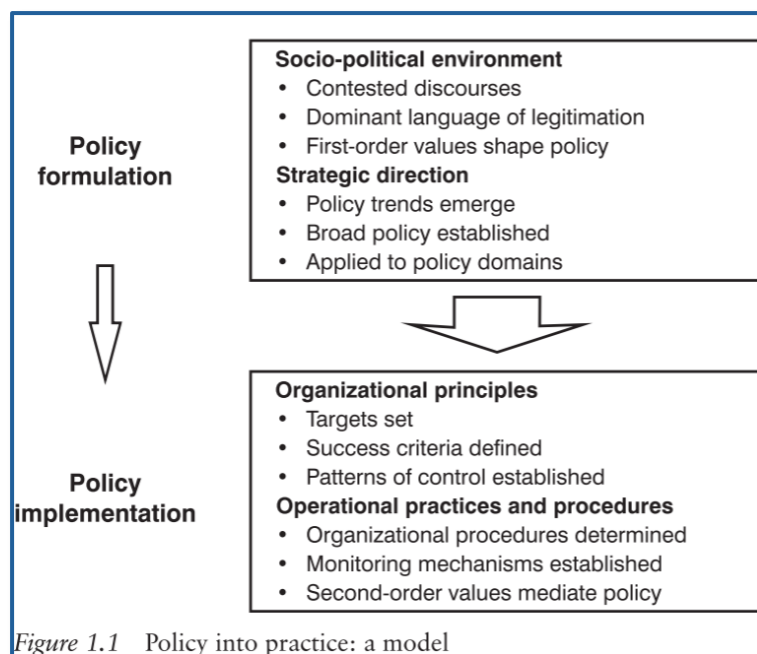
Nonetheless, the process behind the creation of said policies reveals a complex mix of factors that influence the implementation and acceptance of these norms. Next, I will present a definition of policy, its characteristics, and some models for its creation and implementation.

First, in order to understand the concept of policies in the educational field, it's important to acknowledge important aspects inherent to their creation and implementation.

Broadly speaking, as Fan and Popkewitz (2020) inform, “Education policy, including regulations, codes, plans, guidelines, notices, documents, programs, and measures, is a norm or measure that addresses educational issues, resolves educational conflicts, and establishes and adjusts educational relationships.” (p. 6). Nonetheless, to fully understand how policies work, Bell and Stevenson (2006, p. 13), based on the contributions of Taylor et al. (1997), propose a four-level framework which addresses policies based on their context, text, and consequences; and their creation and implementation:

Figure 4

Policy into practice: a model



As a means to comprehend the process behind the formulation of a policy, Bell and Stevenson address the first two levels of the framework: the socio-political environment and the strategic direction. In these levels, context plays a key role in understanding the influence of economic, political, and social factors in the creation of a policy. In addition, education and its problems are seen from the perspective of the main discourses led by social groups. In this sense, once a perspective has been identified, trends emerge, and general parameters and

priorities are established. With this in mind, particular educational policies become defined and begin to organize main aspects of an educational institution.

Taking into consideration the contextual influence previously mentioned, the authors present the next two levels, which guide policy implementation: organizational principles and operational practices and procedures. Once a broad definition of the policy is made, the organizational principles are set, developing success criteria in which, as the authors mention, “Targets are set and patterns of state, local, and eventually institutional control procedures are established.” (Bell & Stevenson, n.d., para. 10). In this way, the policies and their criteria become clearer. Finally, based on the organizational principles, the operational practices and procedures allow the institutions to establish specific operations and programs to implement the policies. In this level, policies are experienced in the daily life of the members of an institution while monitoring mechanisms are implemented.

As evidenced by the process previously described, influences from the context are deeply rooted in the creation and implementation of policies. With the objective of highlighting the importance of the contextual impact on policies, sociologist Stephen J. Ball puts great emphasis on the conception of policy as discourse, which, as seen before, carries ideological notions and permeates the way stakeholders are conceived and their role in the institutions.

Discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. Discourses embody the meaning and use of propositions and words. Thus, certain possibilities for thought are constructed. Words are ordered and combined in particular ways and other combinations are displaced or excluded. (...) In these terms we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies. (Ball, 2006, p. 48)

The perspective of policy as a discourse reveals the power that can be exerted through the parameters and criteria that organize an institution and its educational processes. As Bell and Stevenson explain, based on the contributions of Bachrach and Baratz (1962), and Lukes (1974), power in policy development can be identified in the control of the issues and topics that are discussed and changed, excluding certain actors from the decision-making process. However, power is not always easily detected, as it is exercised by collectivities in order to influence individuals to follow heavily ideologically laden procedures. In this sense, the power exercised through policy creation and implementation can be presented in different and complex ways, affecting the way education is carried out and the aims it has in an institution.

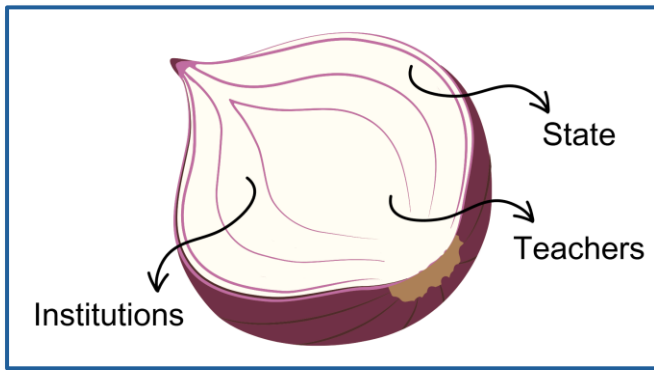
On the whole, the policy-making process previously described has been widely used and has impacted education for decades. As Correa and Usma Wilches (2013) explain, due to the popularity of this model, scholars have distinguished a set of characteristics describing some key aspects. First, the Bureaucratic, Rationalist or Traditional Model of Policymaking (as called by Correa and Usma) develops a top-down approach in making decisions, excluding important actors in the process. Second, it is created with a focus on specific ideologies and discourses, mainly foreign ones. Third, standardization is key in the development of the policy. Fourth, it implements a type of work called “adaptive work” which implies the solution of problems that exceed the skills and responsibilities of a worker. Finally, a market worldview impacts on several aspects of the policies, as the authors mention:

it is recognizable by its “mercantilist” approach to educational knowledge; its political economy of textbook production, consultant, and in-service training (Luke, 2003); and its strengthening of accountability measures designed to evaluate the effectiveness of policy actions (Bentley, 2010). (p. 229)

Nevertheless, when analyzing the development and implementation of policy, it is necessary to acknowledge the complexity of procedures that happen in it. As Ball (2006) clarifies, policy can also be labeled as a text, recognizing the multiple interpretations and adaptations that exist depending on the reader and his/her context. In the words of the author, “the more ideologically abstract any policy is, the more distant in conception from practice (...), the less likely it is to be accommodated in unmediated form into the context of practice; it confronts ‘other realities’, other circumstances” (p. 46). As a consequence, the interactions between the agency of the members in an institution and the constraints put through the implementation of policies result in a complex interaction in which power flows in multiple directions.

In a similar manner, Crandall and Bailey (2018) put emphasis on the multi-leveled structure that makes up the policy development process in language education. In order to highlight the different agents that play a role in the construction of policies, the authors draw attention to the *metaphor of the onion* proposed by Ricento and Hornberger (1996), which consists of 3 layers with the agents and processes that interact in policy-making procedures. The first layer represents the official policies (documents, laws, regulations, etc.) created by national agencies or even consulates and embassies. In the second layer, educational institutions such as schools, universities (or, in the case of this research, language institutes), adapt, interpret, or modify the policy. Finally, the last layer is made up of teachers who implement, adapt, or reject the policy. As Crandall and Bailey point out, policy is constantly being negotiated, modified, or resisted when going from one layer to another.

Figure 5
Onion's model



Note. Onion's model. Adapted from *Introduction* (p. 2), by J. Crandall & K. M. Bailey, 2018, Routledge.

On the whole, in order to provide a definition of policies, different aspects of policy-making development have to be taken into account. As seen before, identifying policy as a text allows us to recognize the importance of the adaptation, negotiation, or resistance that can occur when implementing it and passing through layers consisting of diverse participants and contexts. Alternatively, policy can also be identified as a discourse, calling attention to the influence of ideologies in the creation of policies and to the power that is exercised by collectivities, which, at the same time, can restrict the agency of the actors that are part of the implementation of said policies. This complex interaction is acknowledged by various researchers (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2022; Ball, 2006; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Bettney, 2022; Miranda & Giraldo, 2023) and bearing in mind their contributions and definitions, I can describe policy as a multi-layered social and discursive process that unveils in its implementation the influence caused by ideologies and collectivities.

As a reaction to the traditional linear policy-making development, researchers have introduced different models and approaches. Correa and Usma Wilches (2013) present the *critical sociocultural model*, which focuses on the needs of a specific country or region and

acknowledges the importance of having a discussion with the different stakeholders regarding critical aspects of education. The model proposes changes in policymaking in five categories: First, democratizing the formulation of plans by allowing teachers to have more agency. Second, providing materials and models for teaching that are in accordance with our contexts. Third, situating the teaching of a language through a critical review of the realities in our country. Fourth, articulating the policies with the educational legislation, the Schools' Educational Project (SEP), and other institutions with professional development programs. Finally, providing more appropriate mechanisms of evaluation for teachers and students.

In a similar manner, Tannenbaum and Shohamy (2023) call attention to the creation of policies in multilingual environments. Firstly, the authors emphasize the *engaged language policy* approach, proposed by Professor Kathryn A. Davis, whose objective is to involve all agents (teachers, principals, coordinators, communities, organizations, etc.) in a collaborative policy-making process. Based on this notion, the authors describe that a *multilingual education policy* should: be flexible and adapt to contexts, needs and ideologies; encourage principals and teachers to have deeper policymaking literacy; offer more languages in schools; recognize the advantages translanguaging brings to the learning process; use a multimodal approach to language learning; promote collaboration between language and content teachers; and implement suitable evaluation and assessment strategies in multilingual environments. In this sense, new models and approaches put an emphasis on collaboration and a focus on our contexts while creating and implementing policies.

On the whole, in order to understand the notion of educational policies, it is important to go through their creation and implementation process. Bearing in mind the contributions of the authors mentioned before, policy can be understood as a process and product that involves the convergence of a multitude of discourses and ideologies. In the process of its implementation, the guidelines, programs, plans, among other documents, go through

different layers and participants, and in their path, unveil the influence caused by the power of collectivities and the reactions that can cause in the stakeholders of an educational institution. Taking into account the complexity of this process, researchers propose a deeper focus on the context and the collaboration of participants in the making of policies. With this in mind, in the next section, more information will be provided regarding language teaching and learning policies implemented in the Colombian context.

Language Teaching/Learning Policies in Colombia

When focusing on the history of language teaching and learning policies in Colombia a wide variety of trends and ideological aspects come to light. As Rubio-Cancino and Martínez-Bohórquez (2023) explain, “bilingualism policies in our country have gone through different stages, according to the government in power interests” (p.37). It should be noted, according to Miranda and Giraldo (2023), that after the establishment of English as the principal foreign language to be taught in the 1970s, globalization enhanced the privileged position of said language and contributed to its constant presence in educational reforms since the 1990s. Proof of this, the MoEd has emphasized the impact of learning EFL in order to participate in global economic development, this can be seen in policies including the Project for Strengthening Foreign Languages Skills Development (2010-2014), the National English Program (2015-2025), Bilingual Colombia (2014-2018), and the National Bilingual Program (NBP). Some of its main characteristics will be mentioned below.

One aspect that has been identified in the official policies previously mentioned is the prevalence of foreign models, materials, and standards. As it has been mentioned by researchers (Rubio-Cancino & Martínez-Bohórquez, 2023; Miranda & Giraldo, 2023; Ortega, 2023; Bettney, 2022; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2021; Johnson, 2023) due to the influence of globalization and the imposition of English as the main foreign language to be taught, policies disregard our contexts and the native languages that, in turn, are not included

in the notion of “bilingualism” proposed in the official documents. Additionally, foreign publishing houses and entities have influenced Colombian multilingual education by imposing international testing methods, parameters, and standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which disregard the problems and conditions in our context. In the words of Rubio-Cancino and Martínez-Bohórquez (2023):

These policies have been permeated by the hegemony of powerful global groups and how education systems are geared toward them to respond to particular needs through international entities, as British Council, United Way Colombia, and the French Embassy, that impose linguistic guidelines without considering the communities’ necessities and contexts. (p. 37)

In addition, the influence of foreign companies on national policies can also be evidenced in teachers’ qualifications and training. As it can be identified in programs such as the NBP, standardized tests such as the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) or the Quick Placement Test (QPT) are used to evaluate teachers’ competencies and knowledge (Correa & Usma, 2013). In this sense, policies, influenced by publishing houses, disregard the importance of contextual language teaching knowledge and experience. As a result, our national educational contexts, such as language institutes, mirror this influence and apply these tests to evaluate and train teachers.

Furthermore, language policies in Colombia have shown a strong connection with neoliberal influences. As Correa and Usma (2013) inform, policymaking “is recognizable by its ‘mercantilist’ approach to educational knowledge; its political economy of textbook production, consultant, and in-service training” (p.229). Additionally, as is presented in the policies, the learning of EFL is aimed at providing people with a “technical skill” that will

allow them to be in a good position in the current global economy (Ortega, 2023). In this perspective, as Johnson (2023) points out:

The language ideologies that support both assumptions – that English ability is tied to economic prosperity for both individuals and polities – are intricately tied to neoliberalism and linguistic imperialism and championed by inner circle organizations in the Global North like the British Council (p. 92)

Accordingly, the main characteristics of the policies establishing the *education for work and human development* “Educación para el trabajo y el desarrollo humano” (ETDH) reveal the attention paid to the market in educational objectives. As it was mentioned in the introduction of this research, the Ministry of Education (2009) defines ETDH as the institutes that offer complementary academic services taking into account “the needs and expectations of people, society and demands of the labor market, productive sector, and the characteristics of the culture and surroundings.” (p.2). Similarly, the NTC 5580 (Ministerio de Educación Nacional-Icontec, 2007) lays out a set of required justifications that an institution in the ETDH must present to provide an academic service; among these justifications we can find: To make an impact on the graduates’ employment opportunities, and to be in accordance with the demands in the productive sector. All things considered, it can be noticed that the ETDH maintains neoliberal objectives in the establishment of its official policies.

Overall, the influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism has been identified in the official language learning/teaching policies in Colombia. As researchers have pointed out, national bilingual policies show a significant preference for foreign models and parameters, including the favored position of English, the influence of international entities, the inclusion of testing parameters such as the CEFR, and the disregard of our native languages, context, and teaching knowledge. Also, a focus on the market is detected in the mercantilist approach

of the official policies and the objectives of the ETDH. With this in mind, the presence of said ideologies in national policies is of help in the process of analyzing the policies of a private language institution in Colombia.

To conclude, the four constructs: neoliberalism, internal colonialism, CDA, and educational policies allow me to lay out the main theoretical notions that hold together the research. As seen before, neoliberalism is a theory and ideology that points up the importance of the free market in society; nevertheless, its notions about human relations and interactions in communities have influenced different fields, such as EFL education. Meanwhile, internal colonialism and its tenet of categorizing people from the same country or community as "inferior" have impacted EFL teaching institutions by relegating Colombian teachers, materials, culture, and pedagogy to a lower position compared to foreign contributions. In this sense, considering my objective of analyzing EFL policies from a private language institute to identify the influence of the aforementioned constructs, CDA serves as a suitable tool due to its emphasis on a critical perspective to unveil hidden ideologies in discourse. In the next chapter, the methodological aspects will be described to show how the analysis will be carried out.

CHAPTER III: Methodological Design

In this chapter, I will present key methodological aspects such as the description of the research paradigm, the type of research, and the theoretical perspective. Also, the setting and my role as a researcher will be explained. In addition, the data collection instruments and procedures will be described in order to understand the process of developing and organizing the research.

Research Paradigm

The present research project belongs to the qualitative research paradigm. According to Leavy (2023):

Qualitative research is generally characterized by inductive approaches to knowledge building aimed at generating meaning (Leavy,2014,2020a). Researchers use this approach to explore; to robustly investigate and learn about social phenomenon; to unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations, events or artifacts; or to build a depth of understanding about some dimension of social life (Leavy,2014,2020a). The values underlying qualitative research include the importance of people's subjective experiences and meaning-making processes and acquiring a depth of understanding (i.e., detailed information from a small sample). Qualitative research is generally appropriate when your primary purpose is to explore, describe, or explain. (p.9)

Taking into account my research and objectives, following a qualitative paradigm will allow me to have a deep understanding of the influences in the consolidation of an institutional policy. Also, as mentioned in the statement of the problem, the research question arose from a social phenomenon that is currently happening in private language institutes, and, considering the goals of qualitative research, my objectives aim at building knowledge about the policies that may influence some problems in this environment. In this sense, exploring and analyzing how neoliberalism and internal colonialism shape policies will help generate meaning about a process that could be found in other contexts that involve EFL teaching.

Type of Research

Keeping in mind the objectives of the research, this project is described as a document analysis. According to Kutsyuruba (2023), document analysis mainly entails the use of written texts in a systematic procedure, which involves:

finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained within them (Bowen, 2009). Documents are more complex than just being content containers; they are social products of collective, organized action (Prior, 2003). As Atkinson and Coffey (1997) argued, documents are social facts that are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways. (p. 140)

In the same way, this research project aims to highlight the importance of power relations, context, and ideologies when analyzing a written text. As Kutsyuruba mentions, when synthesizing and analyzing data, the complexity of a document comes to the surface, and in the present study, this complexity is highly taken into account to recognize the power that an institutional document in the educational field, and the collectivity behind it, holds. In this sense, this research project involves the use of *informal* or *internal documents* which “provide an internal perspective of the institution or organization, by describing its functions, norms, values, and understandings.” (Kutsyuruba, 2023, p. 141). Hence, the results of the research will put emphasis on the view of EFL learning and teaching in the context of a private language institute in Colombia.

Furthermore, as Culp and Blackshear (2024) describe, policy analysis is imperative in educational settings. As the authors mention, “Policy is a guideline for action underpinned by a belief system associated with a particular value set normally aligned with a political or ideological position” (p. 168). In the process of making sense of a policy, it becomes easier to identify what these values and ideological positions are and how they possibly affect the way

the notions of teaching, learning, being a teacher, and being a student are understood. Additionally, it will be possible to identify who and what is being left out during policy-making processes.

In the same fashion, Cardno (2018, as cited in Culp & Blackshear, 2024) mentions that policy analysis is related to three aspects contained in documents: context, consequences, and texts. First, it is necessary to consider the background of the document, the issues, and the sociopolitical environment that may influence the policy. Second, the consequences of the implementation of a policy concern the opinion of users and the possible challenges that may emerge. Finally, texts are related to the content of the policy and its structure, as Culp and Blackshear claim:

In this analysis, policy is considered from multiple standpoints and thoroughly investigated for linkages that could provide meaning beyond initial observations. Texts, therefore, are essential points of interaction that represent ideologies that can influence policy implementation and social action. (p. 171)

All things considered, document analysis focuses on the use of written texts to unveil their complexity and the influences of the context, values, and ideologies. Following this perspective, analyzing a policy entails the recognition of documents socially constructed with an influential background and with ideological content that has an impact on the consequences of their implementation. In this research, as mentioned in the objectives, policies in a private language institute will be analyzed, taking into account the possible influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism, which have impacted official policies and teachers' experiences in Colombia.

Theoretical Perspective

As it was stated in the aims of this research, a critical perspective will be held to analyze the policies of a private language institute. According to Creswell J. W. and Creswell J. D. (2023), in qualitative research, theoretical standpoints or perspectives are used as a *lens* to examine an issue or problem. In this sense, the theoretical perspective helps to shape the questions asked, collect the data, and analyze it. Various theoretical perspectives can be found in research, such as feminist perspectives, racialized discourses, queer theory, and disability inquiry; nonetheless, I will select the *Critical Theory* perspective. Regarding this standpoint, Creswell J. W (2007) informs:

Researchers need to acknowledge their own power, engage in dialogues, and use theory to interpret or illuminate social action (Madison, 2005). Central themes that a critical researcher might explore include the scientific study of social institutions and their transformations through interpreting the meanings of social life; the historical problems of domination, alienation, and social struggles; and a critique of society and the envisioning of new possibilities (Fay, 1987; Morrow & Brown, 1994). (p.27)

With this in mind, critical theory deals with empowering people to face the social issues and constraints caused by ideological influence. Additionally, this perspective aims at not only comprehending the way social life works and the issues presented in it, but also at highlighting the desire to transform this reality. In education, critical theory is concerned with critiques of ideological background and the effects it has on teachers, students, institutions, and the general view of education.

Furthermore, the critical theory perspective has a strong connection with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which will be used in this research as a means of analyzing the data collected. As Fairclough (2015) explains, CDA can be described as “normative critique

of discourse, leading to explanatory critique of relations between discourse and other social elements of the existing social reality, as a basis for action to change reality for the better” (p. 48). Based on this description, three main concepts come to light: critique, normative critique, and explanatory critique.

First, *critique* consists of evaluating society and identifying what is “wrong” (based on a set of values), and how it should be fixed. In terms of discourse analysis, being critical means to analyze and interpret, through the analysis of discourse, the causes and consequences of social wrongs produced by social processes, ideologies, and the use of power. In the words of Fairclough, being critical means looking for explanations. Also, it is important to note that the discourse which will result from the critical analysis needs to have a strong explanatory power, which implies that it must have necessary justified explanations both in quality and quantity.

Subsequently, this process can be divided into two categories: *normative critique* and *explanatory critique*. On the one hand, *normative critique* involves assessing discourse against the internal norms or values of society or institutions and identifying possible contradictions. Some examples of said contradictions involve being fair, speaking the truth, behaving in the ‘right’ way, being sincere, etc. As Fairclough (2015) explains, this type of critique is immanent in the sense that “immanent critique does not go outside the social reality it is critiquing to find a measure or standard against which reality can be evaluated and criticized (e.g., to religion or philosophy)” (p.15). On the other hand, *explanatory critique* is carried out if the contradictions identified in normative critique can be explained as an effect of the current social order. Social processes involving ideologies and power come to light in this analysis. Here, what is being critiqued is not discourse by itself, but the existing social reality.

As can be noticed, critical theory and CDA share theoretical notions and background. The critical aspects in CDA and the Critical Theory standpoint demand an analysis related to social reality and the influence of ideologies and power. Also, both acknowledge the main goal of raising awareness of problems that must be challenged and changed. In the words of Fairclough, “it is a critique of the existing social reality focused upon dialectical relations between discourse and other elements; and it is not just critique, it is critique as a basis for changing reality for the better.” (p. 48). I present these theoretical notions as a basis for my research in order to highlight the importance of analyzing policies, bearing in mind the ideological influences behind them, and the aim of identifying what needs to be changed in EFL education in private language institutes.

Setting

The policies selected to carry out the analysis belong to one local language institute. For the sake of anonymity, the name of the institute will be pseudonymized and it will be referred to as Institute X. This pseudonymization process is used as it “provides more security, assisting in implementing data protection measures.” (Vasylieva, 2021, p. 17). Additionally, this institute was chosen taking into account its coverage and representation in the country. It is important to note that this educational institution is considered one of the biggest in Colombia, with more than 50 branches in over 10 cities. The selection of an institute with this coverage allows us to see which perspectives of EFL teaching and its procedures are leading the local non-formal language teaching education. In this sense, the selection of this establishment unveils the perspectives of EFL education that represent the country in terms of language teaching for children, teenagers, and adults in the area of *Education for Work and Human Development*.

In addition, it is important to understand what kind of methodology is used for EFL teaching and the particularities that are involved in it. Regarding methodology, the institute

follows a Presentation Practice Production (PPP) structure, based on the use of a textbook, which is divided into units and lessons and is provided by foreign publishing houses. In this sense, each student schedules a class in order to learn the topics (focused on grammar structures) introduced in a specific lesson of the textbook. Classes can have up to 6 students, each with a different topic to be seen. Throughout the duration of the class, teachers are in charge of explaining the topics each student must learn, supervising the development of grammar activities in the students' textbook, and creating and carrying out a final activity in which, by providing a situation and a task, all the topics are practiced at the same time.

Furthermore, individual processes are key in the institute. Unlike schools and universities, students are not part of a group that takes the same lesson at the same time. As mentioned before, students follow an individualized experience, allowing them to choose the most convenient schedule and branch, and giving them the option of taking as many classes as they wish. As a result, teachers do not follow the learning process of a group of students; instead, they are just responsible for taking care of the students' learning needs during the time of the lesson without knowing if more classes with the same students will come in the future. Overall, students are responsible for their learning process, involving aspects such as the duration of the course and the spaces and times in which classes are taken.

Correspondingly, testing methods are characterized by a quantitative and qualitative assessment based on foreign standards. As it occurs with the students' classes, their assessment during their learning process is individualized. By scheduling an online session, students can present an online quiz made up of closed questions reviewing the vocabulary and grammar seen in the units, and their reading and listening skills. Additionally, in an online meeting with a teacher, the students must answer questions related to the topics seen in class; these meetings have an average duration of 10 to 15 minutes. It is also important to acknowledge that the questions, both in the written and speaking components, follow the

structures seen in popular international exams, complying with the criteria presented in the CEFR. In sum, the students must get a high grade in order to continue with their classes; if this is not accomplished, retaking of the exams will be done (with the inclusion of short tutoring sessions) until the student obtains the required grade.

All in all, the selection of the institute was made based on the importance, influence, and recognition of this establishment in Colombia. Some important aspects that can be highlighted are the individual process of the students, being the ones responsible of the scheduling of tests and classes; the methodology used, which is based on the PPP procedures; the influence of a foreign publishing house in the use of textbooks; and the procedures followed in the assessment of the students' learning process. More relevant information will be thoroughly presented and analyzed in the next chapter with the use of CDA.

Researcher's Role

In order to talk about my role as a researcher, it is important to acknowledge my involvement as part of a neoliberal and colonial system. As mentioned at the beginning of the document, the origin of this research comes hand in hand with my experience as an EFL teacher in a private language institute. Additionally, it is necessary to recognize that, considering my functions as an EFL teacher in this institute, I have been, and still am, a part of a system that carries plenty of ideological influences. After some years working in the private sector, my role as a teacher has been permeated with a perspective of education shaped by neoliberalism and internal colonialism. Nonetheless, it was this influence the one that led to a series of questions and concerns about my agency and the aims of this type of education.

In this sense, as Bonilla-Medina and Samacá-Bohórquez (2023) assert, research comes hand in hand with our experiences as teachers and the dilemmas we have towards our

profession. As teachers/researchers who aim to pursue a critical perspective in language teaching, it is imperative that we advocate for research development that takes into account the value of emotions, perspectives, and epistemologies that have been silenced and oppressed through dominant discourses. Thus, the problems that affect our profession may lead us to investigate the bases of education itself in different contexts.

Moreover, when working as EFL teachers, an intrinsic analytical process towards education and its objectives starts to arise. As a result of our experiences in our daily life as teachers, an inevitable focus on the aims, topics, circumstances, and general characteristics of EFL teaching appears. This natural questioning leads to the revision of official and institutional policies that arrange the way the educational system works in certain environments. On this matter, as we analyze our surroundings, the practices happening in them, and how they are connected to educational policies, more understanding of education, its actors and problems will emerge. In the words of Warriner (2017):

English language teachers, applied linguists, and educational researchers have much to contribute to the continued examination of the politics of ELT. By advancing our collective knowledge and critical understanding of the complicated dynamics involved in ELT, we will all be better prepared to engage in advocacy on behalf of individuals, families, and communities who are engaged with English language teaching or learning. (p. 209)

On the whole, my role as a researcher lies in the necessity of analyzing deep-rooted influences in the EFL teaching sector and contributing to knowledge building related to the use of power in discourse. As a teacher/researcher who is currently part of this environment, I have been able to experience the consequences of influential neoliberal and colonial notions. In addition, after identifying the power exerted through the use of policies, my attention was

centered on the need to go over taken-for-granted ideals and objectives in ETDH institutes. As a result, my researcher's role is centered on analyzing in a critical way the policies that can affect the learning/teaching process of thousands of teachers and students in the country.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The data collected in this research comes from one main document: The Institute's Handbook. As previously mentioned, a policy in the educational field is comprised of "regulations, codes, plans, guidelines, notices, documents, programs, and measures, is a norm or measure that addresses educational issues, resolves educational conflicts, and establishes and adjusts educational relationships" (Fan & Popkewitz, 2020, p. 6). Within this framework, the Institute's Handbook will allow me to describe the general perception of education and EFL teaching, its participants, and the processes that it involves.

This document can be divided into the following sections:

1. Main description of the Institute's philosophical bases, including mission, vision, and principles.
2. Description of the profile of teachers, the requirements to be one, the working schedules, and their duties and rights.
3. Description of the profile of students, and their duties and rights.
4. Description of the academic council, its members, and their functions.
5. The objectives of how the coexistence of the participants should be carried out, and the actions that must be followed to accomplish them.
6. Description of the misconduct in the institution and its categorization.

In addition, it is important to bear in mind that the data collected will be employed in the analysis following the three-dimensional procedure of Critical Discourse Analysis

proposed by Norman Fairclough (1992). In general terms, based on the framework, data are analyzed taking into account the definition of discourse as a text, discursive practice, and social practice. In this sense, the text will be analyzed regarding its linguistic features. Then, these features are linked to the production, distribution, and consumption of the text, highlighting the interdiscursivity and intertextuality that is used in these processes. Finally, social conditions are included in order to understand the ideological traces behind the discursive process.

The description of the framework serves to recognize two important aspects in the collection of data. First, all information in the text must be kept in mind, as it is just through the analytical process that masked notions can come to light. Second, taking into consideration the interaction of different discourses, the interdiscursivity and intertextuality involved in this process, and the influence of social practices, some secondary data sources will be employed in the analysis. The data consist of other texts (some of them already presented in the previous chapter) involving the same theoretical constructs I will employ, and entries on the Institute's website and blog, in order to give strength to the interpretation of the data.

All in all, the present qualitative research aims at building knowledge about EFL teaching in the context of private institutes. According to the paradigm and type of research, the use of documents, such as policies, will allow me to identify ideological influences in the way EFL education is seen and the procedures that are employed in the context of a Colombian private language institute. In addition, the selection of Institute X and its handbook as the main text to be analyzed will display the process that is involved in the teaching of EFL and the possible connections it may carry with neoliberalism and internal colonialism. In the next chapter, the analytical model to be used will be thoroughly explained, and the results will be presented.

CHAPTER IV: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter is structured into three parts. The first part describes the Critical Discourse Analysis three-dimensional framework proposed by Norman Fairclough. The second one explains the process used to carry out the data analysis. Finally, the third part shows the findings of this research study.

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework

In the field of critical discourse analysis, different approaches have emerged in order to examine the relationship between discourse and society and uncover the use of power to control and influence people in various institutions and situations. As Gölbaşı (2017) mentions, some of the main schools and approaches counting with recognized theorists such as Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, Roger Fowler and Theo van Leeuwen, and Norman Fairclough, are the following:

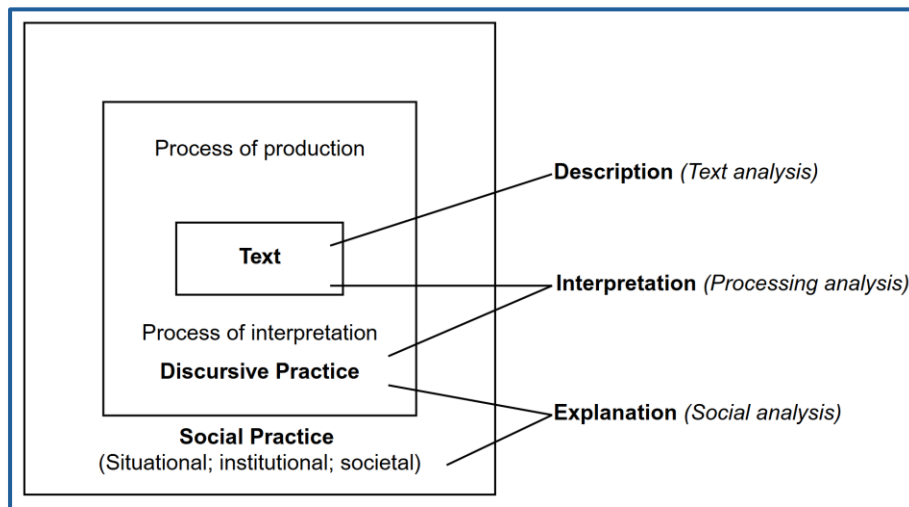
1. The English School: Based on the systemic-functional linguistics method, this school highlights the use of syntactic structures to reflect ideologies.
2. The Vienna School: Based on the social linguistics approach (which is also known as the historical approach to discourse), it analyzes historical events and discourse to identify ideologies with prejudicial effects.
3. The Dutch School: Based on the cognitive approach to discourse, it specializes on the analysis of media discourses to evidence the reproduction of ideologies in social practices and institutions.
4. The German School: Based on Foucault's discourse theory, this school examines the dynamism between individuals and the truth.

Norman Fairclough, a British theorist who has followed the principles set by the systemic-functional linguistics method and the social linguistics approach, proposed one of

the most far-reaching frameworks of CDA. Being influenced by the work of Antonio Gramsci, Michelle Foucault, Karl Marx, Michael Halliday, Jürgen Habermas, Basil Bernstein, among others, Fairclough (2015) introduced a social perspective in which the main objective includes not just analyzing and criticizing discourse but also aiming at a change in a society affected by power relations, ideologies, economic strategies, and policies.

With a social perspective in mind, Fairclough proposed a three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis. As mentioned before, discursive events can be divided into three dimensions: *text* (written or spoken language), *discursive practice* (production, distribution, and consumption of texts), and *social practice* (the use of language in society). At the same time, these dimensions will lay the foundation for the framework of analysis proposed by the author. Each dimension is related to one level of analysis: *description* (text), *interpretation* (discursive practice), and *explanation* (social practice) (Fairclough, 2010). Next, I will present a description of each dimension, taking into account the changes and additions to the framework, which has been adapted by the author as a reaction to social and ideological challenges during the past 40 years. Some of these adaptations can be seen in Fairclough's work, such as *Discourse and Social Change* (1992), *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2010), *Language and Power 3rd edition* (2015), and *CDA as Dialectical Reasoning* (2018), among others.

Figure 6
Fairclough's Three-dimensional Framework of Analysis



First, the analytical process starts with the *description* of the linguistic features in the text (microanalysis). In order to analyze discourse from a linguistic perspective, Fairclough puts emphasis on four values that formal features can have: *experiential*, *relational*, *expressive*, and *connective*. *Experiential values* show how the producer of a text represents the world; some key aspects are contents, knowledge, and beliefs. Next, *relational values* focus on the social relations that are portrayed in the text. In the same fashion, *expressive values* deal with the evaluations the producer of a text makes of reality, which involves the identification of subjects and social identities. Finally, *connective values* relate to the internal connection of a text. One or more of these values can be identified in the following main categories, which allow the development of (written) text analysis: *vocabulary*, *grammar*, *cohesion*, and *text structure*.

1. Vocabulary: In this category, the center of attention is individual words.

1.1. Wordings: The objective is to identify how alternative wordings can entail changes in meaning. Some guiding questions proposed by Fairclough (1992, p. 236-237) are:

- a) Does the text contain new lexical items, and if so what theoretical, cultural or ideological significance do they have?
- b) What intertextual relations are drawn upon for the wording in the text?
- c) Does the text contain evidence of overwording or rewording (in opposition to other wordings) of certain domains of meaning?

1.2. Word meaning: Considering the variable change in meaning of different words, this subcategory puts emphasis on: key words with cultural significance, words with changing meanings, and words with potential meanings involving hegemony and struggle.

1.3. Metaphors: The objective is to identify what factors determine and influence the selection of a metaphor.

1.4. Politeness: In this subcategory, politeness is identified by the use of formal or informal words.

2. Grammar: Concerning grammar, the following dimensions are proposed:

2.1. Transitivity: The objective is to determine the presence and purpose of process types (action, event, relational, mental), the importance given to specific participants, the use of active or passive clauses, and nominalization. Also, agency, expression of causality, and attribution of responsibility are concerned with.

2.2. Theme: This dimension deals with the presence of patterns in the thematic structure of the text, and the motivations behind the selection of frequent themes (initial part of the clause).

2.3. Modality: In this dimension, the presence of frequent modalities is key to highlighting social relations and representations of reality. Special attention is

paid to modality features (modal verbs, modal adverbs, etc.), and the selection of subjective or objective modalities.

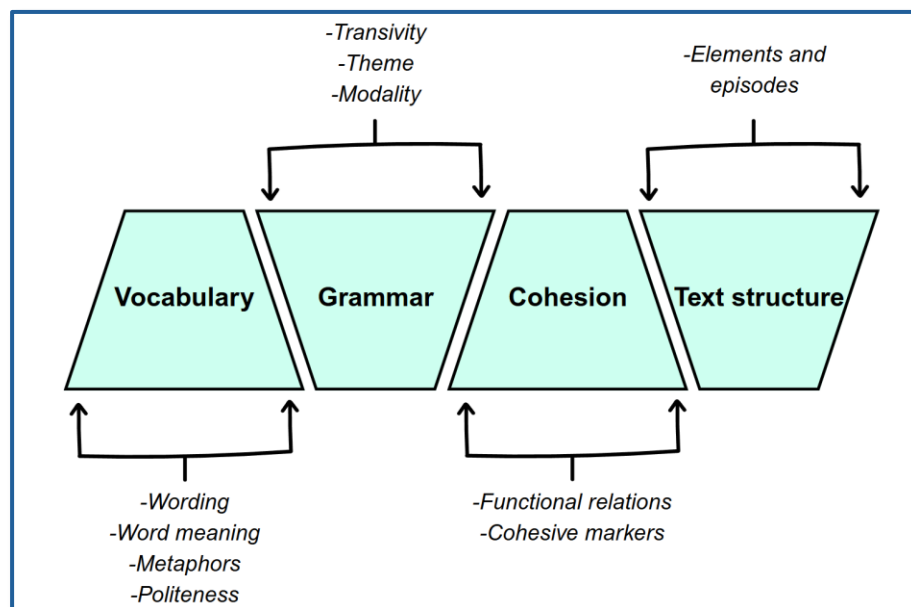
3. Cohesion: In this category, the objective lies in examining how the clauses are linked to make sentences, and in turn, how these are linked to make larger units in the text. This linkage is developed through:

3.1. The recognition of functional relations between the clauses and sentences.

3.2. The use of cohesive markers (reference, ellipsis, conjunction, lexical cohesion).

4. Text structure: This category concerns the higher-level design features of a text, the elements and episodes combination, and their order.

Figure 7
Description



Second, the next dimension consists of the *interpretation* of the relationship between the text and the discursive practice (meso analysis). As was mentioned before, in order for the discourse to happen, language must be used in society. In this process, language needs to be produced and interpreted; nonetheless, in this framework of analysis, Fairclough focuses on

the *process of interpretation* of a text. This process is carried out through the use of formal features of a text (which are used as ‘cues’) and their interaction with the *Members’ Resources* (MR) people have, which the author describes as the “knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on.” (2015, p. 57). It is important to highlight that MR involve cognitive and social procedures, in the sense that they are in people’s minds, but they originate through social interactions that are later internalized.

Considering the sociocognitive aspects of production and interpretation, Fairclough emphasized the following categories to develop the interpretation procedures in the analysis of discourse:

1. **Interdiscursivity:** The objective is to identify the different discourse types that are used in the text. To classify and categorize the elements that are part of discourse types (vocabulary, semantic relations, pragmatic conventions, etc.), the following terms are:

1.1. Genre: The use of language associated with a socially ratified activity. For example: A job interview, chatting with a friend, making a call for customer service assistance, a poem, a scientific article, etc. These genres also include the different processes involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of the texts.

1.2. Activity type: Genres are associated with specific structures, which are named by Fairclough as activity types. They include: the participants involved in the activity and the sequence of actions that compose said activity. For example: The customer and the customer service representative are the participants of the activity of calling a bank due to a mistake in the due payment of the month. The sequence of action is the following: the representative greets the

customer and asks for personal information. The customer provides the information. The representative asks for the reason for the call. The customer explains the problem, etc.

1.3.Style: Genres can have a specific style, even though it is difficult to classify them; the parameters of *tenor*, *mode*, and *rhetorical mode* of the text are useful in this task.

- a) *Tenor:* The description of the text based on the relationship between the participants in an interaction. For example: formal, informal, official, intimate, casual, etc.
- b) *Mode:* It depends on the way the text is produced: written or spoken, and possible combinations between them (spoken-as-if-written, written-to-be-spoken, written-as-if-spoken, spoken-to-be-written, etc.)
- c) *Rhetorical mode:* Follows patterns of organizing a text for a specific purpose. It is categorized into argumentative, descriptive, and expository.

1.4.Discourse: It corresponds to the use of texts to build knowledge from a specific subject matter or area of knowledge. For example: feminist discourses of sexuality, techno-scientific medical discourse. Discourses are associated to different genres (feminist discourses of sexuality may appear in essays, talk shows, poems, etc.).

It is important to point out that even though this categorization facilitates the analysis of texts, a rigid way of applying them to the description of a discourse is not possible, considering its complexity. In order to guide the analysis, Fairclough (1992, p. 232) proposes the following questions:

- a) Is there an obvious way of characterizing the sample overall (in terms of genre)? (If so, what does it imply in terms of how the sample is produced, distributed, and consumed?)
- b) Does the sample draw upon more than one genre?
- c) What activity type(s), style(s), discourse(s) are drawn upon? (Can you specify styles according to tenor, mode, and rhetorical mode?)
- d) Is the discourse sample relatively conventional in its interdiscursive properties, or relatively innovative?

2. Manifest Intertextuality: It relates to the use of other texts to constitute the text to be analyzed. Three types of intertextuality can be found: *sequential intertextuality* (different texts alternate within a text), *embedded intertextuality* (one text is contained within the matrix of another), and *mixed intertextuality* (texts are merged in complex ways). Furthermore, intertextuality can be discussed in terms of:

2.1. Discourse representation: Commonly known as 'reported speech'.

Nonetheless, this term is not used as discourse representation entails more discursive aspects than just grammatical features. Representations can differ in the following ways:

- a) The representation consists of the transfer of ideational or 'message' content, or it includes aspects of the style and context of the original utterances.
- b) Boundaries between the represented and representing texts vary in the clarity they can be distinguished. There is also a variation in the extent the translated discourse is shown in the voice of the representing discourse.

- c) Direct representation involves the reproduction of the exact words from the represented discourse. On the other hand, indirect representation makes it difficult to distinguish between both discourses.
- d) The ways in which the represented discourse is contextualized can vary.

2.2.Presupposition: As Fairclough explains, “presuppositions are propositions which are taken by the producer of the text as already established or 'given” (1992, p. 120). Regarding their presence, the following aspects must be considered:

- a) Some formal cues used to unveil these presuppositions are: clauses introduced by the conjunction ‘that’ with the verbs ‘forget’, ‘regret’, and ‘realize’, and definite articles cue propositions.
- b) Presuppositions can come from other texts or from general opinions.
- c) Presuppositions may be manipulative or sincere.
- d) Negative sentences can be used for polemical purposes. For example:
Learning English is not important!

2.3.Metadiscourse: It is used by the authors of the text as a way to create distance from the discourses included. Some ways to do it include the use of hedging (expressions like 'sort of' or 'kind of') and expressions to mark that something belongs to another text ('as x said').

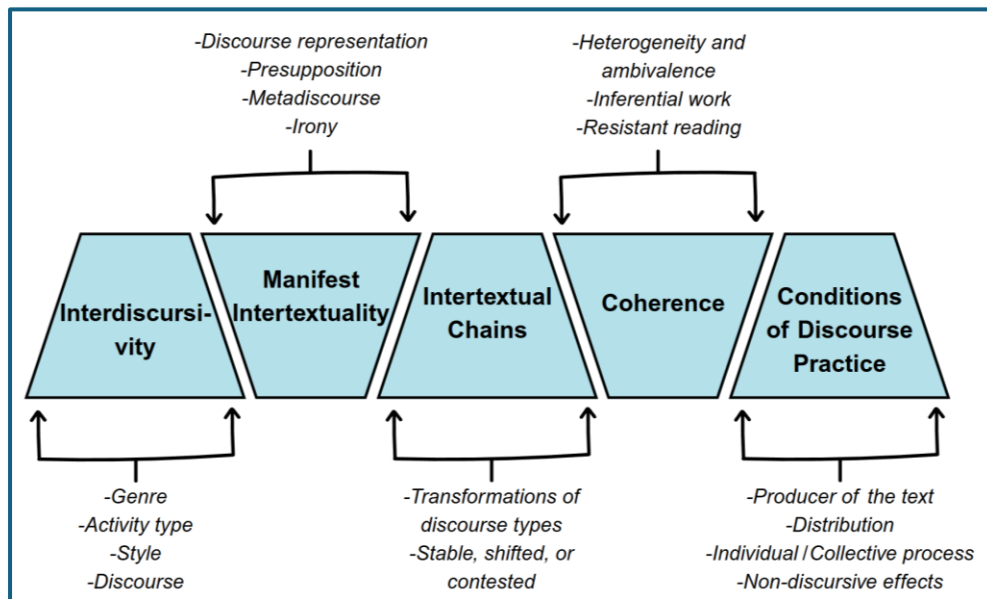
2.4.Irony: It deals with the echoing of another’s utterance with a different meaning from the original one.

3. Intertextual Chains: The aim of this category is to indicate the way text types are related to each other and how one transforms into another. Here, the distribution of discourse is key. For instance, a fiction book can turn into a movie, which in

turn transforms into a review, and so on. Additionally, these transformations can be stable, shifted, or contested.

4. **Coherence:** In this category, this purpose relates to the interpretation of discourse samples and how the reader (in case of written texts) makes sense of it through connections and inferences. The main aspects to be analyzed are: how heterogeneous and ambivalent the text is, how much inferential work is needed, and what kind of reader may have resistant reading.
5. **Conditions of Discourse Practice:** The objective is to indicate the social practices related to the production and consumption of discourse samples. Some of the following aspects can be analyzed:
 - a) The text can be produced and consumed individually or collectively, and in different stages.
 - b) The text can be distributed in different ways. For example, in the same context where it was created, or in different institutions and groups.
 - c) The producer of the text can be an *animator* (the person literally talking-producing the sounds, or writing-drawing the letters on paper), an *author* (the person who composed the words), and *the principal* (the person who is responsible for what is being said/written, the one whose position is represented).
 - d) The text can have non-discursive effects.

Figure 8
Interpretation



Finally, the third dimension corresponds to the *explanation* of the connection between discursive practices and social processes (macro analysis). One of the main objectives of CDA is to unveil the relationship between texts and social processes, highlighting the influence of power relations and ideologies. In this sense, as Fairclough mentions, “discourse is embedded within sociocultural practice at a number of levels: in the immediate situation, in the wider institution or organisation, and at a societal level” (2010, p. 153). Additionally, as the author elucidates, explanation has two dimensions: on the one hand, discourse is part of social struggles, and the explanation dimension helps to make these struggles and their effects known. On the other hand, power relations, which are the outcome of social struggles, determine discourse practices. Analysis of social effects of discourse and social determinants of discourse can be done considering the situational, institutional, and societal levels.

In order to offer a guideline to describe the nature of the social practice in which discourse is embedded, Fairclough proposes the following elements:

1. **Social Matrix of Discourse:** This element focuses on instances of discourse and social practices and the social and hegemonic relations and structures that are part of them.

Also, it aims at examining the interaction between the discursive instance and aforementioned relations and structures, identifying the position taken by the discourse, e.g., Does it oppose these structures? Is it conventional and normative or creative and innovative? Does it aim to sustain the social and hegemonic structures or transform them? Etc.

2. **Orders of Discourse:** In relation to this element, it is important to understand Orders of discourse as the “totality of discursive practices of an institution, and relations between them.” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 112). In this sense, the objective is to analyze instances of social and discursive practice and the effects and transformations they can cause in orders of discourse.

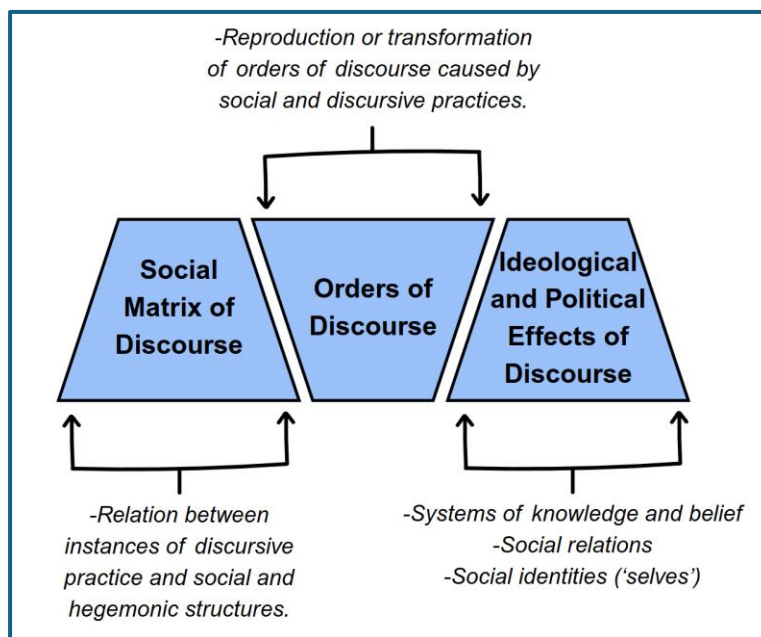
In this matter, Fairclough identifies certain tendencies in discursive change that affect orders of discourse. Two of them are:

- *Democratization of discourse:* According to Fairclough (1992) it refers to “the removal of inequalities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations and prestige of groups of people.” (p. 201). As an example. The author points out that the dominance of a standard variety of English is being challenged by the use of other ‘Englishes’ such as the Indian and African English, and this impacts the access speakers of these Englishes have to institutions.
- *Commodification of discourse:* It is the process by which institutions are organized and conceptualized following the ideals of production, distribution, and consumption of commodities. In this category, education is deeply

affected, as Fairclough mentions, it is not unusual for sectors such as English language teaching “to be referred to as ‘industries’ concerned with producing, marketing and selling cultural or educational commodities to their ‘clients’ or ‘consumers’” (1992, p. 207). As a result, the author maintains that this implies a ‘colonization’ of institutional and societal orders of discourse.

- 3. Ideological and Political Effects of Discourse:** In order to develop the analysis of discourse in relation to social order, it is helpful to acknowledge the ideological and hegemonic effects that can arise. These effects are seen in *systems of knowledge and belief, social relations, and social identities* (*‘selves’*).

Figure 9
Explanation



It is important to highlight that even though Fairclough proposes a three-dimensional framework of analysis which starts with text analysis, followed by processing analysis, and finishing with social analysis, there is not a specific order that must be followed in the actual analytical process. As the author mentions, the dimensions of analysis commonly overlap in

practice, making it difficult to establish an order and allowing the researcher to organize the procedures depending on the aims and emphases of the research. Nonetheless, Fairclough exposes one useful (but not mandatory) progression that starts with the interpretation of discursive practices. Then, it focuses on the description of the text. Finally, it deals with their interpretation/explanation in relation to social practices.

Process of Data Analysis

In order to carry out the analysis of the data, a series of steps will be followed. As Creswell (2023) indicates, qualitative data analysis can be seen as a process that requires steps to be developed, which involve different levels of analysis.

- **Step 1.** Organizing and Preparing the Data for Analysis
- **Step 2.** Reading Through All the Data
- **Step 3.** Coding the Data
- **Step 4.** Identifying Themes (Grouping the codes into themes)
- **Step 5.** Developing a Story Line Interpretation (Interconnecting the themes)
- **Step 6.** Further Analyzing the Data Using an Analytic Framework
- **Step 7.** Representing and Interpreting the Data

Keeping in mind the proposal made by Creswell (2023), in this research, I will follow the steps, including the theoretical and analytical framework described in previous chapters. In this sense, regarding Steps 3, 4, and 5, I will proceed with a first reading in order to identify main themes in the Institute's Handbook which may be of relevance to the research. Here, the theoretical notions regarding neoliberalism and internal colonialism will be considered.

Furthermore, I will employ the three-dimensional framework structured by Fairclough to develop an in-depth analysis of the data and confirm or adapt the main categories

identified in previous steps. Additionally, information obtained through the Institute's website and blog will be used to validate the analysis and results of the principal document. Finally, I will present the findings via categories supported by excerpts of the data. In this sense, in the next section, the results of the analytical process will be presented.

Findings

In this section, the results of the analytical process will be presented. As it was stated before, the first step of the analysis included the first reading of the main document: Institute X's Handbook (2024) in order to identify aspects that are ideologically influenced by neoliberalism and internal colonialism, After the reading was developed, categories were determined and Fairclough's three-dimensional framework was used for an in depth understanding and analysis of the data, and adjustments on the categories were made. Additionally, data from the Institute's website, blog, and posts online were used to validate the analysis of the policy. The four emerging categories will be presented below.

The Market-Based Objective of EFL Private Education

As a starting consideration, it is important to remember that Institute X is ascribed to the area of *education for work and human development* "Educación para el trabajo y el desarrollo humano" (ETDH), which aims to be a complement to the education received by kids, teenagers, and adults. In this matter, the Ministry of Education (2009) states that the programs offered by this educational sector will supply the demands of the current society, focusing on productivity and the labor market. In the analysis of the Handbook, the same market-driven focus is identified, and at the same time, it influences the conception of EFL education and its objectives, said influence will be explained next.

In order to understand the nature of the text, this one can be generally characterized by genre, activity type, style, and discourse. In this respect, the Handbook constitutes a

formal written text, classified as part of a private institute's policy, which aims at disclosing the guidelines regarding the institute's internal organization and procedures to be fulfilled and respected. Consequently, concerning the activity type, the text involves two main groups of participants: the writer (Institute X and its board of directors), and the reader (the community, which includes: teachers, students, parents, graduates, and other workers from the institute in different areas), and it organizes the information in a way that the philosophical notions, procedures, rights and responsibilities are easily identified.

Additionally, the conditions of discourse practice indicate that the text was created and is consumed in an individual and collective way, with non-discursive effects on the community. In terms of production, the Handbook has been modified various times throughout the last ten years; on some of these occasions, the adjustments were made individually by representatives of the institute; nonetheless, the last time it was modified, five members of the institution took part in the adjustments. In terms of consumption, the text is made to be individually read by each member of the institute, but at the same time, its contents must be broadly disclosed in meetings with different groups. Most importantly, in terms of non-discursive effects, the text aims at creating a 'harmonious coexistence' in which, as the Handbook mentions, the academic training of people is carried out by "taking into account the current educational needs of the country" (p. 5). In this sense, the policy has a great effect on the members of the institute and the way EFL teaching is developed.

Upon analyzing the policy, the implication of adjusting EFL education according to the 'educational needs of the country' brings upon a mix of genres, including a market-driven goal on the basis of Institute X's guidelines. In the first part of the Handbook, the institute exposes its mission as a company and educational center, which shapes the way EFL education is seen and its purpose in society. In this sense, Institute X declares: "We develop communication skills in languages for our students to broaden their job opportunities and

personal growth” (p. 5). In terms of grammar analysis, the statement shows a directed action process in which a subject (Institute X) performs an action (develop communication language skills) to reach a goal (help students achieve better opportunities). By using the pronoun “we” as the theme of the clause, the focus is directly set to Institute X and its objectives and principles related to education, and as a company in general. Then, the focus shifts to what is being said about the institute, in this case, its mission of developing communication skills in languages such as English; nonetheless, the lexical item *communication skills* adopts new implications by principally linking said skills to having better job opportunities.

Broadly speaking, *communication skills* in EFL education involve the acquisition and use of linguistic, pragmatic, strategic, and intercultural competences to produce and comprehend discourses in specific contexts (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). In this way, this lexical item highlights the importance of contextual, social and cultural aspects in language learning, and it shows the multiple reasons behind learning a foreign language, which can include social, cultural, and individual objectives. Nevertheless, as Holborow (2018) asserts, language skills in EFL are solely seen in the current society as a tool to advance in the job market and obtain individual benefits. In this perspective, market-driven objectives permeate the field of EFL learning and the lexical items used in it.

Coming back to the mission set by Institute X, the use of the lexical item *communication skills in languages* brings to light the interdiscursive connection between education and the market. Even though, as mentioned before, learning a language and the necessary skills and competences entails a wide variety of social, contextual, cultural, and personal objectives and aspects, Institute X uses the concept of *communication skills* with a market-driven base. By directly making a connection between language skills and the broadening of job opportunities, the institute states that its mission is based on the reification and naturalization of the idea of advancing in the job market as a principal reason behind

learning EFL. In terms of Fairclough's framework, this constitutes a presupposition that can be explained with ideological influences, in this case, the influence of neoliberalism.

In order to further develop this neoliberal influence in the guidelines of Institute X, the following excerpts from the Handbook will be used:

The objectives of the institution are:
(...)
To promote culture, research, education and labor training, presentation and provision of services, academic assistance and social promotion, aimed at contributing to the socio-economic development of the country, and those that can be applied to other nations.
(...)
To ensure the integration of its activities with the core sectors of socio-economic activity or with the activities of the country in which it is domiciled.
(...)
To train people competent in languages with the highest academic standards, who can perform in tasks that require knowledge of more than one language.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 26)

First, Institute X elucidates its objective of being of help at the improvement of the nation's economy. Upon analyzing the objectives described in the Handbook, words related to the market and the economy of the country often appear. As Fairclough explains, lexical cohesion can be achieved through the linking of words or expressions from the same semantic domain. Accordingly, this is done by the author with ideological purposes in mind. In this case, as it can be noticed in the extracts of the Handbook, lexical items related to economy, labor, market, and the state of the country frequently appear, e.g. 'labor training', 'presentation and provision of services', 'socio-economic development of the country', 'sectors of socio-economic activity' and 'activities of the country'. Consequently, the presence of said lexical items informs of an ideological influence at highlighting the significance of the country's economic status as a reason to study EFL.

In this sense, the wording previously seen reveals the impact of neoliberal notions on the Institute's EFL education objectives. As it was explained in the theoretical framework of

this research project, neoliberalism is understood as a theory of political economic practices and an ideology that advocates for free-market, individualism, profit, and privatization. Correspondingly, as Harvey (2005) mentions, the core of neoliberalism involves establishing a stable market, which will be the primary decisive factor in people's choices and will affect their environment. In this regard, neoliberalism directly impacts the objectives set by Institute X through the focus of improving the country's economy and promoting the institute's services (EFL teaching) as the perfect means of being successful in the current market.

Secondly, the attention given to EFL learning and its direct relation to the market are also connected to globalization. Addressing the information seen in the Handbook's excerpts, Institute X touches on the importance of not only seeking improvement in the 'core sectors of socio-economic activity' of the country through 'culture', 'research', 'education and labor training', and 'presentation and provision of services', but also making contributions that 'can be applied to other nations'. This reveals a strong connection to globalization, a term that, as mentioned in the theoretical framework, can be understood as "the deepening interconnectedness of economies (exports/imports), cultures, and people throughout the world as a result of technological advancements, cross-border commerce, and the movement of capital, labor, and information" (Ortega, 2024, p. 71). The influence of globalization can be ratified through Institute X's blog posts:

The importance of English in professional and personal life
In a globalized world, English is the lingua franca of commerce, technology and culture. Mastering this language not only opens doors to better job opportunities, but also allows you access to more information and resources globally.

(Institute X, n.d.-a, para. 3)

Through the analysis of the excerpt, the link between EFL, globalization, and neoliberalism is seen. Even though globalization encompasses a wide range of social, cultural, and technological activities, there is an undeniable leading role of the market and the

skills that ought to be acquired in order to advance and triumph in it. This can be noticed in the use of the correlative conjunction ‘Not only...but also’, which presents two pieces of information, the second one being surprising or unexpected. In this respect, the intertextual presupposition made by Institute X highlights that being proficient in EFL primarily, and evidently, relates to being successful (‘opening doors’) in the job market and having a better economy. This assumption, as Themelis (2021b), Gnutzmann and Intemann (2008), Guerrero-Nieto (2009), and Ortega (2024) inform, proves to be problematic as it limits the learning of a foreign language to a form of economic advancement in the globalized world, which, at the same time, leads to unequal development, economic exploitation, and the commodification of EFL education, this last aspect will be further discussed in the next category of analysis.

Finally, Institute X’s Handbook shows a strong connection between EFL learning and the concept of human capital. As Savage (2017) informs, human capital is defined as the “Skills, knowledge and experience possessed by an individual or population of people, understood as a measure of their economic value.” (p. 148). From this point of view, people are required to obtain said skills, experiences, and knowledge to be successful in the current market. Regarding the information declared in the Handbook, Institute X mentions that one of their objectives entails the training of people to “perform in tasks that require knowledge of more than one language.” (Institute X, 2024, p. 26). Nonetheless, the description of these ‘tasks’ is not mentioned, making the reader, as Fairclough explains, responsible for creating a coherent message through the use of inferences, connections, and assumptions. In order to get closer to the definition of said ‘tasks’, the following excerpts of Institute X’s blog must be taken into account.

Advantages of learning English as an adult

- Improved job skills: English proficiency is an increasingly common requirement in the workplace. By learning English, you increase your chances of getting better jobs and promotions.
- International communication: Speaking English allows you to connect with people around the world, facilitating travel as well as personal and professional relationships.
- Access to content in its original language: From movies to books to online courses, English gives you access to a vast amount of content in its original form.

(Institute X, n.d.-b, para. 3)

Benefits of learning English at a Certified Academy

Improve your job opportunities

- Increased employability: English proficiency significantly increases your chances of getting a good job.
- Better wages: Bilingual professionals are often paid higher salaries.
- Access to international positions: Many companies look for candidates who can work in international teams

(Institute X, n.d.-c, para. 3)

After analyzing the excerpts, a significant concern over the job market and the benefits of learning EFL in this area can be identified. As it can be noticed, lexical items surrounding labor are often found, such as ‘workplace’, ‘jobs’, ‘promotions’, ‘professional relationships’, ‘job opportunities’, ‘employability’, ‘wages’, ‘professionals’, ‘positions’, ‘companies’, ‘candidates’, ‘work’, etc. In addition, the presence of comparatives, adverbs, and adjectives reveal a believed improvement in this area as a consequence of learning EFL, for example, some advantages and benefits are having ‘improved job skills’, ‘increased employability’, ‘better wages’, ‘higher salaries’, and ‘better jobs’ since learning English is now considered an ‘increasingly common requirement in the workplace’. Consequently, this focus on the labor market reveals a connection between the ‘tasks’ that students will be able to perform by learning EFL and their success in having better jobs, salaries, and international positions.

As a result of this focus on learning a foreign language in order to improve their performance in their professions, the necessity of acquiring these new communicative skills is shown as absolutely necessary in the current society. As Holborow (2015) explains, under

the neoliberal ideology, people are now in charge of obtaining skills and knowledge that will prepare them to compete against others. In Holborow's words:

If the person can develop, usually at their own cost, their own skills and capabilities, their own 'human capital' is expanded and they can gain the edge over others on the labour market and secure a 'premium' or a higher salary. (2015, p.16)

In conclusion, upon the analysis of Institute X's policies and blog posts, a market-driven background is unveiled, establishing a connection between neoliberalism and EFL learning and teaching. Through the presence of a reductionist perspective of language learning, Institute X conceives EFL education as solely an enabler of human capital improvement. This process is done through the acquisition of communicative skills that will serve students the purpose of having better jobs, higher salaries, and success in the current national and international market due to globalization processes. As a result, neoliberal ideas permeate the area of foreign language teaching in private education, contributing to the prevalence of a market-driven objective behind learning a new language and having repercussions in inequality in the labor market, disregarding socioeconomic realities, discrimination, and barriers to having access to the necessary education to obtain said skills.

EFL Teaching as a Commodity and the Identity of Its Participants

Taking into account the analysis done in the previous category, a market-driven base was identified in Institute X's policies, which leads to numerous implications, one of them being the commodification of education. As presented in the theoretical framework, a commodity is a product that has an exchange-value, which means it is created for exchange purposes. (Simpson, 2023; Winn, 2021; Holborow, 2015; Petrovic & Yazan, 2021). In this regard, when employing the term in the field of language education, courses and lessons are taken in order to satisfy the demands of the current market and acquire the human capital that

the global labor market requires. As a consequence, EFL teaching is seen both as a service and a commodity (in the form of lessons and courses), which is offered by a producer (teacher) and bought/acquired by a consumer (student) to satisfy a need (Simpson, 2023). The neoliberal perspective of EFL education is unveiled in the analysis of Institute X's Handbook; for this purpose, the next excerpt will be presented.

WE VALUE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE. We do our work with passion and dedication, our goal is the customer. (Institute X, 2024, p. 6)
--

In relation to grammar, the previous excerpt shows two directed action processes in which the pronoun 'we' serves as the theme. Focusing on the theme, Institute X employs the pronoun 'we' as a unification strategy. As Janks (2010) explains, this type of strategy is used to bring people together through a collective identity. As a result, the institute presents all individuals of the company, including teachers, as the responsible actors for 'serving' the customers (students) through the provision of a product (the lesson) that will be consumed in a process where both teachers and students are participants. On this matter, as Fairclough (1992) clarifies, there are tendencies in which language use aims at influencing the orders of discourse, that is, at affecting various discourses that are present in an institution. In this case, one of the most influential tendencies is seen in Institute X's discourse: commodification. About this matter, Fairclough explains:

Commodification is the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities in the narrower economic sense of goods for sale, come nevertheless to be organized and conceptualized in terms of commodity production, distribution and consumption. It is no longer surprising, for example, for sectors of the arts and education such as theatre and English language teaching to be

referred to as 'industries' concerned with producing, marketing and selling cultural or educational commodities to their 'clients' or 'consumers'. (1992, p. 207)

As a result, this process affects not only how EFL education is perceived, but also how students' and teachers' identities are shaped. With this in mind, with the purpose of understanding how Institute X shapes the perception and identity of students and teachers, it is important to take into account the use of metaphors in discourse. In this regard, Fairclough (1992) states that metaphors go beyond stylistic choices; they construct reality in certain ways, conditioning our beliefs, systems of knowledge, and actions. In the case of Institute X, the use of metaphors is identified in the Handbook's descriptions of students as 'customers'. This can also be noticed in the following extracts:

WE TAKE CARE OF WHAT WE DO.

We honor the investment of our customers and shareholders. We recognize the importance of good management of resources.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 6)

The student assessment procedure begins when prospects indicate that they have had previous experience with the language and require assessment to identify their level of proficiency and place them in the program that corresponds to their current level of language proficiency.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 9)

In relation to the first extract, the image of students is directly related to being a participant in an economic transaction. In a similar way to the previous excerpt, the theme of the sentences is the employees of Institute X, being represented with the pronoun 'we'. Also, two other participants are introduced: the customers and the shareholders of the institution. At the same time, the relationship between the participants is dictated by the structure of the sentence, which is described as a non-directed action that establishes an agent and its actions or objectives, as Fairclough mentions, this type of structure answers the questions "What did x (= the agent) do?, (...) 'What happened to x (= the goal)?" (1992, p. 180). In this case, the focus of the sentence goes to the employee of the institute (teachers) and its goal of honoring

the investment of customers (students) and shareholders. As a consequence, the relationship between teachers and students is permeated by the value of the students' investment of what can only be inferred as time and money.

In this manner, the metaphor of students as customers is heavily impacted by economic influences. Through the establishment of the students' investment as the link in their relationship with teachers, the former's identity as a customer is mediated by an economic transaction and the value of their resources in the institute/company. This viewpoint is supported by the second excerpt, which identifies students as 'prospects'. In the business field, this term refers to "a possible future customer" (Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 671), a description that calls attention to students' trajectory, whose first encounter with the procedures in the institute is based on their potential purchase of a product. This first identity-shaping path is reinforced with the title of 'customer' after signing a contract and buying the course.

As a consequence, the metaphor of students as customers entails a series of characteristics that affect the way they are perceived and treated in EFL education. As Tight (2013) explains, the perception of students as customers distances the student from their learning experience, viewing education as a product and not a process in which they must be active participants. In the words of Tight (2013), when referring to the same problem seen in universities, "it portrays the student as a relatively passive recipient of what the university has to offer, rather than the active, engaged, indeed self-directed, individual which most academics would wish to deal with." (p. 293). Additionally, this metaphor affects the way students interact with classmates and teachers, reinforcing individualism in the language learning process. As a result, the role of students is affected, adding additional difficulty in EFL learning/teaching.

In the same manner, teachers' identity is also shaped by neoliberal notions, which show EFL teaching as a commodity/service. This viewpoint will be further explained with the analysis of the following excerpts of Institute X's Handbook:

TEACHER'S PROFILE Education professional whose commitment is focused on the provision of a quality education service. (Institute X, 2024, p. 17)
PRINCIPLES -WE UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD TREATMENT. We work ready to serve with charisma and cordiality. We always want to please with empathy. (...) -WE TALK ABOUT THE GOOD AND WE ARE GRATEFUL. (Institute X, 2024, p. 6)
TO THE TEACHER AS EDUCATOR To act in coordination with the principles of the institution, to achieve in their work a true social coexistence based on our own values, in this way to build a true culture encouraging creativity and autonomy, developing the intellectual and labor skills required for the progress of the country. (Institute X, 2024, p. 7)

To begin with, regarding the teacher's profile in the institute, their identity is shaped in accordance with the commodification of EFL teaching and the provision of a service. In the first excerpt, teachers are described as professionals with a commitment, which is directly linked to the 'provision of a quality education service'. This final extract is described in terms of grammar as nominalization, a process that, as Fairclough (1992) explains, turns a clause into a nominal or noun. Additionally, said process serves the objective of setting inherent states or properties, which can be used to talk about goals or agents of processes. In this case, the nominal 'provision of a quality education service' works as an inherent goal not only of Institute X, but also of the teachers who are part of it. Consequently, teachers can be described as providers of a service-commodity (lessons), which must be of good *quality*.

Furthermore, teachers' provision of education service is required to be of good quality, but what does it entail? Through the analysis of the second excerpt, some key aspects of the *quality education service* come to light. First, the nominal 'good treatment' serves as

the focus of one of the institute's principles, which are the foundation of the institution. Also, this lexical item is closely related to others in the same excerpt, revealing the use of overwording, which, as Fairclough (1992) mentions, entails the use of multiple near synonyms and shows the author's 'intense preoccupation' with a topic and the importance of ideological aspects. In this case, lexical items such as 'good treatment' 'serve with charisma and cordiality' and 'please with empathy' reveal a key aspect of the *quality education service*, which is to be a *server/provider of a service* whose job objective is not centered on teaching EFL, but on pleasing the customer (student) by always having a positive attitude and charisma. In addition, as the last part of the excerpt describes, teachers must show gratitude for the conditions of their work and the service they are providing.

Furthermore, as the final excerpt reveals, the concept of teachers is associated with two metaphors: *providers of a service* and *educators*. On the one hand, as it was explained before, teachers are identified as *providers of a service* whose focus relies on pleasing the customers (consumers/students). On the other hand, when analyzing the third extract, the metaphor of teachers as *educators* comes to light. Nonetheless, even though important aspects of education such as the development of 'creativity', 'autonomy' and 'intellectual skills' are mentioned, they are directly linked to neoliberalism with the presence of the lexical item 'labor skills' and the phrase 'required for' which is used as a cohesive device to indicate the acquisition of said skills with the 'progress of the country' in mind. As a result, teachers' identity is defined in a dichotomy of the provision of a service to please the students and the role of educators who teach EFL with neoliberal purposes as a base.

In addition to the definition of being a teacher given by the Handbook, said policy also sets a series of requirements that complement the role and view of teachers in the institute:

REQUIREMENTS TO BE A TEACHER
[For all teachers] Language proficiency proven by an internationally accepted certificate.
[If the teacher has] Completed university studies in the area of language teaching. [The teacher will require] Certificate of studies or university degree
[If the teacher has] -University studies in education in other areas of knowledge. -Minimum two years of proven teaching experience in addition to a certificate of knowledge in language pedagogy. -University studies not related to education [The teacher will require] -Certificate of knowledge in language pedagogy or training courses in language teaching.
[If the teacher has] -No or partial university studies. [The teacher will require] -Minimum two years of proven teaching experience in addition to a certificate of knowledge in language pedagogy.
(Institute X, 2024, p. 14)

Based on the policy, Institute X declares that candidates can be accepted for a teaching position depending on their educational background and teaching experience. As the institute mentions, candidates are considered suitable if they obtained a bachelor's degree majoring in foreign language teaching, a requirement that seems coherent with the position of being an EFL teacher. Nonetheless, two other profiles are accepted: candidates with studies in other areas, and candidates with partial or no undergraduate studies. In both cases, they are required to take language pedagogy courses (all of them international courses, such as the TKT - TESOL - CELTA.), to have two years of experience, and to present a valid certificate in English language proficiency.

These requirements reinforce the aforementioned metaphors of teachers as *providers of a service* and *educators for neoliberal purposes* in mind. In this matter, the acceptance of teachers without a bachelor's degree in language, a language pedagogy course taken, and two years of experience, is seen as an intertextual relation (*embedded intertextuality*, following Fairclough's (1992) distinctions) with national policies, such as the NTC 5580, which allow private language institutes to hire candidates with such background. However, as Ramírez

Ospina (2015) mentions, institutes regard the acceptance of these candidates not just as a requirement forced upon by national policies, but also as a beneficial factor to the institutes due to three main reasons:

1. Language proficiency: As said teachers have usually lived abroad, they are deemed better users of the language.
2. Teaching methodologies: Without the influence of methodologies taught in university programs, their teaching strategies are easily shaped without resistance in order to follow the institute's methodology, mission, and vision.
3. The 'X' factor: Teachers without undergraduate studies in foreign language teaching have the 'X' factor, which means having more modern practices in EFL teaching.

These factors reinforce the metaphors seen before due to the following reasons. First, language proficiency is deemed as one of the most important qualities for teachers, showing that being a qualified EFL teacher means, mainly, having good language use. At the same time, this is related to educating students just in the acquisition of language skills, which are part of the needed human capital to be successful in a neoliberal world. Second, as Ramirez Ospina (2015) mentions, the implication of having the 'X' factor is utterly connected to customer satisfaction. In the author's words, "What they mean by "modern practices" are unplanned lessons and classes intended to please the clients' demands of more relaxed and entertaining lessons." (p. 47), which highlights the metaphor of teachers as merely service providers seeking to please the customer. Lastly, the preference of teachers without a theoretical background in pedagogy reinforces their identity as providers of a service, who just need to follow the institute's demands and methodologies to satisfy the students' needs and make them ready for being part of the global market.

Regarding the requirement for a minimum of two years of experience, it proves to be lacking in coherence regarding job application posts published by the institute. As Fairclough (1992) explains, coherence involves the interpretation of discourse and how the reader makes sense of it through connections and inferences. In this sense, when making a connection with online posts found on Institute X's website, the requirements described do not involve teaching experience. For instance:

What do you need?

To have a degree in modern languages or areas related to language education, or if you are a professional in other areas you must have a certified course in language teaching training such as: TKT - TESOL - CELTA.

Have a language level of B2, C1 or C2, preferably with an international certificate (MCRE).

(Institute X, n.d.-d, para. 3)

As a consequence of the identity-shaping influences made by Institute X through the metaphors of teachers as *providers of a service* and *educators for neoliberal purposes*, and the requirements to work in the institute, teachers are affected in three categories: deskilling of teachers, working conditions, and benefits provided by the institute. First, as Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) explain, deskilling of teachers in private language institutes involves the reduction of skills required in their job, and it can be seen through the positioning of language proficiency over teaching skills, and the routine hackwork. This can be identified in the following excerpts of the institute's Handbook:

Our selection process is focused on the recruitment of teachers who not only master the language they teach, but also know how to teach it to our students, based on our method.

(Institute X, n.d.-e, p. 13)

TEACHER'S PROFILE

Person with a high command of language teaching strategies according to the population and institutional requirements.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 17)

Regarding language proficiency, this aspect is favored over teaching experience and knowledge. As it was explained before, the correlative conjunction 'Not only...but also'

presents two pieces of information, the first one being something common or taken for granted. In the first excerpt, this position is taken by the teachers' ability to master the language to be taught. As a result, the pivotal position of language proficiency over teaching skills is seen as a discriminatory practice when competing for a job position with the so-called Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs) (Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2023). Additionally, it reinforces the stereotype of speaking a foreign language as the only requirement to be a teacher, disregarding all the other aspects and skills that must be considered in language teaching.

Regarding routine hackwork, teachers' skills are overlooked, making them follow the formulaic procedures set by the institute. As mentioned before, with the metaphor of the teacher as *educators for neoliberal purposes*, the focus lies on teaching language skills to prepare students for succeeding in the job market. In accordance with this notion, institutes are interested in teachers sticking to the methodology proposed (PPP) and the examples, exercises, and procedures found in the material provided by international publishing houses. In the second excerpt, this objective is identified through the use of the preposition 'according to' by directly linking the 'high command of language teaching strategies' to 'institutional requirements'. As a consequence, teachers' opportunity to change and improve their methodologies and strategies is shifted to the fulfillment of a routine with the lessons provided by a textbook, and a detriment to their mental health.

Second, the aforementioned metaphors of being a teacher in Institute X have consequences related to working conditions. As the institute mentions, regarding the contract teachers have: "Our academy has teachers hired under an indefinite term contract, under the following criteria, to ensure the success and quality of each program." (2024, p. 13). However, coherence is again affected, taking into account Institute X's most recent job offer posts, which describe the type of contract as a "Fixed-term employment contract for 6

months, with the possibility of being indefinite term.” (Docentes en inglés Bogotá, 2025). Consequently, the deskilling of teachers and their perception of providers of a service whose main objective entails teaching EFL skills has an effect on their working conditions. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) mention, these types of short-term contracts affect the understanding of being a teacher, “reducing the teaching profession to the single activity of delivering a lesson” (p. 192).

Finally, the metaphors surrounding the identity of EFL teachers in Institute X have an impact on their work benefits. As the institute states, they want to be recognized as a “safe and pleasant place to work, which promotes the well-being and development of our employees” (Institute X, 2024, p. 12). In order to achieve said objective, Institute X has established a series of benefits that allow teachers to improve professionally by granting time from their work hours to pursue a graduate degree in the area of education. This can be found in Article 15 of Institute X’s Handbook.

ARTICLE 15. RECOGNITION FOR STUDIES AND SENIORITY

Institute X recognizes teachers for their permanence in the company and other characteristics such as graduate studies, which results in time benefits as a stimulus for their commitment and seniority in the company.

These characteristics and benefits can be consulted in Institute X’s recognition program.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 12)

Nonetheless, a lack of coherence is found in the current conditions of the institute. In order to verify the existence of the benefit on Institute X’s website, it can be noted that this stimulus no longer exists. Even though the institute points out the presence of 5 benefits for the job of EFL teacher, “100% scholarship to study English or French [in Institute X]. Discount to take or update your international exam. Days off to celebrate your special dates. Agreements with different entities for your well-being. Pet Benefit” (Institute X, n.d.-d, Benefits of Working at Institute X section), no mention of time for graduate studies is found. The removal of this stimulus reinforces the view of teachers as *providers of a service* and

educators for neoliberal purposes, whose role is centered on customer satisfaction and the mere use of a textbook during all the lessons, disregarding the importance of pursuing graduate studies as a way of improving professionally.

In conclusion, after analyzing Institute X's Handbook, EFL teaching is regarded as a commodity that impacts the identities of students and teachers. Overall, EFL teaching (in the form of lessons) is seen as a commodity-service offered by a producer (teacher) and acquired by a customer (student) to satisfy a need. This view influences the way students and teachers are perceived. On the one hand, students are seen as customers who are valued due to their economic investment in the company, which distances them from the learning experience, having a passive participation and impacting their interactions with teachers. On the other hand, teachers are identified with the metaphors of *servers/providers of a service* and *educators for neoliberal purposes*, whose goal is to please the customer and focus on EFL as a beneficial labor skill in the current job market. This has implications regarding the deskilling of teachers, and their working conditions and benefits.

EFL Teaching and Learning: An Individual Process

One of the consequences of having a neoliberal influence on EFL teaching is the prevalence of individualism in education. On the whole, neoliberalism has a strong connection with individualism, which goes back to the origins of the ideology. As it was mentioned in the theoretical framework, neoliberalism has its roots in liberalism, a philosophy that regarded freedom as an imperative aspect in society (Useche, 2002). Later, this freedom was associated with the market and people's 'need' to acquire private property to be successful in the competitive market system. Additionally, as Useche (2002) explains, public goods are replaced with the individual responsibility of having access to health, education, and other essential services. Regarding EFL teaching, people are met with the

necessity of learning EFL to triumph in the job market. As Nikpouya & Zareian (2024) explain:

Under the neoliberal paradigm, English is perceived as a highly valuable yet impartial form of capital that can be accessed by individuals through diligent investment of effort and time (Heller & Duchêne 2012; Heller, 2003, 2010; Park, 2016; Urciuoli, 2008). Consequently, individuals are often held responsible for undertaking the necessary investment in acquiring a socially-expected level of English proficiency to thrive in an intensely competitive neoliberal market. (...) The teaching of languages, particularly English as a foreign language, has transformed into a lucrative industry for the English-language sector. (Philipson, 1992; Barnawi, 2017). (p. 209)

The aforementioned need of learning EFL impacts the creation of private language institutes and the procedures found in them. Being part of the ETDH, private language institutes aim at supplying people with programs that allow them to reach the expectations of the labor market and productive sector (MoEd, 2009). At the same time, this neoliberal influence has an impact on how individualism permeates the teaching and learning processes that are part of private institutes. Through the analysis of Institute X's Handbook, three main areas are identified to be impacted by individualism: EFL teaching model, students and teachers' roles and objectives, and the assessment process.

Firstly, regarding the teaching model, it's important to take into account how a lesson at Institute X is developed. As it was explained in the description of the setting, the model is based on the PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) structure and the use of a textbook, which is divided into classes (from 72 to 84) and determines the topics to be covered. In this sense, each student can have a different grammar topic connected to a situational context that must be explained in the duration of the lesson. For example: Student 1: Class 1-Simple past

(talking about childhood), Student 2: Class 5-Indirect questions (asking questions related to cities), Student 3: Class 20-Use of sequence adverbs (making a recipe), Student 4: Class 29-Comparative structures (Comparing houses), etc. In this sense, students can repeat topics they have seen before. At the same time, the topics to be seen in the same class must be connected by the teacher (even if it results in a difficult task) in order for the students to feel a general unification during the lesson, as the institute explains:

Our methodology is conversational, semiprivate with groups composed of a maximum of 6 people of the same level who are studying different interrelated contents. This guarantees to review and recognize topics that will be your objectives later on, familiarizing you with the topics of the whole level.

(Institute X, n.d.-e, p. 10)

The institute describes the methodology as semiprivate (*semipersonalizada*, in Spanish, the original language of the document), with the goal of highlighting a more individual process in EFL learning. In general, the term *semipersonalizada/o* is created with the suffix *-semi* and the adjective *personalizada/o*, which comes from the verb *personalizar*. About the offering of products and services, it usually refers to the adaptation of a product or a service in accordance with the desires of a customer (Real Academia Española, 2025), its direct translation could be *semicustom* in English. Nonetheless, as Institute X describes, in this context, the term is used additionally to emphasize the reduced number of students in a lesson (up to 6), which is related to the term *semiprivate*. This choice of wording reveals an interdiscursive connection with physical training centers, whose services include ‘semiprivate training’ in small groups with individual adaptations.

In spite of the focus on a low number of students, the methodology used in Institute X’s lessons reduces the benefits of a more ‘personalized’ EFL teaching and unveils a profit-seeking justification. As it was explained before, lessons have up to 6 students, each one attending with the objective of following their individual process and taking the class that

corresponds according to the book. However, taking into account the number of topics to be seen and grammar to be explained, a class of 90 minutes with 6 students usually has got to be divided in the following way:

1. Warm-up activity: 10 minutes
2. Presentation stage / explanation of each topic: 10 minutes per class (60 minutes in total)
3. Practice stage/development of exercises in the textbook: 10 minutes
4. Production stage/closing activity: 10 minutes

In general, the promise of a *semiprivate* lesson, which is supposed to be focused on individual needs and objectives while working in a group, leaves each student a reduced time to review the topic of his/her assigned class and do some grammar exercises in the textbook. With this in mind, private language institutes have a higher profit by assigning just one teacher to a group of students under the agreement that each one of them will have a consistent individual process, a promise that results in a maximum of 20 minutes for reviewing each student's topic. This strategy enters the scope of the *corporatization of education*. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) explain, corporate strategic choices are often taken in private education to attract customers and make a profit. In this sense, the idea of having individualized lessons is often sold with the objective of achieving a higher profit.

Secondly, regarding students and teachers, individualism permeates their roles and objectives set by Institute X. For students, the institute gives an insight into their development in EFL learning.

TO THE STUDENT

Active participation in their individual development process making them an important member of their educational community.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 7)

As Institute X mentions, students are considered active participants in an individual development process. To comprehend the choice of the wording “individual development process”, aspects such as class scheduling must be considered. As the institute states “The academy offers flexibility in the scheduling of classes to its students, giving them the possibility to attend in any time block established by the academy” (Institute X, n.d.-f, Servicio Instituto, para. 16). In this matter, students are not part of a fixed group which takes classes at the same time or with the same teachers. Instead, students have an individual process, scheduling the number of classes they prefer, in the schedule and time they wish, and with random teachers in every class. Although this flexibility may benefit students with difficult schedules, it is detrimental in aspects such as a lack of teamwork with other classmates, problems with availability in class scheduling, and the impossibility of having continuous assessment by fixed teachers in their learning progress.

Additionally, concerning teachers, individualism is perceived in relation to their objective as educators, and the students’ learning process. As it was previously mentioned, Institute X does not establish a fixed group of students under the guidance of specific teachers; instead, teachers are given groups of a maximum of 6 students, and these groups are just assigned minutes before the class starts. As a means of offering an explanation for this decision, Institute X mentions:

(...) you will have qualified teachers who rotate randomly in order to achieve maximum language comprehension and adapt to different accents.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 12)

Upon analyzing the excerpt, the subordinating conjunction ‘in order to’ plays an important role. As it is commonly used, the conjunction ‘in order to’ shows cause and effect relations, setting the achievement of a better language comprehension and the adaptation to accents as the effect and objective of the random rotation system of teachers. Nevertheless,

this objective seems to be insufficient as the decision may result in the difficulty for teachers to support, accompany, and keep track of students in their learning process. Also, it impacts the preparation of lessons, which are impossible to prepare in advance, as no prior knowledge of the assignment of the students and the topics to be covered is given. In this sense, the flexibility and individuality that characterize students' learning process and the scheduling of lessons affect the support, help, and guidance that can be given to them, reinforcing the perception of teachers as mere providers of a service.

Furthermore, neoliberal and individualist perspectives influence the role and objectives set for teachers in Institute X. Regarding the role of teachers as educators and the aims of the company, the institute states the following:

TO THE TEACHER AS EDUCATOR

To act in coordination with the principles of the institution, to achieve in their work a true social coexistence based on our own values, in this way to build a true culture encouraging creativity and autonomy, developing the intellectual and labor skills required for the progress of the country.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 7)

As seen in the previous categories of analysis, the metaphor of teachers as *educators for neoliberal purposes* is found in Institute X's Handbook and can be linked to the encouragement of individualist perspectives. Regarding the excerpt, infinitive constructions are used to show the purposes or intentions surrounding teachers' roles. In this way, the main purpose concerns teachers' obedience to the principles set by the institute, which are related to the creation of a 'true culture' based on autonomy and the development of labor skills for the progress of the country, among other aspects. In respect to said autonomy, as Tavares (2022) mentions, "self-interest and autonomy are regarded as the ideal state the individual should strive to achieve. The neoliberal perspective on identity enables the individual to believe that contextual outcomes are the product of one's actions alone" (p. 159).

Consequently, Institute X highlights the 'crucial' role of teachers at encouraging students'

individual work when learning EFL to achieve the best outcomes in the labor market of the country.

Lastly, individualism is also identified in the testing and assessment process of students. Regarding the evaluative procedures, Institute X states the importance of both individual and group activities and assessment:

EVALUATION AND PROMOTION:

The evaluation criteria taken into account are:

Learning outcomes established for each level of training, management of interaction and mediation in language, acquired knowledge, active participation, attendance to class sessions and independent work of the student, interest in the development of individual or group face-to-face activities, personal or group independent work activities for the preparation and application of knowledge, interaction with group members and finally the presentation of the result (final) test for the evaluation of communicative competences of the language.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 9)

Nonetheless, these criteria are not in accordance with the testing system instituted for the assessment of students' progress and the promotion to the next units and levels. As Institute X establishes:

INDIVIDUAL EXAMINATIONS:

Once enrolled in the academic program, the student takes two types of examinations: the first one corresponds to the assessment of the process in certain academic units to verify the progress of their learning, and the second one is the final examination which will assess the totality of objectives and level competences acquired by the student in the program. The two types of examinations are structured on the basis of two sub-tests: one evaluates the communicative skills in terms of comprehension (listening) and oral and reading expression. The second evaluates written expression.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 10)

Subsequently, a lack of coherence is found in the testing system used in Institute X and the criteria that are said to be considered. On the one hand, the institute advocates individual and group activities for the purpose of putting into practice what is learned in all its processes. On the other hand, examinations are done individually after finishing certain units of the textbook and at the end of the level. In these, students present a written exam

reviewing grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading, and writing; and a speaking session is done with the teacher to assess the topics seen in the unit(s). As a result of this system and the mismatch between the institute's set of beliefs about evaluation and the actual process, the benefits of group work and assessment are traded for the use of standardized tests, focusing only on individual performance.

All in all, individualism, being a key characteristic of neoliberalism, has influenced educational aspects in Institute X, such as the teaching model, the students' and teachers' roles, and the assessment process. Firstly, the semiprivate focus of the methodology reveals the promise of having a strong individual process; however, this results in a lack of time to address students' assigned topics. Additionally, students are set as solely responsible for their learning process by having a 'flexible' scheduling system. As a result, problems with consistent assessment, teamwork, and class scheduling arise. This system affects teachers in terms of the assessment that can be given to students, the preparation of lessons, and the reliance on just using the textbook in the lessons. Lastly, even though individual and group assessment criteria are said to be taken into account in Institute X's Handbook, the testing system is completely individual, proving a lack of coherence with the institute's values and principles.

Internal Colonialism's Influence in EFL Private Education

Through the analysis of Institute X's Handbook, various aspects of neoliberalism have come to light; nevertheless, neoliberal processes go hand in hand with internal colonialism in EFL private education. As it was mentioned in the theoretical framework, *internal colonialism* is understood in this research as the domination, control, and neglect of one community at the hands of a privileged group from the same country, this being the principal difference with colonialism. Although both encompass different processes, they share colonial mechanisms such as *epistemic violence*, *whitening*, and

homogenization/assimilation, which lead to outcomes in the naturalization of dominant ways of thinking and the control and exploitation of people.

With respect to the Colombian case, internal colonialism has also been detected in the educational decisions made surrounding language teaching. As Guerrero-Nieto (2023) asserts, educational and language policies are found to favor colonial notions and foreign entities. As a consequence, our native languages and local knowledge are disregarded, affecting education in different ways, including the area of EFL teaching. This influence can also be noticed in private language institutes, which is the case of Institute X. In order to identify said influence, excerpts of the institute's Handbook and blog posts will be analyzed.

In this regard, Institute X offers a wide range of objectives that involve the way EFL is taught and its impact on students' lives. In this way, the institute aims:

ARTICLE 46. OBJECTIVES

To train people competent in languages with the highest academic levels who can perform tasks that require knowledge of more than one language.

(...)

To train people with bilingual competencies that apply to take exams with international standards.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 26)

As the institute mentions, one of its objectives highlights the importance of training people who excel at language use. When analyzing the excerpt, the superlative construction 'the highest academic levels' is used, reflecting the institute's intention of comparing the language teaching service provided and its results with those of other institutes, and emphasizing the 'good quality' of these academic services. However, questions such as: who establishes them and what are their characteristics? appear. In order to answer these questions, the second objective sheds light on the matter. Making a connection with the academic levels mentioned in the first objective, the second excerpt informs of the acquisition of competences in EFL that are in accordance with 'international standards'. In this way,

international entities and publishing houses are responsible for establishing the characteristics of the high academic levels that ought to be followed at Institute X.

The influence of international entities is detected from the moment the students start the admission process in the institute. As Institute X establishes:

ARTICLE 8. Conditions for enrollment, admission, permanence and withdrawal of students. Submit internal placement test to establish their level of proficiency or otherwise submit results of international language certification (four-skill MET - four-skill LINGUA SKILL - IELTS - 4-skill Cambridge exams), so that they can enter the appropriate program according to their result.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 7)

ARTICLE 10. ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE.

For those students who wish to validate previous knowledge in any of the English and French language levels, they must take a placement test, which will place the student in one of the levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This placement test consists of a virtual test with multiple choice questions that verify the level of oral and written comprehension. A teacher performs the oral and written evaluation procedure that verifies expression and fluency.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 9)

Regarding the students' admission process, their knowledge and proficiency in EFL must be demonstrated through two possible options: an international language certification or an internal placement test. The first option focuses on establishing students' level of proficiency through the results of a test made by an international entity, exams such as "four-skill MET - four-skill LINGUA SKILL - IELTS - 4-skill Cambridge exams" are deemed acceptable by Institute X's standards. The second option encompasses the presentation of an internal placement test, which is also created under foreign standards, following the proficiency levels established by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and being influenced by Cambridge University Press type of examinations, taking into account their partnership with the institution, as mentioned on Institute X's website (Institute X, n.d.-h).

The dependance on foreign institutions reveals an intertextual relation with national policies and the impact of *standardization*. Firstly, the reliance on international standards is

not a new decision regarding EFL teaching in Colombia; it shows an intertextual connection with educational policies instead. For instance, the NTC 5580, which dictates the parameters for private language institutes part of the ETDH, requires institutes to act in accordance with the CEFR for the creation of the curricular plan, teachers' hiring, students' certifications, admissions, and a wide range of educational processes. In this matter, *standardization* is usually found in Colombian policies with the use of the CEFR, overlooking the realities of our country and contextual differences between our educational systems and the international standards that must be followed and achieved (Losada-Rivas, 2023; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2021).

It is important to highlight that said standards are not just used for admission processes, they affect a wide range of aspects at Institute X. For instance, the curriculum and model followed in the institute is primarily based on the division of students in levels according to the CEFR, having the students inscribed at a specific level (from A1 to C1). Also, the standards are found in the textbook used, and consequently in the testing and assessment done to students through quizzes that are adapted from international examination organizations such as Cambridge English. As a result, knowledge produced by Colombian institutions, academics, and teachers is overlooked, favoring foreign agencies, as González (2021) mentions:

Other voices expressed their concern about its role in Colombia (Valencia 2014) because of academic colonialism and the commodification of ELT that has come from the adoption of the tests, teacher development courses, teaching materials and experts related to the British Council and British publishing companies (Correa and González 2016). (p. 375)

In this fashion, internal colonialism is unveiled through the use of *epistemic violence*. As Correa and Guerrero (2024) explain, epistemic violence “is characterized by the invisibilization of the “other” and their ways of knowing through different forms of oppression and domination” (p. 7). When analyzing Institute X’s Handbook, the presence of this internal colonialism is detected in private EFL education, highlighting the ‘high academic level’ that is given based on international standards. Hence, the knowledge the “other” (Colombian teachers and academics) can build in a joint work is not deemed as having the same ‘quality’ as the one provided by foreign agencies. Moreover, this colonial mechanism can be linked to *coloniality of knowledge*, which emphasizes the imposition of European knowledge systems as a result of colonialism, invalidating other ways of knowing.

Furthermore, epistemic violence is also detected in the requirements asked for teachers at Institute X. As it was previously mentioned regarding teachers’ identity, candidates for the position of EFL teachers who have studies in areas different to language teaching, and candidates with partial or no undergraduate studies are required to provide a certificate in language pedagogy given by an accepted (international) course, such as the TKT - TESOL - CELTA. Hence, international certificates hold the same, or even a higher value, than Colombian undergraduate degrees. As González (2021) informs, the acceptance and even preference for these types of certifications “have become instruments of exclusion, inequality, standardization, and commodification” (p. 378). As it is seen, epistemic violence is exerted through the invisibilization of our own production of knowledge and the glorification of foreign certification systems.

In a similar manner, teachers are affected by internal colonialism with the phenomenon of *native speakerism*. This phenomenon can be identified in the following excerpt:

A teacher is a native speaker when he/she was born and trained in the teaching of the language in a country whose official language corresponds to the required language. Also in Institute X, a person of any nationality who has resided and studied for 10 years or more in a country whose official language corresponds to the required language is considered a native speaker.

(Institute X, n.d.-g, Preguntas frecuentes, para. 1)

Upon analyzing the institute's excerpt, a new definition of being a native speaker is identified. As observed in different dictionaries (Cambridge, n.d.; Merriam-Webster; n.d.; Collins, n.d.) the lexical item *native speaker* refers to a person who learned a language as a child and has spoken it since, rather than learning it as an adult and as a foreign language. However, Institute X restructures the 'meaning potential' (conventionally accepted terms, as Fairclough (1992) describes) by adding a new definition. In this sense, the institute also assigns the term to "a person of any nationality who has resided and studied for 10 years or more in a country whose official language corresponds to the required language". This description unveils the effect of the colonial mechanism known as *whitening*, which shows how 'white' characteristics are preferred over the 'non-white' ones, and leads groups of people to adapt their ways of being and acting in order to acquire the privilege that 'white' people possess (Correa & Guerrero, 2024; Viveros Vigoya, 2016). In Institute X's excerpt, people who have fully immersed themselves in a foreign country and their language can achieve the status of *native speaker*.

Additionally, the whitening process leads to *native speakerism*. As Lowe & Kiczkowiak (2016) describe, *native speakerism* refers to "the belief that a 'native speaker' embodies not only the English language, but also Western teaching methodology, and as a result is better suited to teach it" (p. 2). This is further evidenced in the next excerpts:

You can choose between classes with non-native and native teachers according to the modality of study and according to the rates that apply to each service

(Institute X, n.d.-f, Servicio Corporativo y personalizado, para. 2).

Fluency: Practicing with native teachers will help you to acquire a natural pronunciation and fluency.
--

(Institute X, n.d.-c, para. 4)

In the previous excerpts, Institute X shows its view of native English speaker teachers (NESTs) over non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs). Firstly, Institute X addresses the students in a direct way through the use of the pronoun ‘you’ as the theme of the sentence; by doing this, it lets students know of choosing between NESTs and NNESTs depending on the service they acquire. In relation to the type of service, the institute informs in their website that students “will be able to take classes with a native teacher only in our corporate and personalized programs. Not applicable for on-site programs” (Institute X, n.d.-g, Preguntas frecuentes, para. 1) a service that is usually more expensive and offers private lessons. In this sense, native speakerism is detected as NESTs are found only in ‘exclusive’ services which offer the ‘best’ EFL teaching methodology and procedures.

Furthermore, the second excerpt informs us of the benefits of choosing a NEST over a NNEST. Through the use of the strategy known as *rationalization*, which reinforces ideologies with the use of an argument followed by a set of reasons (Thompson, 1984), Institute X assures students that taking classes with NESTs is greatly beneficial, as their fluency skills will improve. The previous reasoning unveils not only the presupposition that NESTs will be able to teach the language in a better way, with higher benefits such as acquiring a ‘natural pronunciation and fluency’, but also the prejudice towards NNEST, deeming their fluency and pronunciation as not ‘perfect’ enough for EFL teaching. As a consequence, Colombian teachers and students are part of a whitening process that leads them to place foreign English varieties as the standard and the key to being proficient in the language.

In the same train of thought, a final colonial mechanism appears:

homogenization/assimilation. As Correa and Guerrero (2024) inform,

homogenization/assimilation is:

the process by which a dominant culture, using its economic, social and political power, assimilates another. (...) By means of homogenization, particular traits and practices of one culture are erased and replaced by the new one. In decolonial terms, people from local cultures are led to rebuild their personal and cultural identity according to the western model, and to lose their selves, their essence, and their sense of belonging. (p. 7)

In this respect, Institute X's Handbook addresses the importance of culture in EFL teaching by establishing its vision as a company and its philosophical notions:

ARTICLE 4. VISION

By 2025 Institute X will be a leading service institution committed to continuous improvement through:

Programs that facilitate the cultural development of our students and generate language learning solutions.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 6)

ARTICLE 5. PHILOSOPHICAL NOTION

With the promulgation of the 1991 political constitution, new possibilities were opened to think about democracy from the perspective of coexistence in pluralism, ethnic and regional diversity, and also the possibility of defining the principles and purposes of education.

(...)

From educational processes it is possible to form one's own thinking, scientific development and the formation of a cultural policy that allows coexistence in plurality and diversity.

(Institute X, 2024, p. 6)

Through a first analysis, Institute X declares their accountability for being a key player in the cultural development of students. Through an intertextual representation, Institute X restates the Colombian Constitution of 1991 and its view of democracy as “coexistence in pluralism, ethnic and regional diversity” to emphasize the protection of plurality and diversity in EFL education. In accordance, their vision as a company highlights

the ‘cultural development’ that must be facilitated through language learning. Nonetheless, the characteristics of this cultural development, diversity, and plurality are not fully described. In order to identify said characteristics, the next excerpts will be analyzed:

In a globalized world, English is the lingua franca of commerce, technology and culture. Mastering this language not only opens doors to better job opportunities, but also allows you to access a greater amount of information and resources globally.
--

(Institute X, n.d.-a, para. 3)

We have Cambridge University Press® didactic material designed exclusively for Institute X, producing a book adapted to our methodology. We are the only institution in the continent with this privilege.
--

(Institute X, n.d.-e, p. 13)

While analyzing the first excerpt, it should be noted that Institute X highlights the status of English as the *lingua franca* of culture in modern times. As Gnutzmann and Intemann (2008) explain:

The spread of English has therefore an ambivalent character; it is a lingua franca necessary for international communication, and it is a vehicle for the spread of a culture influenced by the USA and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe. (...) English is not only seen as a threat to other languages, but also to the cultures connected with these languages. When English is taught, it is seldom ever entirely separated from its cultural background, which is generally American and British. Non-native users of English may fear an ‘anglification’ of their own culture. (p. 12)

In this sense, the dominance of the English language through globalization not only reveals a strong influence of neoliberalism in EFL teaching, but also of the cultural background that comes with it. This can also be identified in the “access [to] a greater amount of information and resources globally” that Institute X mentions, which can be related to the aspects that are brought mostly from American and British culture. In the same manner, in the second excerpt, the institute proudly calls attention to the partnership established with

Cambridge University Press. This relationship influences various aspects in EFL teaching at Institute X, one of them being the cultural topics seen in the textbook, which are mostly focused on the USA and the United Kingdom.

As a result, homogenization is detected in Institute X. Taking into account the previous information, a lack of coherence is perceived between the vision and philosophical notions of the institute and the culture that is highlighted through the use of a foreign textbook and methodology. In this sense, the plurality and diversity in EFL education that Institute X declared to protect is reduced to the adaptation of Western culture and system knowledge in our context. Consequently, teachers and students are immersed in the naturalization of EFL teaching and learning as a process in which only foreign cultures are acknowledged, disregarding the opportunity of talking about our context and identities.

In conclusion, internal colonialism was unveiled through the analysis of Institute X's Handbook. First, standardization was identified as a key element in EFL education, setting the parameters provided by the CEFR and international organizations as mandatory in educational processes. Second, epistemic violence was seen in the way these foreign contributions are preferred over national ones. Third, native speakerism and whitening were found in the way Institute X sets NESTs as ideal teachers in the most privileged services that are offered. Finally, homogenization/assimilation was unveiled as the parameters and materials used for EFL teaching promote the focus on foreign cultures and varieties of English.

CHAPTER V: Conclusions

Based on the analysis of Institute X's Handbook, I will present the main conclusions and contributions of the research process. Additionally, the implications that the study may have will be mentioned. Also, I will describe the limitations of the research. Finally, I will

provide some further research that can be done in order to expand the contributions in the area of private institutes' policy analysis.

Conclusions

This research study aimed at unveiling how the institutional policies of a private language institute are shaped by neoliberalism and internal colonialism. To do so, I identified the main theoretical constructs (Neoliberalism, Internal colonialism, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Policies) and their characteristics based on relevant national and international research studies and academic papers. Additionally, with the use of the three-dimensional framework proposed by Norman Fairclough (1992, 2015) the first specific research objective was fulfilled: to examine the institutional policies following a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach.

Moreover, four categories emerged, which evidenced the influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism: The Market-Based Objective of EFL Private Education; EFL Teaching as a Commodity and the Identity of Its Participants; EFL Teaching and Learning: An Individual Process; and Internal Colonialism's Influence in EFL Private Education. In this way, the second specific research objective was met: to evidence the influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism in the institutional policies of a local language institute.

Furthermore, in order to provide some general conclusions and fulfil the third specific research objective: to decipher the characteristics that should be included in local language institutes' policies, some contributions of the research will be mentioned. These contributions are related to three main categories: *critical research and the use of CDA, private language institutes and their development, and the creation of private language institutes' EFL policies.*

To begin with, this research shows contributions related to the use of *critical research and CDA* in the academic field. Currently, an increasing number of research studies are being conducted regarding EFL education, which address multiple problematic situations from different points of view and follow a wide variety of types of research. Even though all types of studies are valuable for the field, this research focuses on the importance of following a critical perspective and methods such as CDA. In the Colombian case, researchers such as Escobar Alméciga (2013), Ruiz Gómez (2021), and Borda Mosquera (2022) make significant contributions through the use of CDA; however, the analysis of policies belonging to the private sector, in specific language institutes, has not been seen. It is imperative to develop critical research to raise awareness about the dilemmas, constraints, and problems that may emerge in this area, and to encourage changes. As Fairclough (2015) mentions:

When we do CDA, the point is not just to analyze and criticize discourse (...) It is to analyze and criticize, and ultimately to change, the existing social reality in which such discourse is related in particular ways to other social elements such as power relations, ideologies, economic and political strategies and policies. (p.5)

Subsequently, contributions are made to research concerning *private language institutes and their development*. As mentioned in the rationale of the study, private language institutes, which belong to the ETDH, have been rapidly growing in the last couple of years (SIET, n.d.), and with them, the number of unexpected situations and issues. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) and Quintero González (2022) assert, these institutes are presenting negative consequences that affect teachers, students, and the processes involving learning and teaching EFL. In this sense, this research provides a general understanding of the ideological influences that permeate these institutes, and the way they affect teachers and students in relation to their identities, learning and assessment processes, working conditions, and lack of an appropriate contextual approach that fosters teamwork in EFL teaching.

Finally, contributions involving *the creation of private language institutes' EFL policies* are presented. As Ramírez Ospina (2015) denounces, due to the lack of official national policies regarding language teaching in ETDH, and the laxness of the few policies that exist, private language institutes *(re)interpret* and *(re)create* their own policies, leaving important aspects behind and showing a strong influence of ideologies, such as neoliberalism and internal colonialism. As a result of the analysis of Institute X's Handbook, and the categories that emerged from it, five aspects are highlighted, which involve characteristics to be considered by policymakers in the creation of local language institutes' policies.

Firstly, by acknowledging the realities of our society and communities, we can recognize the influence neoliberalism has had in all aspects, from the job market to EFL education, and in this regard, English is seen as an important skill for people to succeed in our globalized world (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008; Guerrero-Nieto, 2009; Ortega, 2024). Nonetheless, policies must take into account the context and realities of students, and the implications they can have on EFL learning. For instance, it is important to recognize that inequality is broadly present in our society. In this way, as Ortega (2024) explains, selling the idea of learning EFL as the solution for being successful in the job market can increase these inequalities and affect students' effort and aims if the promised results are not achieved. Even though we cannot change how neoliberal ways of thinking have permeated all aspects of people's lives, educational institutions can contribute to the way EFL learning is perceived and its objectives in society. Adding a wider vision of EFL learning is key to acknowledging the impact learning a foreign language has, going beyond market-driven purposes.

Secondly, as seen in the analysis of Institute X's Handbook, teachers' and students' identity is heavily impacted by neoliberal notions and the perception of EFL teaching/learning as a service-commodity. On the one hand, as Tight (2013) mentions, the perception of students as *customers* defines their implication in their learning process as a

rather passive and individual agent who, in general terms, must follow the textbook-based methodology but has a considerable influence on the institutes' processes as their opinion as *customers* is highly taken into account. On the other hand, teachers are seen as *providers of a service* and *educators for neoliberal purposes*, whose value relies on having an international certification in English proficiency, following a textbook during the lessons, and 'educating' students for achieving success in the job market while creating an environment full of 'creativity' and 'fun' in class (Ospina, 2015).

Consequently, these created identities have a significant negative impact on the institute's participants. As Guerrero-Nieto and Quintero-Polo (2023) explain, the influence of said neoliberal notions results in the deskilling of teachers and students and in a reductionist perception of their roles by not including them as active agents in education. In this sense, it is crucial for policymakers to regard students as more than customers who need to be satisfied with the service they pay for. Also, it is necessary to see teachers as important actors who are able to use their pedagogical skills and background, showing their agency by going beyond the use of a book and 'serving' the students.

Thirdly, concerning the influence of neoliberalism on teachers' working conditions and benefits, two main aspects should be reviewed in private language institutes' policies: a fair employment contract and the encouragement of pursuing professional development. Regarding the first matter, as it was described in the analysis, teachers are currently being hired under fixed-term contracts for 6 months, which is not consistent with the private institutes' goals of having good working conditions, promoting teachers' well-being, and maintaining a good environment in the EFL education field.

Additionally, regarding benefits provided to EFL teachers, institutes' policies should take into account the professional development of teachers and the contributions it can bring

to their lives and the improvement of education in EFL. In the first place, it is important to grant more opportunities to prepare, develop, and put into practice innovative pedagogical activities. This can be done in order to tackle the problem concerning teachers' hackwork, which is mostly due to a constant focus on classes with the same methodology. Moreover, benefits encouraging the pursuit of graduate degrees can be established, considering the impact that they will have on both teachers and EFL teaching in these institutes. As González (2023) mentions:

Many [teachers] claim the lack of professional development (PD) opportunities as a source of job dissatisfaction (Álvarez Espinal, 2018). To improve their ELT skills and access graduate study programs, English teachers need to increase their income working in more than one institution. (p. 215).

Fourthly, concerning the methodology used in Institute X, the individualistic perspective was found to be crucial and key in the selling of EFL courses. First, the use of lexical items such as *semiprivate lessons* to improve sales turn out to be problematic considering the real time that is left to focus on each student during the lesson. Also, this issue is directly related to the type of methodology that is implemented in private language institutes. Although the benefit of the *semiprivate* methodology concerning students' schedules cannot be denied, it has a negative impact on the lack of consistent activities in groups and the direct assessment of fixed teachers for a long period of time.

In this sense, on the one hand, even if it is seen as a difficult possibility, the provision of different methodologies (individual and in groups – with random or fixed teachers – scheduling in different moments or maintaining a fixed schedule and group for a period of time) is encouraged for students to consider the selection of a methodology that is in accordance with their pedagogical needs. On the other hand, it is important for policymakers

to examine aspects such as the wording used to describe courses and methodologies (such as *semiprivate*) as it results in a lack of coherence with real experiences in EFL classes, as described in the analysis done of Institute X's Handbook.

Lastly, in line with the revision of the methodology regarding the current individual perspectives, it is also noticed that it favors international standards and organizations. Although the adoption of the CEFR parameters has to be done acting under national policies such as the NTC 5580, its use alongside the position of privilege of foreign entities and publishing houses results in the presence of epistemic violence, whitening, homogenization, and native speakerism (Correa & Guerrero, 2024), all of them evidence of internal colonialism in education.

As a consequence, 'high quality' in EFL teaching is focused on the use of international standards and material, disregarding the production of contextual pedagogical advances that are focused on our needs, problems, and cultural aspects. Also, teachers enter a whitening process, in which the goal is to be proficient in EFL, coming as close as possible to a native speaker in relation to accent and fluency, among other linguistic aspects, which results in higher salaries (Correa & Guerrero, 2024; Viveros Vigoya, 2016). In this matter, it is crucial for private language institutes to acknowledge the importance of possessing standards and materials that focus on the students' context and enhance the acceptance of our culture, linguistic variations, and ways of teaching EFL.

All in all, Critical Discourse Analysis proved to be a useful tool in the analysis of discourse to unveil the influence of the ideologies that may impact people's lives. As it was described, through the framework of analysis, different aspects of discourse are highlighted, displaying the ideologies and belief systems that are behind them. In this manner, I could identify that neoliberalism and internal colonialism are in fact, strongly present in the policies

of a private language institute, and they affect the way teachers and students are seen, how EFL is taught, and the objectives and goals that constitute the base of education in this field. Furthermore, this research study makes contributions regarding critical research and the use of CDA, private language institutes and their development, and the creation of private language institutes' EFL policies.

Implications

Regarding the implications of the research, I could identify some key aspects: First, teachers at private language institutes should be encouraged to analyze their experiences in this sector and take into account the importance of recognizing the problems that may affect our roles in education. Being attentive to our daily activities as EFL teachers, we can be active participants in our own research process, which will contribute to a better understanding of these new areas in which language teaching takes place and the improvements that need to be made. As a result, any kind of analysis done in this field, which does not count with a large research background, will contribute to the enhancement of education, and students and teachers' roles.

Also, policymakers (both institutional and national) need to realize that policies are crucial in the operation of an educational institution. As mentioned before, policy-making is not a linear process in which policymakers create rules and objectives that need to be directly applied by the members of an institution; on the contrary, it must involve all the actors that are part of education and listen to their opinions and perspectives. Furthermore, it is never a process that has an ending; instead, policies must be constantly reviewed and analyzed with the objective of improving and providing the best education and conditions that the members of an institute deserve. In this sense, research related to policies needs to be encouraged at all levels of education.

Finally, private language institutes need to listen to the appreciations, suggestions, and evaluations that teachers make about the processes in these spaces. As ETDH institutions, their objective must be directed to the constant improvement of education in order to support children, teenagers, and adults, who mostly rely on these institutes to learn a foreign language. As a consequence, said improvement cannot be made if key actors of private institutes, such as teachers and students, are not listened to, taken into account, and considered as active agents who know firsthand the problems that arise and that need to be solved. This research serves as a call to attention to private institutes to work in groups with their members, with communal objectives in mind.

Limitations

Carrying out this research allowed me to accomplish the goal of analyzing a local language institute's policy and unveiling the influence of neoliberalism and internal colonialism; however, I faced some limitations in the process. First, the principal limitation was found in the search for documents that could be used in my analysis. Considering the research was focused on a private institution, a wide variety of documents were not available, as they are part of the institute's private documentation. This left me with a narrow selection of public information that could be used, being respectful of the Institute's confidential information.

Subsequently, as a result of focusing on the institute's Handbook, some of the problems identified in the document lacked enough information to be supported and explained. Even though a thorough framework and process were followed, the document provided data that left the reader with questions and the need to look for more information to complement the ideas. This limitation was solved by using additional sources published by the same institute.

Further Research

In accordance with the limitations of the study, further research is required to continue with the efforts to recognize the problems and implications of teaching and learning EFL in private language institutes. For instance, research should be done in partnership with these institutes, providing the advantage of having access to a wider range of documents and policies. Moreover, the possibility of developing a research process in which teachers' narratives or interviews are done in addition to the analysis of the policies can bring many benefits that result in a better comprehension of the realities of the context. Furthermore, the presence of research related to internal colonialism is not commonly found in education, almost nonexistent in private language institutes. This informs us of the necessity of doing more research studies that can cover more characteristics of this domination and control process that is currently affecting many actors in EFL education. Finally, the use of CDA to analyze discourse in education proved to be of great use. I encourage researchers to take advantage of this framework in future research, which will help to uncover hidden aspects that can affect the way EFL education is developed in different fields.

References

- Abdelal, R., & Ruggie, J. G. (2009). The Principles of Embedded Liberalism: Social Legitimacy and Global Capitalism. In D. Moss & J. Cisternino (Eds.), *New Perspectives on Regulation* (pp 151-162). Tobin Project.
https://tobinproject.org/sites/default/files/assets/New_Perspectives_Full_Text.pdf
- Ariza Traslaviña, A. M. (2019). *Neoliberalism in Colombian education: A critical discourse analysis of the “Decennial National Plan of Education 2016-2026: the road to quality and equity”* [Master's thesis, University of Oulu]. OuluREPO.
<https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:oulu-201908172773>
- Ávila Pacheco, V. M. (2010). Representaciones bifurcadas en tiempos de futuro: De la colonialidad a la decolonialidad. *Diálogos De Saberes*, 32, 91-102. <https://revistas.unilibre.edu.co/index.php/dialogos/article/view/1924>
- Ball, S.J. (2006). *Education Policy and Social Class: The Selected Works of Stephen J. Ball (1st ed.)*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203015179>
- Bell, L., & Stevenson, H. (2006). *Education Policy: Process, Themes and Impact (1st ed.)*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203088579>
- Bell, L., & Stevenson, H. (n.d.). *Organizing Public Education: an analysis*. Esade.
<https://esadepublic.esade.edu/posts/post/organising-public-education-an-analysis>
- Bettney, E. (2022). Examining Hegemonic and Monoglossic Language Ideologies, Policies, and Practices Within Bilingual Education in Colombia. *Íkala, Revista De Lenguaje Y Cultura*, 27(1), 249–270. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v27n1a12>
- Block, D. (2014). *Second Language Identities*. Bloomsbury.

Block, D. (2018). *Political economy and sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, inequality, and social class*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Bonacina-Pugh, F., Barakos, E., & Chen, Q. (2022). Language policy in the internationalisation of Higher Education in Anglophone countries: The interplay between language policy as 'text', 'discourse' and 'practice'. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 13(6), 1103-1125. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2019-0148>

Bonilla-Medina, S.X., Samacá-Bohórquez, Y. (2023). Disobedient ELT Research: Breaking the Rules, Finding Alternatives, Invoking Other Ontologies. In , C.H. Guerrero-Nieto (Ed.), *Unauthorized Outlooks on Second Languages Education and Policies* (pp. 15-33). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45051-8_2

Borda Mosquera, M. Y. (2022). *Influence discursive du Programme du Bilinguisme de Bogotá dans le plan d'études du français langue étrangère à l'École de l'Université Antonio Nariño*. [Master's thesis, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional]. Repositorio Institucional UPN. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12209/18149>.

Cambridge University Press. (2011). *Cambridge Business English Dictionary*. Cambridge University Press.

Cambridge Dictionary. (n,d.). Native Speaker. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved July 8, 2025, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/native-speaker>

Canagarajah, S. (2013). *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations*. Routledge.

Cárdenas, J. C., Barinas, A., Fergusson, L., Gómez, M., & Namen, O. (2021). ¿De qué colegio te graduaste? In J. C. Cárdenas L. Fergusson & M. García Villegas (Eds.), *La quinta puerta* (pp.193-224). Editorial Planeta.

- Castañeda-Peña, H., Gamboa, P., & Kramsch, C. (Eds.). (2023). *Decolonizing Applied Linguistics Research in Latin America: Moving to a Multilingual Mindset*. Routledge.
- Cerquera-Losada, O. H., Rodríguez-Corredor, M. C. & Riveros-Pastrana, L. M. (2023). Educación Media: ¿Que probabilidad hay de asistir a un Colegio Oficial en Colombia?. *Sociedad y economía*, (49), 1-22.
<https://doi.org/10.25100/sye.v0i49.12028>
- Charris Angulo, A. C. (2017). *Imaginarios sociales e identidad profesional de los docentes de inglés* [Master's thesis, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas].
Repositorio Institucional Universidad Distrital - RIUD.
<https://repository.udistrital.edu.co/items/dc54b2b1-7bd2-40c8-9991-1b5ddc7513f8>
- Collins. (n,d.). Native Speaker. In *Collins Dictionary.com*. Retrieved July 8, 2025, from
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/native-speaker>
- Correa, D., & Usma Wilches, J. (2013). From a Bureaucratic to a Critical-Sociocultural Model of Policymaking in Colombia. *HOW*, 20(1), 226–242.
<https://www.howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/32>
- Correa, D., & González, A. (2016). English in public primary schools in Colombia: Achievements and challenges brought about by national language education policies. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(83), 1-30.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.2459>
- Correa, D., & Guerrero, C. H. (2024). Traces of Coloniality in Colombia's Linguistic Landscape: A Multimodal Analysis of Language Centers' English Advertisements. *Revista Brasileira De Linguística Aplicada*, 24(2), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-6398202421526>

- Crandall, J., & Bailey, K.M. (2018). Introduction. In J. Crandall & K. M. Bailey (Eds.). *Global Perspectives on Language Education Policies* (pp. 1-19). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315108421>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE publications.
- Culp, B. & Blackshear, T. B. (2024). Using Documents and Artifacts: Document Analysis in Qualitative Research. In K. A. Richards, M. A. Hemphill & P. M. Wright (Eds.), *Qualitative Research and Evaluation: in Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* (pp 167-179.) Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- De Figueiredo, E. H. D., & Martinez, J. (2019). The Locus of Enunciation as a Way to Confront Epistemological Racism and Decolonize Scholarly Knowledge. *Applied Linguistics*, 42(2). 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz061>
- De Mejía, A. M. (2009). Teaching English to Young Learners in Colombia: Policy, Practice and Challenges. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 33(1), 103-114.
- Docentes en inglés Bogotá. (2025, June 23). In *Computrabajo*.
<https://co.computrabajo.com/ofertas-de-trabajo/oferta-de-trabajo-de-docentes-en-ingles-bogota-en-bogota-dc-B3B552B0C03A38F661373E686DCF3405?fgoa=true>
- Escalante Gonzalbo, F. (2015). *Historia mínima del neoliberalismo*. El Colegio de México.
- Escobar Alméciga, W. Y. (2013). Identity-Forming Discourses: A Critical Discourse Analysis on Policy Making Processes Concerning English Language Teaching in

Colombia. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 45–60.

<https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/37861>

Escobar Alméciga, W. & Castañeda-Peña, H. (2015). Introduction. In W. Escobar & H. Castañeda-Peña (Eds.), *Discourse analysis applied to English language teaching in Colombian contexts: theory and methods* (pp. 13-19). Universidad El Bosque.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*.

Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and Power* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Fajardo, N. (2024, January 10). Así funciona el millonario negocio de los idiomas en

Colombia. *Forbes Colombia*. <https://forbes.co/2024/01/10/negocios/asi-funciona-el-millonario-negocio-de-los-idiommas-en-colombia>

Fan, G. & Popkewitz, T. S. (2020). Introduction: Education Policy and Reform in the Changing World (Volume 2). In G. Fan & T. S. Popkewitz (Eds.), *Handbook of Education Policy Studies* (pp. v-xx). Springer Open. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8343-4>

Feria Quintero, E. F. (2024, August 1). *Aprender inglés, uno de los grandes problemas para que los colombianos consigan trabajo: esto dice Anif*. El País.

<https://www.elpais.com.co/economia/aprender-ingles-uno-de-los-grandes-problemas-para-que-los-colombianos-consigan-trabajo-esto-dice-anif-0120.html>

Gazzola, M. (2023, December 27). English still rules the world, but that's not necessarily

OK. Is it time to curb its power? *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/27/english-world-power-language-linguistic-justice>

Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Routledge.

Gerstle, G. (2022). *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*. Oxford University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197519646.001.0001>

Gnutzmann, C. & Intemann, F. (2008). Introduction: The Globalisation of English. Language, Politics, and the English Language Classroom. In C. Gnutzmann & F. Intemann (Eds.), *The Globalisation of English and the English Language Classroom* (pp 9-25). Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen.

González, A. (2021). English and English teaching in Colombia: Tensions and possibilities in the expanding circle. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes (2nd ed.)* (pp 371-386). Routledge.

González, A. (2023). Colombian teachers of English as agents in the implementation of English language policies in a multilingual country: Villains or heroes? In N. Miranda, A. de Mejía & S. Valencia Giraldo (Eds.), *Language Education in Multilingual Colombia: Critical Perspectives and Voices from the Field* (pp 205-223). Routledge.

Gómez-Quintero, J. D. (2010). La colonialidad del ser y del saber: la mitologización del desarrollo en América Latina. *El Ágora USB*, 10(1), 87–105.

<https://doi.org/10.21500/16578031.366>

- Gölbaşı, S. (2017). Critical Approach in Social Research: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. *The Online Journal of Communication and Media*, 3(4). 5-18.
<https://www.tojcam.net/journals/tojcam/articles/v03i04/v03i04-02.pdf>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2018). ¿Negros marxistas o marxismos negros?: una mirada descolonial. *Tabula Rasa*, (28), 11-22. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n28.1>
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. H. (2008). Bilingual Colombia: What does It Mean to Be Bilingual within the Framework of the National Plan of Bilingualism?. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 10(1), 27–45.
<https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/10563>
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. H. (2009). Language Policies in Colombia: The Inherited Disdain for our Native Languages. *HOW*, 16(1), 11–24.
<https://www.howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/74>
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. H. (2023). The syntax of marginalization in Colombian language policies: From colonialism to neoliberalism. In H. Castañeda-Peña, P. Gamboa & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Decolonizing Applied Linguistics Research in Latin America: Moving to a Multilingual Mindset* (pp 33-53). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003326748>
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. H., & Quintero-Polo, Á. H. (2021). Emergence and Development of a Research Area in Language Education Policies: Our Contribution to Setting the Grounds for a Local Perspective on Policymaking. *HOW*, 28(3), 119–133.
<https://doi.org/10.19183/how.28.3.677>
- Guerrero-Nieto, C.H., & Quintero-Polo, Á.H. (2023). Deskillling of English Teachers in Colombia: Neoliberalism, Internal Colonialism, and the Reification of English. In C. H. Guerrero-Nieto (Ed.), *Unauthorized Outlooks on Second Languages Education*

and Policies (pp. 189-208). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45051-8_10

Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Haywood, H. (1948). *Negro Liberation*. International Publishers, CO.

Holborow, M. (2012). What is neoliberalism? Discourse, ideology and the real world. In D. Block, J. Gray & M. Holborow (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and Applied Linguistics* (pp 14-32). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203128121>

Holborow, M. (2015). *Language and Neoliberalism*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315718163>

Holborow, M. (2018). Language skills as human capital? Challenging the neoliberal frame. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18(5), 520–532.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2018.1501846>

Hurie, A. H. (2018). English for Peace? Coloniality, Neoliberal ideology, and Discursive Expansion in Colombia Bilingüe. *Íkala, Revista De Lenguaje Y Cultura*, 23(2), 333–354. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v23n02a09>

Iborra-Mallent, J. V. & Montañez-Pico, D. (2020). Los orígenes de la idea del «colonialismo interno» en el pensamiento crítico del comunista afroamericano Harry Haywood: crónica de una conversación con Gwendolyn Midlo Hall. *Tabula Rasa*, (35), 89-114.
<https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n35.04>

ICEF Monitor. (2015, July 14). *New study offers important insights on demand for English training in Colombia*. <https://monitor.icef.com/2015/07/new-study-offers-important-insights-on-demand-for-english-training-in-colombia/>

Institute X. (2024, August 12). *Manual de Convivencia*. <https://bit.ly/44G0v8Y>

Institute X. (n.d.-a). *¿Cuál es la mejor opción para estudiar inglés en Colombia?* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/40KDW1x>

Institute X. (n.d.-b). *Curso de inglés en Colombia para adultos: ¿Cuál es la mejor opción?* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/40cK16F>

Institute X. (n.d.-c). *Beneficios de aprender Inglés en una academia certificada.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/4nGNQLv>

Institute X. (n.d.-d). *Docentes Inglés.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3ImjSMx>

Institute X. (n.d.-e). *Presentación Instituto.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/44kGIwO>

Institute X. (n.d.-f). *Términos y condiciones generales.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/44S7OeO>

Institute X. (n.d.-g). *Programa Personalizado.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/3IlaokK>

Institute X. (n.d.-h). *Cambridge University Press.* Retrieved July 9, 2025, from <https://bit.ly/462ALFZ>

Ishak, D. (2023). Education Policy: Understanding Policy Analysis in the Education Sector in Indonesia. *Educare: Journal Educational and Multimedia*, 2(01), 77–82.
<https://seaninstitute.or.id/bersinar/index.php/ducare/article/view/71>

Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and Power*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869956>

Johnson, D. C. (2023). Marginalizing discourses and teacher resilience in Colombian language policy and education. In N. Miranda, A. M. de Mejía, & S. V. Giraldo

(Eds.), *Language Education in Multilingual Colombia* (pp 89-94). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003155263-9>

Katznelson, N. (2023). *Multilingual Education for Sale: The Neoliberalization of Language Education Policy* [Doctoral dissertation, UC Berkeley]. UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zm6t8mn>

Kutsyuruba, B. (2023). Document Analysis. In J. M. Okoko, S. Tunison & K. D. Walker (Eds.), *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods: Selected Contextual Perspectives* (pp 139-146). Springer.

Leavy, P. (2023). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Lloyd, M. (2023). Colonialidad del poder, del ser y del saber en una universidad intercultural en México. *Revista de la Educación Superior*, 25, 41-46.

<https://doi.org/10.36857/resu.2023.205.2369>

Losada-Rivas, J. J. (2023). Appropriating ELT in Colombia: A Critical Call to Localize Language Teaching. In C. H. Guerrero-Nieto (Ed.), *Unauthorized Outlooks on Second Languages Education and Policies* (pp 77-98). Palgrave Macmillan.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45051-8_5

Lowe, R. J., & Kiczkowiak, M. (2016). Native-speakerism and the complexity of personal experience: A duoethnographic study. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1-16.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1264171>

- Mackenzie, L. (2020). Discriminatory job advertisements for English language teachers in Colombia: An analysis of recruitment biases. *TESOL Journal*, 12(1), 1-21.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.535>
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On The Coloniality of Beign. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), 240-270. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548>
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2016). *Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality*. Fondation-Frantz Fanon. Retrieved November 17, 2024, from <http://fondation-frantzfanon.com/outline-of-tentheses-on-coloniality-and-decoloniality/>
- Melanson, C. C. (2023). A Clash of Interests: Neoliberalism in Education. *One World in Dialogue*, 7(1), 4-8.
<https://ssc.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/OneWorldInDialogue/2023%20V7N1/A%20Clash%20of%20Interests%20Neoliberalism%20in%20Education.pdf>
- Merriam-Webster. (n,d.). Native Speaker. In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved July 8, 2025, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/native%20speaker>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2006). *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés* [Basic Standards of Foreign Language Competences: English].
https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1621/articles-115174_archivo_pdf.pdf
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional –ICONTEC. (2007). *Norma Técnica Colombiana 5580*.
https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1621/articles-157089_archivo_pdf_NTC_5580.pdf
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2009). *Decreto 4904 de 16 de diciembre de 2009*. [Decree 4904/ December 16, 2009] <https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/portales/jes-tematicos/Normas-sobre-Educacion-Preescolar-Basica-y-Media/216551:Decreto-4904-de-16-de-diciembre-de-2009>

- Miranda, N., & Giraldo, S. V. (2023). English in education policy in Colombia: Two decades of policy discourse and appropriation. In N. Miranda, A. M. de Mejía, & S. V. Giraldo (Eds.), *Language Education in Multilingual Colombia* (pp 94-114). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003155263-10>
- Montoya, A., & Correa, D. (2024). Discriminatory practices against non-native English speaker teachers in Colombia's language centers: A multimodal study. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 26(1), 117–131. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v26n1.105427>
- Morales Topacio, K. N. (2015). Understanding the Dynamics of Language Centers in Non-School Setting. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 3(1), 147-172. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v3i1.7090>
- Nikpouya, E., & Zareian, G. (2024). Neoliberalism and the violation of students' rights: The case of English language education. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching*, 7(1), 206-213. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2024.7.1.3>
- Ortega, Y. (2023). Late capitalism and the commodification of English in Colombia: The shaping of language education policy and practice. In N. Miranda, A. M. de Mejía, & S. V. Giraldo (Eds.), *Language Education in Multilingual Colombia* (pp 131-149). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003155263-12>
- Ortega, Y. (2024). Symbolic annihilation: processes influencing English language policy and teaching practice. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 21(1), 63-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2023.2215361>
- Ortiz Ocaña, A., Arias, M. I., & Pedrozo Conedo, Z. E. (2018). *Decolonialidad de la educación: Emergencia/urgencia de una pedagogía decolonial*. Editorial Unimagdalena.

Ortiz Ocaña, A. (2024). *Pedagogías decoloniales. Decolonizar la educación, la enseñanza y el aprendizaje*. Ediciones de la U.

Pardo Abril, N. (2013). *Cómo hacer análisis crítico del discurso. Una perspectiva latinoamericana. 2a. edición*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Instituto de Estudios en Comunicación y Cultura (IECO).

Petrovic, J. E. & Yazan, B. (2021). Language as instrument, resource, and maybe capital, but not commodity: A Marxian clarification. In J. E. Petrovic & B. Yazan (Eds.), *The Commodification of Language Conceptual Concerns and Empirical Manifestations* (pp 24-40). Routledge.

Pulido-Tirado, G. (2009). Violencia epistémica y decolonización del conocimiento. *Sociocriticism*, 24, (1-2), 173-201.

Quintero, P. (2020). Notas sobre la teoría de la colonialidad del poder y la estructuración de la sociedad en América Latina. *Papeles De Trabajo. Centro De Estudios Interdisciplinarios En Etnolingüística Y Antropología Socio-Cultural*, (19), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.35305/revista.v0i19.122>

Quintero-Polo, A., Duarte-González, C., & León-Castro, A. (2022). Identity as a Source of Agency for Transformative English Language Teachers. *Educación y Humanismo*, 24(43), 110-128. <https://doi.org/10.17081/eduhum.24.43.5758>

Quintero González, J. A. (2022). *Delving into Colombian EL teachers' identities from their voices in neoliberal times: A narrative study* [Master's thesis, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas]. Repositorio Institucional Universidad Distrital - RIUD.
<https://repository.udistrital.edu.co/items/5781aabb-1451-4ad1-9357-def1743a6661>

- Ramírez Ospina, C. Y. (2015). *Why is the number of EFL teachers with no English teaching degree increasing in the profession? A critical study* [Master's thesis, Universidad de Antioquia]. Repositorio Institucional Universidad de Antioquia.
<https://bibliotecadigital.udea.edu.co/handle/10495/19365>
- Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española. (2025, July 01). *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas (DPD) [en línea], 2.ª edición (versión provisional): Personalizar*, <https://www.rae.es/dpd/personalizar>
- Rendón Alfonso, J. P. (2019). *Exploring EFL Teachers' Activity and Identity Construction through the Path of Private Institutional Policies* [Master's thesis, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas]. Repositorio Institucional Universidad Distrital - RIUD. <https://repository.udistrital.edu.co/items/2759f7e4-95bf-4a2f-88ff-cfbf121529d9>
- Roa Herrera, J. P. (2021). *Exploring In-service Teachers' Linguistic Identity Construction within ELT and Social Practices* [Master's thesis, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas]. Repositorio Institucional Universidad Distrital - RIUD.
<https://repository.udistrital.edu.co/items/140eb37c-0428-4067-a316-1b0742f512ad>
- Romero, G. (2022). The Neoliberal Blow to English Language Teaching: Deconstructing the Teacher Academy Program in Chile. In A. Jalalian Daghigh, J. Mohd Jan & S. Kaur (Eds.), *Neoliberalization of English Language Policy in the Global South* (pp 15-34). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92353-2_2
- Rubio-Cancino, E. M., & Martínez-Bohórquez, Y. M. (2023). Educational Policies in the Process of Language Teaching and Learning in Colombia: Challenges Emerging from the Implementation of Bilingual Plans in Bogotá. In C. H. Guerrero-Nieto (Ed.),

Unauthorized Outlooks on Second Languages Education and Policies (pp 35-54).

Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45051-8_10

Ruiz Gómez, L. J. (2021). *A critical discourse analysis of undergraduate public university*

students about COVID-19 pandemic. [Master's thesis, Universidad Pedagógica

Nacional]. Repositorio Institucional UPN. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12209/16476>.

Saavedra, F. (2024, August 23). *Cómo están de inglés los colombianos en comparación con*

los países de Latinoamérica: institución internacional reveló el ranking. Infobae.

<https://www.infobae.com/colombia/2024/08/23/nivel-de-ingles-en-colombia-no-es-bueno-en-comparacion-con-los-paises-de-latinoamerica/>

Savage, G. C. (2017). Neoliberalism, Education and Curriculum. In B. Gobby & R. Walker

(Eds.), *Powers of Curriculum: Sociological Perspectives on Education* (pp 143-165).

Oxford University Press.

Simpson, W. (2023). *Capital, Commodity, and English Language Teaching*. Routledge.

Sistema De Información de la Educación para el Trabajo y el Desarrollo Humano (SIET).

(n.d.) *Búsqueda de Programas de Formación para el Trabajo y el Desarrollo*

Humano. Retrieved September 27, 2024, from

<https://siet.mineduacion.gov.co/consultasiet/programa/index.jsp>

Soto-Molina, J. E., & Méndez, P. (2020). Linguistic Colonialism in the English Language

Textbooks of Multinational Publishing Houses. *HOW*, 27(1), 11–28.

<https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.1.521>

Statham, S. (2022). *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Practical Introduction to Power in*

Language. Routledge.

- Tavares, V. (2022). Exploring the Impact of Notions of Success based on Native-Speakerism, Individualism and Neoliberalism on ESL Students' Identities. In A. Jalalian Daghigh, J. Mohd Jan & S. Kaur (Eds.), *Neoliberalization of English Language Policy in the Global South* (pp 153-173). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92353-2_10
- Tannenbaum, M., & Shohamy, E. (2023). *Developing Multilingual Education Policies: Theory, Research, Practice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003107415>
- Themelis, S. (2021a). Introduction. In S. Themelis (Ed.), *Critical Reflections on the Language of Neoliberalism in Education: Dangerous Words and Discourses of Possibility* (pp.1-8), Routledge.
- Themelis, S. (2021b). Neoliberal Globalization. In S. Themelis (Ed.), *Critical Reflections on the Language of Neoliberalism in Education: Dangerous Words and Discourses of Possibility* (pp.20-27), Routledge.
- Thompson, J. B.(1984). *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. University of California Press.
- Tight, M. (2013). Students: Customers, Clients or Pawns? *High Educ Policy*, 26, 291-307. <https://doi.org/10.1057/hep.2013.2>
- Torres, J. (2007). *Educación en tiempos de neoliberalismo*. Ediciones Morata.
- Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. (n,d.-a). *Licenciatura en Español y Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés y Francés*. Retrieved October 2, 2024, from <https://humanidades.upn.edu.co/licenciatura-en-espanol-y-lenguas-extranjeras-con-enfasis-en-ingles-y-frances/>
- Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. (n,d.-b). *Maestría en Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras*. Retrieved October 3, 2024, from <https://humanidades.upn.edu.co/departamento-de-lenguas/maestria-en-ensenanza-de-lenguas-extranjeras/>

- Useche Arévalo, A. J. (2002). Neoliberalismo, Educación y Desarrollo Económico en Colombia. *Civilizar*, 2(2), 73–106. <https://doi.org/10.22518/16578953.862>
- Usó-Juan, E. & Martínez-Flor, A. (2006). Approaches to language learning and teaching: Towards acquiring communicative competence through the four skills. In E. Usó-Juan & A. Martínez-Flor (Ed.), *Current Trends in the Development and Teaching of the four Language Skills* (pp. 3-28). De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110197778.1.3>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1996). Ideological Discourse Analysis. *MOARA – Revista Eletrônica do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras*, (06), 13-45. <https://periodicos.ufpa.br/index.php/moara/article/view/2896>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, H.E. Hamilton & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed.) (pp. 466-485). Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118584194.ch22>
- Vasylieva, L. (2021). *Anonymisation and pseudonymisation of textual documents* [Master's thesis, University of Oslo]. University of Oslo Library. <https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/87968>
- Viveros Vigoya, M. (2016). Blanqueamiento social, nación y moralidad en América Latina. In S. Messeder, M. G. Castro, & L. Moutinho (Eds.), *Enlaçando sexualidades: uma tessitura interdisciplinar no reino das sexualidades e das relações de gênero* (pp. 17-39) EDUFBA. <https://doi.org/10.7476/9788523218669.0002>.
- Warriner, D.S. (2017). The Politics of English Language Teaching. In T. L. McCarty & S. May (Eds.), *Language Policy and Political Issues in Education. Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (pp 199-210). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02344-1_16

Winn, J. (2021). Commodity. In S. Themelis (Ed.), *Critical Reflections on the Language of Neoliberalism in Education: Dangerous Words and Discourses of Possibility* (pp.54-61), Routledge.

Zárate Pérez, A. (2014). Interculturalidad y decolonialidad. *Tabula Rasa*, (20), 91-107. [DOI: https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.172](https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.172)