The Conception of Student-Teachers and the Pedagogical Practicum in the Colombian ELT Field

Concepción del docente de lengua en formación y la práctica pedagógica en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés en Colombia

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This article provides an overview of how student-teachers and the pedagogical practicum are conceived in the Colombian English language teaching field. The study reviewed 72 articles in three levels of analysis: extraction of corresponding knowledge, epistemic review, and concatenation of emergent insights. The analysis reveals that student-teachers are conceived as subjects with principles, values, beliefs, responsibilities, and knowledge. Meanwhile, the pedagogical practicum is an academic space, process, and experience constituted by purposes, practical knowledge, and building relationships. This literature review mainly contributes to the field as an invitation to continue revising the foundations of the pedagogical practicum and the kind of student-teachers that this space may develop.

Keywords: English language teaching, epistemic review, language teachers, pedagogical practicum, student-teachers

Este artículo se enfoca en la concepción que académicos colombianos tienen sobre los docentes en formación y la práctica pedagógica en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés en Colombia. Se revisaron 72 artículos en tres niveles de análisis: (a) extracción y (b) revisión epistémica del conocimiento correspondiente y (c) concatenación de los resultados. Se encontró que a los docentes en formación se los concibe como sujetos con principios, valores, creencias, responsabilidades y conocimientos. Por su parte, la práctica pedagógica se entiende como un espacio académico, un proceso y una experiencia constituida por propósitos, saberes prácticos y construcción de relaciones. Esta revisión contribuye al campo como una invitación a continuar revisando los fundamentos de la práctica pedagógica y el tipo de docentes en formación que este espacio busca formar.

Palabras clave: docentes en formación, enseñanza del inglés, práctica pedagógica, profesores de idiomas, revisión epistémica

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Introduction

This literature review presents an overview of Colombian scholars' conception of student-teachers[1] and the pedagogical practicum (the practicum, henceforth) in English language teaching (ELT). In Colombia, authors such as Dávila (2021), Fandiño-Parra (2022), Garzón-Duarte (2020), Gómez-Vásquez and Guerrero-Nieto (2018), Méndez-Rivera (2018), and Méndez-Rivera et al. (2019) regard English language teachers as constituted[2] in distinctive ways by the expected practices, behaviors, and attitudes encountered in language policies, curricula, and institutional and academic discourses. These studies initially unveil how English teachers seem to be framed chiefly by instrumental, technical, or standardized discourses and practices of teaching and to be regarded as holding Western values. English teachers eventually practice distinctive teaching skills and, by so doing, reflect on what type of English teachers they are.

Other local studies have initially shown that student-teachers seem to be embodied practitioners with knowledge, beliefs, emotions, attitudes, interests, and roles (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Carvajal & Duarte-Medina, 2020; Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Lucero & Cortés-Ibañez, 2021; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Olaya & Gómez-Rodríguez, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017). Even though these studies serve as initial references to understand how student-teachers are conceived in the local ELT field, a deeper exploration of how the Colombian scholarship sees both student-teachers and the practicum within ELT undergraduate programs is necessary. Knowing how scholars understand student-teachers and the practicum gives an idea of the kind of teachers-to-be that these programs educate and that society will receive as part of the future of language education in the country.

Awareness of this state of knowledge is also relevant to fostering dialogue among the local community members (e.g., directors, coordinators, teacher-educators, practicum advisors, student-teachers, researchers, and institutions or organizations). The dialogues should make the community constantly rethink the practicum from more situated perspectives that allow, on the one hand, to determine the pre-established demands that set it aside from several in-context realities and, on the other, to regard student-teachers beyond established discourses of what they must be and do. As experienced teacher-educators, practicum advisors, and researchers about practicum matters, the authors inquired about the local foundations of the practicum and student-teachers within the local ELT. We constantly search to (re)create spaces where teachers-to-be can construct themselves as teachers for new generations and ever-changing contexts. This reflection comes from different gaps among practicum advisors' and student-teachers' expectations and practices, practicum configurations, and educational context realities.

For our review, we used the epistemic discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2013), which implies a systematic analysis of how knowledge is "managed (activated, expressed, presupposed, implied, conveyed, construed, etc.) in the structures and strategies of text and talk" (van Dijk, 2013, p. 497). By exploring worldwide scientific databases of education research,[3] we found local and global indexed journals containing published research articles about the practicum and student-teachers during this stage in Colombia. National scholars specifically wrote the articles in the 2000–2022 period.[4] We ended

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1   We pin the term "student-teachers" to account for the varied views of self-awareness, constructed thoughts, knowledge, values, feelings, dispositions, and behaviors that teachers-to-be may hold (Lucero & Cortés-Ibañez, 2021). This term looks to cover more aspects of the self than the term "preservice teachers" which customarily seems to focus more on student-teachers as just being trained for teaching.

2   We understand a constitution as a state of becoming whereby an individual progressively aggregates new knowledge and experiences.

3   We explored the Scopus, WoS, Redalyc, Latindex, Dialnet, and SciELO databases using a search formula with the keywords "pedagogical practicum/practice/training" and "pre-service/student teachers" or "teachers to be," all of them in Colombian literature.

4   We filtered the search to this period since the national regulations for the practicum have majorly happened during these years.

up with 72 articles that were submitted to a three-stage analysis:

1. Extracting samples of what the authors say about (a) what the practicum implies (its processes, procedures, stages, etc.) and (b) what English student-teachers are or do in that stage.
2. An epistemic review that inquired about (a) how student-teachers and the practicum are conceived, (b) what knowledge is portrayed in those conceptions, (c) who says that knowledge and from what position, and (d) what implications are verbalized.
3. A concatenation of insights about the analyses extracted in the two previous stages: At this stage, we explored the knowledge of how student-teachers and the practicum are conceived and the implications and prospects of this knowledge.

We present this literature review around four main insights: how the Colombian ELT scholarship conceives (a) student-teachers and (b) the practicum, (c) the role of student-teachers during the practicum, and (d) the implications of these understandings for the local ELT community.

Student-Teachers in the Colombian ELT Scholarship

Based on the reviewed literature, student-teachers are envisioned as subjects with principles, values, convictions, and their own beliefs and conceptions about teaching (Díaz-Quero, 2006). They are also defined as subjects able to analyze, reflect, solve problems, make decisions in the school contexts, be aware of different realities, and transform them through determined actions (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Durán-Narváez et al., 2017; Méndez-Rivera et al., 2019). Cote-Parra (2012) complements these understandings by claiming that student-teachers must regularly reflect on their teaching performance. This reflection seeks to "draw conclusions that allow them to redirect their future actions or implement

necessary changes" (p. 30) in their teaching practices since they are becoming teachers. Along with this process, Pinzón-Capador and Guerrero-Nieto (2018) and Ramos-Holguín (2013) consider that student-teachers begin to understand their job as teachers and may become independent decision-makers when reflection is core in their education.

Another perspective on this issue is the one offered by Rodríguez (2013) and Ubaque-Casallas and Aguirre-Garzón (2020) when they affirm that student-teachers are always in the process of developing their identity as educators during their major. Their identities are constantly shaped by their past experiences and re-shaped throughout the practicum in combination with the "newly acquired knowledge and experiences in their teacher preparation programs" (Rodríguez, 2013, p. 18). This means this process is not static, and their identities are constantly constructed. Those experiences strongly determine their motivations, attitudes, and engagement toward the teaching field (Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015).

Student-teachers are also defined based on the responsibilities or roles they are supposed to assume while teaching English. According to the articles analyzed, those roles are mainly related to language proficiency, their knowledge of world issues, how they are effective teachers, and the development of critical thinking inside the classroom. In line with Fandiño-Parra (2013) and Fajardo-Mora (2013), they must be bilingual teachers who need access to a wide range of information, which keeps them updated to analyze social, political, economic, or religious phenomena worldwide. To complement this conception, student-teachers should also have specific knowledge that can be grouped into teaching methods and theories, language knowledge and proficiency, the social dimension of the context where they teach, and being critical towards policies and foreign teaching models.

Teaching methods and theories are one of the main types of knowledge mentioned by the authors.

Fandiño-Parra (2013), García-Chamorro et al. (2020), and Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (2013) consider that student-teachers not only need to have a good English proficiency level to teach future generations but also be knowledgeable about teaching methods and theories and sensitive to sociocultural dimensions since they need to be qualified to teach in a globalized world. Cárdenas and Suárez-Osorio (2009) remark that teacher education programs should emphasize language training so that student-teachers can be accurate and proficient in the foreign language.

Regarding knowledge of the sociocultural dimensions of the context where student-teachers teach, Aguirre-Morales and Ramos-Holguín (2011) claim that student-teachers need to comprehend the social dimensions of the practicum context (for instance, how the community relates to one another, how tasks are done, and how responsibilities are assumed) since they may find a mixture of realities in their classrooms, with students coming from different backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, and religious beliefs. In their practicum, they might consider these aspects to face those realities as future teachers.

Concerning being critical of policies and foreign teaching models, Camargo-Cely (2018) and Fajardo-Mora (2013) explain the need to reflect and take a critical stance regarding the adoption of language policies and foreign teaching models. Student-teachers are recommended not only to acquire knowledge about these aspects but also to develop a critical position to have a more active role during the practicum. Student-teachers should know the implications of designing bilingual curricula to account for teachers' professional development and enact social transformations when faced with this task.

In brief, in agreement with García-Chamorro et al. (2020), the knowledge that student-teachers should have can be: (a) technical, which reflects disciplinary knowledge and methodological, contextualized, or reflective practices; (b) sociocultural, which implies relating with others and their contexts; and (c) personal, which involves teaching ethics, responsibilities, and competencies framed in a particular context. All this can be put into practice during the practicum by including the learners' interests and needs (e.g., social, linguistic) in the lessons and by considering the sociocultural factors that have a bearing on classroom practices.

The Practicum in the Colombian ELT Scholarship

In general terms, the practicum is conceived as the "teaching practice" that is a subcomponent or curricular area of the professional training of a bachelor's degree (Chaves-Varón, 2008; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). The practicum is the teaching work that student-teachers perform in different contexts (Díaz-Quero, 2006). It is mainly constituted by (a) teachers (which include, at least, student-teachers proper, their supervisors/advisors, and the cooperating or homeroom teachers), (b) the curriculum, (c) the learners, (d) the teaching process, and (e) the context.

Based on the reviewed articles, the practicum can be condensed into three main views. Firstly, it is a "space" where knowledge, subjects, institutions, teaching procedures, feelings, beliefs, and experiences about teaching a language are enacted (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Fandiño-Parra, 2022; Lucero, 2016). From this view, it is a requisite for student-teachers to demonstrate how they see themselves as teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019). Secondly, the practicum is not only a process for student-teachers to develop the knowledge and teaching skills that they have acquired throughout their major (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Chaves-Varón, 2008; Esteban-Núñez, 2021) but also a process to gain research experience by implementing a small-scale research project (Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Fandiño-Parra, 2013; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). Thirdly, the practicum is an experience to learn about how to be a teacher in real situations and contexts and from their practicum advisors' or cooperating teachers'

advice (Cote-Parra, 2012; Esteve, 1998; Lucero & Cortés-Ibañez, 2021). For these three views, the practicum represents the practical knowledge generated by student-teachers because of their everyday experimentation and continuous reflection inside and outside the classroom. This knowledge comes to life via student-teachers' discourses about their sense of identification, purpose, and agency with the teaching profession in the everyday duties in practicum contexts (Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Sarasa, 2017) and via critical reflections on what was appropriate or not after teaching each lesson (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2011; Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014).

Regardless of the way, the practicum offers moments to promote student-teachers' critical reflection on others and their teaching practices and positively influence their beliefs. The reflection is based not only on the structural aspects of the English language and its teaching methodologies (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2011; Barros del Río, 2019; Garzón-Duarte, 2020; Samacá-Bohórquez, 2012) but also on stated principles of communication as a social practice (Muñoz-Julio & Ramírez-Contreras, 2018). That reflection can happen pre-, while, or post-teaching experiences, but always aiming to incorporate changes and improve student-teachers' practices to make English teaching and learning easier (Cote-Parra, 2012; Fandiño-Parra, 2011; Gamboa-González & Herrera-Mateus, 2021). Thus, there is a connection between reflection and critical theories or pedagogies. These Colombian authors prompt this connection with reflection activities done in an oral, written, or dialogic form. Through these activities, student-teachers are expected to start rethinking education to reach social transformation. As not all practices generate reflective processes—as Camargo-Cely (2018) and Esteve (1998) acknowledge—promoting models for reflective learning and practices should be paramount during the practicum, for example, on the bilingualism phenomenon and decision-making processes in the classroom.

The influence in student-teachers' system of beliefs usually occurs through the (self-)discovery of three facts. For the first, Gamboa-González and Herrera-Mateus (2021), Herrera-Mateus et al. (2021), Londoño-Orozco (2009), and Montoya-López et al. (2020) affirm that student-teachers' system of beliefs is influenced by the implementation, successful or not, of different teaching strategies, activities, and methods for English learning. The second is when they become aware of the roles to perform from the curricular/pedagogical demands of planning communicative and interactional lessons as well as being innovative and transformative (Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016; Fajardo, 2013; Muñoz-Julio & Ramírez-Contreras, 2018; Quintero-Polo, 2016; Rodríguez, 2013; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020). The third fact is about an awareness of the realities of ELT in Colombia. Barón-Pereira and Rojas-Espitia (2014), Giraldo and Murcia-Quintero (2018), Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019), and Méndez-Rivera et al. (2019) state that those realities are about language teaching and assessment methodologies and the different types of learners and contexts. These facts result in rediscovering student-teachers' teaching-learning practices and knowledge, demonstrating that the practicum strongly influences their beliefs. They connect their beliefs, knowledge, and experiences to construct new knowledge and improve ELT realities (Cárdenas & Suárez-Osorio, 2009).

Furthermore, the practicum fosters the formation of values and relationships. Cárdenas and Suárez-Osorio (2009) and Esteban-Núñez (2021) highlight how student-teachers embody the development of professional values through real teaching experiences in which they complete pedagogical tasks, commitments, and responsibilities of homeroom or cooperating teachers. As Cárdenas and Suárez-Osorio (2009), Chaves-Varón (2008), and Herrera-Mateus et al. (2021) state, the teaching experiences afforded by the practicum are one further step in student-teachers' professional development, even though such experiences may

come into conflict with their previous beliefs. When this is the case, Muñoz-Julio and Ramírez-Contreras (2018) propose transactional strategies (preparing or reviewing, modeling and eliciting, practicing and reviewing). Equally, Giraldo and Murcia-Quintero (2019) propose using contextualized lesson plans and rubrics for a more knowledgeable, objective, fair, and capable combination of theory and practice of language teaching and assessment.

Building relationships is also possible during the practicum. As teaching is a social practice by nature, ongoing supportive relationships influence student-teachers' interactions and sense of affiliation (Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Pinzón-Capador & Guerrero-Nieto, 2018). The relationships between student-teachers and practicum advisors, cooperating teachers, homeroom teachers, and other members of the practicum community lead to unique reflection moments that are little considered in the language teaching theory (Samacá-Bohórquez, 2020). They also connect the practicum and student-teachers' sense of affiliation with the teaching context, even with the profession itself. Viáfara-González (2014) extends the relationship-building to research experiences from the practicum. As student-teachers are constantly surrounded by activities such as conducting surveys, listening to reports, or keeping a journal, the relationship with research may contribute to their pedagogical skills, making them more competent when solving problems, implementing strategies, and reflecting.

To sum up, the practicum in Colombian ELT education is considered a three-fold moment for student-teachers: an academic space, a process, and an experience. Regardless of the view, the practicum is always a subcomponent or curricular subject of professional training within an EFL bachelor's degree. From this view, the practicum serves three primary purposes: (a) to develop teaching knowledge and skills by learning about how to be a teacher in real situations and contexts, (b) to promote critical reflection on others and own teaching practices, and (c) to influence student-teachers' system of beliefs positively. Other objectives involve acquiring research experience and implementing teaching approaches, methodologies, and procedures. The practicum is also the time for generating practical knowledge, building relationships, and creating a sense of identification, purpose, and agency with the teaching profession. Feelings, emotions, and teacher roles are also considered practicum constituents.

Student-Teachers in the Colombian ELT Practicum

According to the reviewed literature, student-teachers should fulfill a series of demands during the practicum. Those demands, which constitute a state of becoming for student-teachers, can be grouped into three main categories: language teaching performance, reflection on it, and the knowledge student-teachers should hold or construct throughout the practicum.

Language teaching performance seems to be the most prominent kind of demand. According to Castañeda-Trujillo (2021), Quintero-Polo (2016), and Ramos-Holguín (2013), student-teachers are required to focus more on the social or cultural issues rather than on only linguistic aspects of the English language. During their practicum, student-teachers tend to focus on English grammatical aspects rather than exploring the use of this language for communication tasks. However, as Cárdenas and Suárez-Osorio (2009) explain, this focus may change as teaching experience is gained throughout lesson deliveries in the practicum contexts. Fajardo-Mora (2013) places this responsibility in the ELT undergraduate programs. For student-teachers to teach English from a social perspective, the programs, mainly during the practicum, must make them steadily develop strategies and skills of language teaching, assessment, and material design.

Eventually, cultural knowledge will also be relevant for student-teachers in their language-teaching

performance during the practicum. Viáfara-González (2016) considers that student-teachers must constantly work on the improvement of their English proficiency and cultural knowledge, while Granados-Beltrán (2016), Olaya and Gómez-Rodríguez (2013), and Ramos-Holguín et al. (2019) believe that student-teachers must also know about varied cultural aspects attached to English. Thus, as Carvajal and Duarte-Medina (2020) affirm, student-teachers can reach effective, creative, and innovative teaching if their English proficiency and respective cultural knowledge are high. This condition will benefit learners' classroom behaviors and attitudes and account for their interests, needs, and learning processes (Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Nieto-Gómez, 2018).

Another set of demands has to do with reflection on teaching experiences, as this allows student-teachers to become critical language teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Cote-Parra, 2012; Fandiño-Parra, 2011). This demand can be accomplished through research, which is an unavoidable endeavor in the teaching profession (Barón-Pereira & Rojas-Espitia, 2014; Córdoba-Zúñiga et al., 2021; Díaz-Quero, 2006; Londoño-Orozco, 2009). The reviewed articles mention several paramount issues that student-teachers should investigate during the practicum; for instance, that reflection or research should be primarily on student-teachers' own beliefs and conceptions regarding language, teaching, learning, and assessment (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; García-Chamorro et al., 2020; Giraldo & Murcia-Quintero, 2019; Tapia-Carlín, 2014; Viáfara-González, 2014). Other authors (e.g., Garzón-Duarte & Posada-Ortíz, 2020; Rodríguez, 2013; Sarasa, 2016) suggest that student-teachers should study their identity construction so that they can recognize what type of teachers they become during the practicum. Along the same line, Chacón-Vargas and Prada-Ramírez (2015) and Montoya-López et al. (2020) suggest that research should be on the roles and tasks that language policies, curricula and the academic community demand from student-teachers (mostly about how to teach and how to be language teachers).

Meanwhile, Durán-Narváez et al. (2017) suggest that any study should concentrate on student-teachers' relationship and affiliation with the practicum community and on their expectations, values, and convictions so that they accommodate themselves better during the practicum. In short, as Fandiño-Parra (2013) states, either reflection or research on any of these issues may conduce student-teachers to construct a solid practice and knowledge base about language teaching or, as McNulty (2010) confirms, to overcome their lack of knowledge, experience, and preparation about language and language teaching.

A third demand is that student-teachers must know about various aspects of ELT and being a teacher. Among all the pieces of knowledge, the curriculum and the sociocultural dimension of the teaching context are the most comprehensive (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2011; Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Esteban-Nuñez, 2021; Lastra et al., 2018; Méndez-Rivera et al., 2019; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). Thus, student-teachers should know about the practicum community (the school, homeroom or cooperating teachers, etc.), its practices (institutional project, normativity, classroom rules, disciplinary procedures, etc.), and even its beliefs (the "obvious" actions of teaching, assessment, and reacting with disruptive behaviors).

Language didactics can also be considered part of this type of knowledge. Student-teachers should (already) know about material design and language teaching methods, approaches, theories, techniques, strategies, values, competencies, and assessment (Fajardo, 2013; Giraldo & Murcia-Quintero, 2018; Lucero & Cortés-Ibáñez, 2021; Pinzón-Capador & Guerrero-Nieto, 2018; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017). Consistent with this line of thought, Castañeda-Trujillo et al. (2022) affirm that student-teachers demonstrate their language didactics in preparing themselves or studying to be

language teachers and planning and delivering language lessons. Regarding the latter, Castañeda-Trujillo (2021), Sarasa (2017), and Ubaque-Casallas and Aguirre-Garzón (2020) assert that student-teachers demonstrate lesson planning and delivery in their teaching performance in the classroom with elements such as the roles they assume, the methodologies they implement, the materials they design, the classroom atmosphere they create, and the teaching strategies they employ (even for in-situ decisions and problem-solving acts). The other side of the coin is how lesson planning and delivery involve the learners as their class performance demonstrates how student-teachers connect lesson planning with the context and the learners' needs and interests (Chavarría & Correa, 2021; Macías & Sánchez, 2015; Viáfara-González, 2005; Viáfara-González & Pachón-Achuri, 2021).

Critical thinking and teaching methodologies are the other two demanded topics about ELT and being a teacher. Knowing what critical thinking is and how to develop and exercise it creates reflective future teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019; Castro-Garcés, 2021; Gamboa-González & Herrera-Mateus, 2021; Gutiérrez, 2015; Posada-Ortíz & Garzón-Duarte, 2013). Camargo-Cely (2018) and Granados-Beltrán (2016) additionally emphasize how student-teachers' levels of reflection may cause them to transform their current and future teaching performance. Concerning teaching methodologies, knowledge of them makes student-teachers predict or take on the tasks and difficulties posed by the practicum context with more motivation, agency, or engagement (Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Garzón-Duarte, 2020; Samacá-Bohórquez, 2012).

In sum, we can conclude that student-teachers in the Colombian ELT practicum are understood from a series of demands they should address. Those demands mainly refer to aspects of language teaching performance and reflection. Teaching performance progressively allows student-teachers to improve as language teachers during the practicum, and the reflection on that performance is vital for them to become knowledgeable and critical agents. Both teaching performance and reflection are evident in their English proficiency and how they didactically approach teaching the language and its cultural aspects.

Implications

In this section, we present the significance of the abovementioned understandings, perspectives, and demands and their relevance in the corresponding line of thought of the scholarship about student-teachers and the practicum in the Colombian ELT field.

To start, we highlight that, in the reviewed literature, the practicum is an academic space, process, experience, and teaching practice. Among these, the tendency is to see it as an academic space composed of must-be and must-do knowledge and tasks for student-teachers. In this sense, the practicum is not only contributory but also additive. In consonance with Lucero and Cortés-Ibañez (2021), the practicum becomes contributory when, while teaching, student-teachers consolidate their previous pedagogical learning through selected texts, experiences in context, and the guidance of practicum advisors or cooperating teachers. On the other hand, the practicum becomes additive when there is a continuous addition of aspects of English teaching and being a teacher that student-teachers must incorporate into their teaching practices. Nonetheless, previous studies state that the practicum can go beyond such considerations (e.g., Cárdenas & Suárez-Osorio, 2009; Castro-Garcés, 2021; Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Gamboa-González & Hernández-Ochoa, 2022; Gamboa-González & Herrera-Mateus, 2021; Herrera-Mateus et al., 2021; Lucero, 2016; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Sarasa, 2017). Thus, the practicum should also be seen as a dynamic process whereby, in a context-based situation, student-teachers gain knowledge and put it into practice. It implies a constant reconstruction of student-teachers' lives and all the practicum participants in context.

Thus, the practicum offers opportunities to go beyond its participants' expected roles and duties. Our epistemic review reveals that student-teachers are commonly expected to put into practice didactic forms of English teaching, which are usually based on foreign macro discourses and practices but not much on the realities of each context. Castellanos-Jaimes (2013) and Nieto-Gómez (2018) suggest that, for the Colombian ELT scholarship, the practicum should provide more opportunities for student-teachers to reflect, gain insight, and have a voice on their practicum experiences and performance, the multiple complexities of being teachers and feeling engaged with the profession in multiple contexts.

All of this connects with how local authors understand student-teachers. One understanding resides in the meaningful experiences that the practicum community can offer to student-teachers during and after the practicum (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Giraldo & Murcia-Quintero, 2019; Viáfara-González & Pachón-Achuri, 2021). This understanding sees student-teachers as subjects that receive opportunities to have initial experiences in teaching and that hold a set of beliefs and practices about language teaching, learning, and assessment as well as about learning to teach and its related issues (e.g., motivation, autonomy, engagement, and internal/external factors).

Another implication is that the constitution of student-teachers may reconfigure the educational community and its pedagogical discourses and curricular projects. Such reconfiguration should look for new ways of knowing, being, and doing that goes from the formation of a fixed and predetermined language teacher to the education of a reflective, inquisitive, and forward-thinking teacher (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2011; Fandiño-Parra, 2022; Méndez-Rivera et al., 2019). Not only can student-teachers' identities, positions, knowledge, and actions be part of this endeavor, but also their contradictions, wounds, fears, and resentments.

To that end, student-teachers can then become producers of pedagogical knowledge. Student-teachers can be endorsed with roles other than being English teachers by becoming more participative in organizing practicum contexts. By enacting other roles such as organizers, supervisors, decision-makers, and agents of transformation, student-teachers can uncover their (language) teaching beliefs, practices, skills, weaknesses, knowledge,[5] and potential. Achieving these aspects requires that student-teachers become more conscious of what they do as teachers and of the reasons behind their actions (Chaves-Varón, 2008; Rodríguez, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017). Such awareness must be based on reflecting and analyzing teaching methodologies, the approaches implemented, and the assumptions that support them. Since student-teachers' progressive pedagogical and experiential knowledge indeed constitutes one relevant dimension of teacher education, they should reflect on their experiences (Gamboa-González & Herrera-Mateus, 2021; Olaya & Gómez-Rodríguez, 2013) and "question their realities by debating critical topics and developing real-world projects that move them outside the classroom setting" (Samacá-Bohórquez, 2012, p. 197).

Practicum advisors are critical companions in student-teachers' professional development and in helping them augment their knowledge (Bonilla-Medina & Samacá-Bohórquez, 2020; Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016; Chaves-Varón, 2008; Méndez-Rivera et al., 2019; Montoya-López et al., 2020; Viáfara-González, 2005). Practicum advisors should be good listeners who fuel conversations via comments or questions and understand that difficulties are part of the learning-to-teach process. They should respect the student-teachers'

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5   We recognize that knowledge comprises multiple types (e.g., pedagogical, disciplinary, content, experiential) created in context from individual views, experiences, beliefs, feelings, emotions, conceptions, and so on (Castañeda-Londoño, 2021).

system of beliefs, which seems to be the biggest constraint to keeping them from engaging in reflective practices. Advisors should also implement more active, varied, and context-situated exercises to prepare student-teachers. Most importantly, they should concentrate on student-teachers' academic and emotional needs and the working conditions in different contexts. As we can see, the practicum advisors" role is paramount as they have an advantageous position to establish relations among student-teachers, practicum contexts, and the curriculum.

Local authors give Colombian ELT undergraduate programs several suggestions. One suggestion is to provide opportunities for student-teachers to analyze their beliefs on the practice of teaching (as both a temporal and spatial system), the global and local ELT field, language assessment, experiential and emotional factors, and professional development (Fandiño-Parra, 2011, 2022; Giraldo & Murcia-Quintero, 2018; Londoño-Orozco, 2009; Lucero & Cortés-Ibáñez, 2021). Other suggestions include the implementation of different types of inquiry about language pedagogy, strengthening professional-based focus in student-teachers, including funds of knowledge provided by the practicum community, and exploring and confronting language teaching ideologies (Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguín, 2011; Barros del Río, 2019; Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019; Frodden & Cardona, 2001; McNulty, 2010; Sarasa, 2017).

Altogether, local authors advise an approach for the practicum based more on the contexts, realities, experiences, and future development of the practicum communities rather than on pre-established macro discourses and practices of English teaching. Although we agree on this premise, the implications of this vision seem to be a David-and-Goliath matter. In a national model that has favored Global-North visions—politically and in practice—a situated, reflective, and autonomy-fostering approach for the practicum has just started to put the English teaching establishment at risk. Despite all the local efforts thus far, the social beliefs of English

teaching, learning, and assessment are still impregnated in people's minds as technical, instrumental, and standardized; the gap between Colombian scholarship and language policymakers is still enormous; and the acknowledgment of Colombian scholarship about ELT is just blossoming.

Against this backdrop, the claim is to unveil how our ELT field has been historically and epistemologically conceptualized and exercised so that we, as a community, can unlearn imposed narratives and practices. This consciousness should open spaces for dynamic, built-in, and located language pedagogies with the strength and prominence to reach the educational and political levels. Thus, dismantling more than a half-century series of language policies, commercial agreements, social beliefs, language ideologies, and educational practices in the Colombian ELT field demands vigorous and collegial governmental, sociocultural, and academic efforts. An approach for the practicum in the local ELT with these premises seems to be a starting point to challenge the established system that has normalized and instrumentalized language teachers governmentally, epistemologically, and academically.

However, the idea of opening even more spaces for reflection and guidance on English education during the practicum can foster other possibilities of thought and autonomy for student-teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo et al., 2022; Garzón-Duarte & Posada-Ortiz, 2020; Quintero-Polo, 2016). Colombian ELT undergraduate programs should then evaluate how they provide student-teachers with professional development, majorly in those topics with a tremendous foundation on foreign macro-narratives, such as multiliteracies, interculturality, language use, theories, and teaching skills. As Castañeda-Trujillo (2021), Fajardo (2013), and García-Chamorro et al. (2022) suggest, to have a more integrated practicum, these programs should urgently start looking into the in-context realities of the English classrooms at all levels (school, university, and language centers) and listening to student-teachers' experiences.

These concerns should also be addressed at the practicum institutions and academic programs. Once they notice the current ELT panorama, they also ought to consider improving the organization of the professional development of student-teachers (Chaves-Varón, 2008). For instance, ELT undergraduate programs should evaluate how student-teachers use conventional approaches and theories (Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020). Learning how to teach languages should result from combining theory with pedagogical knowledge and practices derived from the practicum experiences (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2021). Then, there is an invitation for academic undergraduate programs to create short and long-term plans to improve the practicum, particularly on teaching performances, responsibilities, problem resolution, respect for peers, collaborative work, and research (García-Chamorro et al., 2020; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020). From this viewpoint, the practicum should transcend a curricular subject with pre-established and sequenced contents and demands. As previously stated, it should also be a dynamic process of knowledge and practices in which student-teachers relate themselves collaboratively and reflectively to settle down the essence of the profession in our contexts and communities (Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Lucero & Cortés-Ibañez, 2021; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Pinzón-Capador & Guerrero-Nieto, 2018).

Conclusions

The Colombian scholars' conception of student-teachers and the practicum in the local ELT field concisely unveils that student-teachers are subjects expected to reflect on their nascent teaching experiences, always in the process of developing their identity as educators, having knowledge, roles, and responsibilities, and needing to be critical individuals. The practicum is an academic space, process, and experience, but it is always a curricular subject of an EFL undergraduate program. It sustains several purposes for generating practical knowledge. Correspondingly, the practicum requires

that student-teachers perform a series of demands (must-be and must-do) around language teaching, reflection, and knowledge construction.

By putting these understandings together, we suggest that the practicum should be a dynamic process of knowledge and practices when educating student-teachers within the practicum community. We are congruent with the Colombian scholarship when they suggest that the practicum should offer opportunities for student-teachers to go beyond established roles and duties, promote reflection, gain insights, and have a voice in their practicum experiences and performance. The invitation is two-fold: first, to continue the study of the set of beliefs and practices of a practicum community regarding language teaching, learning, and assessment, and its dissemination; then, from this one, for academic undergraduate programs to create more plans to improve teaching performance, responsibilities, problem resolution, respect for peers, collaborative work, and research during the practicum. These invitations point toward a reconfiguration of the educational community, its pedagogical discourses, curricular projects, and student-teachers' perspective as producers of pedagogical knowledge in and outside the classroom setting.

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