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## **Pedagogical Practicum and Student-Teachers Discursively Conceived in an ELT Undergraduate Program**

**Práctica pedagógica y docentes en formación concebidos discursivamente  
en un programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del inglés**

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The research study shows how pedagogical practicum is conceived, and how student-teachers are constructed as language teachers, within the discourses spoken in the initial meetings and institutional documents of pedagogical practicum in an English language teaching undergraduate program in Bogotá, Colombia. The discourses were analyzed under the principles of ethnography of communication and linguistic ethnography. This study affords insights into a contributory conception of pedagogical practicum and into an institutional image and a teacher's figure of student-teachers. Pedagogical practicum contains several academic, professional, and experiential aspects that configure this space with established (pre-) requisites, tasks, and roles for student-teachers; these aspects in turn start constructing these individuals with particular manners of must-be and must-do.


*Keywords:* discourse, initial teacher education, pedagogical practicum

El presente estudio muestra cómo la práctica pedagógica se concibe y cómo los docentes en formación se construyen como docentes de idiomas, en los discursos dichos en las reuniones iniciales y en los documentos institucionales de ese espacio, en un programa de pregrado en la enseñanza del inglés en Bogotá, Colombia. Los discursos se analizaron siguiendo los principios de la etnografía de la comunicación y la etnografía lingüística. El estudio presenta como resultado una concepción contributiva de la práctica pedagógica y una imagen institucional con una figura de profesor para los docentes en formación. La práctica pedagógica contiene diferentes aspectos académicos, profesionales y experienciales que configuran este espacio con (pre)requisitos, tareas y roles para los docentes en formación; estos aspectos a su vez empiezan a construir a estos individuos con unas maneras particulares de deber-ser y deber-hacer.

*Palabras clave:* discurso, formación inicial docente, práctica pedagógica

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## Introduction

This study corresponds to the second stage of a wider research project that seeks to display how pedagogical practicum (only “practicum” henceforth) serves as a subject to nurture preservice teachers in English language teaching (ELT) undergraduate programs in Colombia.<sup>1</sup> The first stage of this project showed valuable insights from mentor teachers (Lucero, 2015) and preservice teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019) about the way they lived the practicum in an ELT undergraduate program in Colombia. These insights have led us, now as a research group, to explore the discourses that take place in the communicative events of practicum in varied ELT undergraduate programs in the country. Knowledge about this matter can elucidate how English student-teachers are educated during practicum in our country.

With this second stage, we commit now to offer an understanding about the way practicum is conceived, and the way student-teachers are constructed in the communicative events occurring in this space in ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia. We believe that part of what English teachers are nowadays started out via the way they were constructed from the held conceptions about what practicum and student-teachers should be when they were in these undergraduate programs.

As part of this second stage, in this article we describe the discourse that takes place in the initial meetings with the coordinators, practicum advisors, cooperating teachers, and student-teachers at the beginning of practicum in an ELT undergraduate program in Bogota, Colombia. This description helps shed light on how practicum is conceived, and how student-teachers start being constructed as language teachers within the discourses spoken in these meetings.

The insights from these two stages have led us to reflect on the conception of three terms in the whole research project. First, we have moved from using the terms of practicum supervisors or mentor teachers to using practicum advisors, preferably. This move responds to abandoning a vision of those teacher educators who accompany practicum as supervisors or mentors who are knowing in the field, who give and transmit knowledge and skills, manage student-teachers’ training, follow-up on them in terms of their attendance at schools, hold advisory meetings, and evaluate student-teachers by using established or pre-designed checklists (Dakhiel, 2017; Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Macías & Sánchez, 2015). We prefer to adopt the vision of practicum advisors as one of those who create empathy and dialogue for pedagogical guidance, offer emotional support and professional socialization, develop teaching knowledge and practices collaboratively, foster student-teachers’ self-construction and esteem, and promote reflection on what is done, how, and why for language education (Castañeda-Peña et al., 2016; Clandinin et al., 2009; Liu, 2014; Quintero-Polo, 2016).

Second, we have moved from using the term of preservice teachers to using student-teachers in preference. This move avoids seeing them as loaded with instructional roles, commanded to do conventional tasks, susceptible to being observed and shaped, and having been trained for service purposes in the work market (Ripski et al., 2011). We have opted to use the term student-teachers, since they come to practicum holding varied domains and senses of self-awareness, as well as holding constructed thoughts, knowledges, values, feelings, dispositions, and behaviors (Schussler et al., 2010). Something similar happens with the term pedagogical practice; thus, we have decided to use pedagogical practicum instead. The former tends to imply training, repetition, effectiveness, and transmission (Crookes, 2003). The latter encompasses personal and contextual characteristics, educational backgrounds, and creation

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<sup>1</sup> The project is pursued by the research group *Language and Discursive Practices in Contexts of Education*.

of subject matter knowledge; this term also stresses the importance of experiences, skills, knowledges, and dispositions of all its participants (Fajardo-Castañeda & Miranda-Montenegro, 2015; Liu, 2014).

### Conceptual Framework

The concepts in this section mostly come from local knowledge as we have been building the study from the situated experiences that we have lived as teacher educators during the practicum of ELT undergraduate programs in Bogota. With this, we do not want to say corresponding knowledge that comes from other countries, usually some in North America or Europe, is invalid for the study. We acknowledge this fact, but this time we look for epistemological coherence in the understanding of these concepts for a study that has been born and situated in Bogota, Colombia.

### Initial Teacher Education

In Colombia, Decree 1278 of 2002, *Estatuto de Profesionalización Docente* (Teacher Professionalization Guidelines), establishes that curricula of initial teacher education (ITE) programs must sustain pedagogy, evaluation, and research as the pillars to articulate disciplinary and academic contents with teaching contexts, realities, and learners' needs for education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2014; Restrepo-Gómez, 1994; Rincón-Zabala, 2016). This articulation in turn allows the diversification of practicum and its guidelines into methodological, institutional, and instructional notions (Gelvez-Suarez, 2007; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). By considering these principles, Colombian education faculties prompt understanding ITE as the curricular implementation for student-teachers' pedagogical, academic, and socio-affective developments. This implementation is later consolidated in the spaces of practicum (Resolution 2041 of 2016; Londoño-Orozco, 2009; MEN, n.d., 2014; Ríos-Beltrán, 2018). Thus, practicum, as a subject of professional training, helps to a great extent to educate,

construct, and constitute student-teachers as teachers in the ITE programs.

In the ELT field, specifically, ITE is part of the undergraduate programs in this matter. Since 1994, with the passing of National Law of Education 115, MEN mandated an emphasis on professional development to achieve the specifics of the National Law which encompass the establishment of foreign language teaching methods and approaches and the fostering of teachers' exercise of autonomy with those teaching methods (González-Moncada, 2010). Colombian education faculties then began adopting these aspects for their ELT-program curricula; aspects that the MEN has reinforced with the National Bilingual Program since 2004 (Colombia Aprende, n.d.). Therefore, in these programs ITE seeks to foster student-teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge, the learning of English to improve life quality, the development of consistent standards for ELT, and the enhancement of ongoing professional development (González-Moncada, 2010; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2009; Mora et al., 2019; Usma-Wilches, 2009).

### Pedagogical Practicum

In consonance with Zuluaga (1979, 1999), de Tezanos (2007), Fandiño-Parra and Bermúdez-Jiménez (2015), Londoño-Orozco (2009), Moreno-Fernández (2015a), Ortega-Valencia et al. (2013), practicum refers to situated experiences of teaching that are verbalized through pedagogical discourse. Besides, practicum may also occur outside classrooms since it is also a complex historical event that prompts a pedagogical analysis of context-situated knowledges. The authors explain that practicum should go beyond transmission or explanation of contents and skill sets; practitioners should be more active to confront the long-term educational issues of contexts and communities for their transformation.

In the Colombian ELT field, practicum is a professional and academic space in which student-teachers, from their experiences and knowledges, are expected

to give their first classes as language teachers (Esteve, 1998; Posada-Ortiz & Garzón-Duarte, 2013). Student-teachers, on the one hand, put in practice and try out the compendium of knowledge learned throughout their major during practicum (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Chaves-Varón, 2008). On the other hand, in this space, student-teachers internalize and construct pedagogical knowledge through being the mediators of their students' English learning process (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017; Quintero-Polo, 2019).

In brief, practicum is concerned with knowing, doing, and relating (de Tezanos, 2007; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Zuluaga, 1999). While student-teachers give their lessons and construct themselves as language teachers, they put in practice and build their disciplinary, professional, pedagogical, content, and experiential knowledges.<sup>2</sup> Student-teachers do this by receiving the support, accompaniment, and advice of their practicum advisors, cooperating teachers, and peers. A functional relationship should be created between student-teachers and their practicum advisors, as well as with the practicum context, so that student-teachers' knowledges, skills, and attitudes about ELT are potentiated (Samacá-Bohorquez, 2018).

For most student-teachers in practicum, this is the time to have real experiences of teaching English. The role that different types of knowledge, but particularly experiential and pedagogical knowledge, have in student-teachers during practicum scaffolds their figures as mediators of English teaching, learning, and assessment (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017). Reflection for awareness of how student-teachers construct their pedagogical knowledge and their figures as language teachers collaboratively are also part of the experiences to live during the practicum (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2019;

Samacá-Bohorquez, 2008, 2012; Quintero-Polo, 2019; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020).

### Student-Teachers

Commonly known as preservice teachers, student-teachers are those individuals majoring in education to be teachers. ELT student-teachers in Colombia are referred to as skilled practitioners with knowledge, wisdom, beliefs, emotions, attitudes, interests, and roles towards teaching (Aguirre-Sánchez, 2014; Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Castellanos-Jaimes, 2013; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Olaya & Gómez-Rodríguez, 2013; Suárez-Flórez & Basto-Basto, 2017).

Student-teachers are object and subject of the relationship among knowledge, teaching, and policing. They are expected to show accepted or pre-established practices of teaching and to accumulate knowledge of language education in those practices under the light of curricula. They may assume themselves as figures of knowledge and power from those practices and from the roles and tasks that appear in language education discourses. This recently-advocated issue states that ELT student-teachers in Colombia become subjects throughout the historical modes of what it is to be an English teacher, socially, academically, and politically (Davila, 2018; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero-Nieto, 2018; Méndez-Rivera, 2018; Méndez et al., 2019). From this perspective, student-teachers may be subjectified and objectified in the ELT field by dividing practices, expecting/expected behaviors and attitudes, and desired discourses and modes. In brief, these discourses and modes of subjectification and objectification are connected to the conceptualizations of who an English teacher should be and do in varied contexts and according to curricula. In this way, English (student) teachers are turned into subjects; this transformation defines how they relate to themselves and to teaching knowledge, practices, and discourses.

<sup>2</sup> We recognize the fact that other knowledges can also be part of language teachers. See a discussion about this matter in Castañeda-Londoño (2018, 2019).

When English student-teachers constitute themselves, or are constituted by ELT knowledge, practices, and discourses, practicum is constituted too. Therefore, a reciprocity appears, student-teachers constitute practicum as this space constitutes them. Naranjo (2010) exposes the need to go beyond established knowledge, practices, and discourses to allow (student) teachers to discover themselves. ITE programs and their spaces of practicum should generate processes that lead student-teachers to be aware of themselves and their own teacher knowledge, practices, and voices (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Ubaque-Casallas & Aguirre-Garzón, 2020).

### Discourse(s)

As a first statement, following van Dijk (1997), we understand discourses as specific forms of social interaction, forms that stand for a complete communicative event in a social situation. Thus, discourses are social practices that occur in multiple social events (Saville-Troike, 2003; Rampton et al., 2015). As a second statement, pursuant to Gee (2005), discourses are multifaceted and complex social acts in which meaning is emitted, gathered, and appropriated. In these two statements, in consonance with Díaz-Villa (2001), we see that a piece of discourse can be constituted by other discourses and, at the same time, be the source for constructing other discourses (we perceive that this happens during practicum).

Discourses are therefore the result of social dynamics, of interactions among its participants, and of relations between texts and contexts. By considering all this, we understand that discourses open spaces for the (re)production of coexisting and competing discursive conventions and frameworks that (re)construct and transform realities and subjects in each context (Méndez-Rivera, 2012).

We acknowledge the fact that discourses are the result of socio-historic conditions of production, are

potentially ideological (Fairclough, 2006, as cited in Chacón-Chacón & Chapetón-Castro, 2018, p. 4), exert power and maintain control (Bernstein, 1998, as cited in Escobar-Alméciga, 2013, p. 50), and are not neutral since their participants and texts play a role in their distribution and circulation (Guerrero-Nieto, 2010).

In the Colombian ELT field, discourse has been studied from different angles (see a profiling done by Castañeda-Peña, 2012). Specifically, with respect to practicum, scholars as Guerrero-Nieto (2010) and Camargo-Cely (2018) have demonstrated that discourses from the Colombian language policies point towards what English (student) teachers must be and know about didactics and learning theories and the way this must be known. These discourses serve as foundations to construct teachers as subjects during practicum. Apart from these two studies, little has been explored about how other discourses happen or are produced in the contexts of practicum, or in ITE, of ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia. These other discourses may also reveal further discursive conventions, frameworks, ideologies, and practices occurring throughout time in these contexts.

### Research Design

This study took place in an ELT undergraduate program in Bogotá. We considered the discourses that took place in the initial meetings of practicum held by the program and the discourses written in the official documents of the program for practicum.<sup>3</sup> The data of this study consisted of audio recordings of two initial meetings with two coordinators and 23 practicum advisors, and of two initial meetings held with the two coordinators, the 23 practicum advisors, and all student-teachers (around 200). Each meeting lasted about one hour. These meetings were recorded in two

<sup>3</sup> A consent letter, issued by the directors of the program, allowed recording these meetings, previous agreement with the individuals involved in the study, and getting access to the official documents of the program.



subsequent academic semesters. We also recorded four initial meetings at different schools where practicum was going to take place. The respective school's cooperating teachers and the assigned practicum advisors (around five each), with their student-teachers (around 14), attended these four meetings. We transcribed each recorded meeting.

We, the researchers of the study,<sup>4</sup> used field notes as understood by Martínez (2007) and Moreno-Fernández (2015a) to register statements occurring during the meetings as covert participants. We took notes in relation to what was said, and how it was expressed, about the practicum and student-teachers. We contrasted the field notes with the recordings and transcripts.<sup>5</sup>

The official documents consisted of the master document of the undergraduate program and its practicum regulations, seven syllabi, and eight institutional signed agreements. To frame the discourses worth for the study, we carried out an initial documentary analysis in two phases. The first, the formal analysis phase, corresponded to an external view of each document and its identification of the conventions proposed by Moreno-Fernández (2015b, pp. 99–101), to wit: type of document, date of publication, author, and thematic content for the study. We classified the documents in line with these conventions. The second, the internal analysis phase, involved working deeply on the thematic content of each document in the search of keywords, statements, and descriptions to establish what is said about the practicum and student-teachers in the documents. To do so, we concentrated on three questions of analysis: (a) What is a student-teacher during practicum? (b) What must/should a student-teacher do in this space? (c) How is practicum defined and what are

its goals? We identified this throughout the thematic content of each document.

To analyze the discourses in the meetings and documents, we designed a study that combines the ethnography of communication with the linguistic ethnography. According to Hymes (1996), Cameron (2001), and Flórez-Romero (2004), ethnography of communication combines the sociocultural relationships that are expressed through language and the linguistic view of it as a system of cultural behaviors in a context. That is, the emphasis is placed on the interdependence between the language use, sociocultural activities, and the context in which they occur (Duff, 2002). With this approach we examined, firstly, the interactional and discursive conventions within the discourses of those meetings and documents; secondly, how these conventions conceive practicum and construct what student-teachers should be.<sup>6</sup>

The linguistic ethnography allowed us to analyze the ways practicum and student-teachers were discursively conceived and constructed when those discourses were communicated in the meetings and through the documents. Shaw et al. (2015) say that linguistic ethnography aims to understand how social and communication processes work in a specific context. As a matter of fact, with this approach, we were able to understand, firstly, *what* was said, *how*, and *why*, about the practicum and student-teachers in the meetings and documents; thus, we placed emphasis on the complexity of the discourses and the ideological meanings presented in them.

## Insights

In this section, we present the insights from the analysis of the discourses spoken in the above-mentioned meetings and documents of practicum. These look for discerning how practicum is conceived, and how

4 In total, we were four researchers collecting and analyzing data for the study. We four belong to the program but from different departments.

5 We took the field notes separately, then contrasted and analyzed them with the revision of two external colleagues to avoid bias. These two colleagues are also language teachers and practicum advisors.

6 The results about this issue will be published in a forthcoming article.

student-teachers start being constructed as language teachers in them.

### How Is Practicum Conceived?

In the discourses, practicum is conceived as a space that takes place only when its participants gather to do what they are expected to do in it. The general elements of educational guidance imply that student-teachers are the school's instructors and advisors. The student-teachers become responsible for their students' education concerning English teaching, learning, and assessment; they do so by the execution of the corresponding curriculum of this language and the school rules in general. The relevant elements of English teaching, learning, and assessment refer to preparing, conducting, and collaborating with the school and the cooperating teachers in the planning, development, and evaluation of English classes, activities, and examinations.

Practicum is not plainly a content subject, neither is it an academic space per se that holds a set of pre-established and sequenced contents. Instead, it is a space in which general elements of educational guidance and relevant elements of English teaching, learning, and assessment converge for practicum advisors and student-teachers to work with. We present examples of these elements in Excerpt Set 1.<sup>7</sup>

We highlight the fact that these discourses overlook the contexts where the practicum is going to take place. Along the same lines, we knew that the student-teachers and practicum advisors were given minimal elements to understand the overall content of the practicum documents.

The discourses about practicum also indicate that student-teachers can only start it when they have completed a set of subjects and requisites within the

undergraduate program. These subjects can be about English, pedagogy, (language) didactics, history of education, and (language) teaching methods, among others. The requisites can cover a standardized-exam score of at least a B1-level of English proficiency, the completion of required subjects, language or content examinations, and a certification of health insurance.

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#### Excerpt Set 1

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In the initial meetings at the university

"Practicum is not only giving a class; it is about the educational and instructional tasks that practicum advisors and student-teachers have to do at the institutions."  
"Practicum is the space for practicum advisors to teach student-teachers how to teach a language and manage groups of students."

In the initial meetings at the schools

"Practicum is a chance to learn about how to be a teacher in real situations and contexts."  
"Practicum offers you a chance to know what you are going to face as official teachers."  
"In practicum, student-teachers can grasp what to be a schoolteacher is."

In the institutional documents

"Practicum looks for the interrelations among agents, cultural contexts, discursive forms, and teaching beliefs."  
"Teacher education is central to practicum; in this space disciplinary, professional, and research knowledges in the field of pedagogy take place."

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In the analyzed discourses, academic, professional, and experiential aspects for practicum are also prominent. We present examples of these aspects in the following Excerpt Set 2.

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<sup>7</sup> We translated the quotes listed in all these excerpt sets. The quotes were spoken by the practicum coordinators of the program in the initial meetings at the university and by the cooperating teachers who oversee the practicum at the schools.



**Excerpt Set 2**

In the initial meetings at the university	<p>“The university has offered student-teachers a set of contents and strategies that should be put in practice during practicum.”</p> <p>“Practicum advisors need to document with observations and tutorials how student-teachers progress as teachers.”</p> <p>“Each school can be different; student-teachers have to act accordingly.”</p>
In the initial meetings at the schools	<p>“During practicum, student-teachers can put in practice everything that has been learned during the major.”</p> <p>“Student-teachers are expected to know about how to teach the language didactically and ludically.”</p> <p>“Student-teachers are now the ones responsible for how children learn the language at the school.”</p> <p>“Student-teachers could share their new knowledge with the more experienced homeroom teachers at the school.”</p>
In the institutional documents	<p>“Before starting practicum, the program has offered a set of knowledge about pedagogy, language sciences, language didactics, and education.”</p> <p>“With this knowledge, student-teachers are expected to problematize how different theories of language teaching are related to language pedagogy.”</p> <p>“Practicum empowers student-teachers as competent L2 users-speakers with the capacity to solve their students’ language-based problems.”</p>

As follows, we show each prominent aspect from these examples. *Academic aspects* include elements

as contents, means, processes, and actions that the ELT undergraduate program has offered to student-teachers in its curricula before starting the practicum. The program expects that student-teachers can put into practice, during practicum, all that has been taught thus far in the major. These academic aspects are closely connected to disciplinary, professional, and research knowledges in the general field of education and in the specific areas of English teaching, learning, and assessment.

*Professional aspects* are about what a language teacher is and how teaching a language should occur. During practicum, student-teachers are expected to start their experiences of teaching English. In all those experiences, student-teachers should consolidate their knowledges and practices related to English teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as their understandings about how to plan lessons, manage classrooms, and be a language teacher. These professional aspects turn into the realization of the academic aspects during practicum.

Equally, these professional aspects are closely connected to *experiential aspects*, since knowledge and experience are mutually constructed during practicum. Practicum advisors and cooperating teachers demand varied tasks in this space, such as lesson planning and delivery, materials design, grade reports, reading assignments, progress documenting, and so on. Consequently, experiential aspects refer to the individuals, situations, and artifacts with which student-teachers live their experiences as teachers during practicum. All these elements interact and interrelate one to another as well as with the socio-cultural aspects, discursive practices, and beliefs about education in the practicum context.

All of these discourses make it clear how practicum is conceived. As this is not a content-subject as such, student-teachers are not expected to consider it as lesson deliveries. Instead, this is a space in which student-teachers enter after completing a set of

requirements in order to put into practice what has before been taught and learned about education in general and English teaching, learning, and assessment in particular. Practicum is also a space for the student-teachers to consolidate those learnings and to construct themselves as English teachers, both from selected texts and experiences in context as well as from practicum advisors' or cooperating teachers' guidance about their performance as (language) teachers. This is particularly a contributory conception of practicum.

We discuss the fact that this conception little accounts for inspecting how student-teachers come into practicum; for example, what their feelings, emotions, attitudes, fears, expectations, and beliefs are about education, language teaching, and socio-cultural aspects of practicum contexts, as well as what being a language teacher is and what it represents. This contributory conception of practicum largely assumes that student-teachers are already charged with and prepared to receive contents, knowledges, and ways of teaching, all of which must be put in practice within the practicum tasks for constant reformulation and broadening. This contributory conception also presumes that practicum advisors and cooperating teachers should be there to guarantee this widening and experience. We advocate for more awareness of how student-teachers can start consolidating their knowledges and selves as language teachers collaboratively in close consideration with their personal and contextual characteristics, educational backgrounds, experiences, skills, and dispositions.

It is in the convergence of all these aspects and elements that student-teachers are conceived as English teachers. As practicum is a space to perform what was taught and learned about language education, and to broaden this knowledge, student-teachers are conceived of as performers or implementers of practicum tasks. This opens our next insights.

### How Do Student-Teachers Start Being Constructed as Language Teachers?

In the initial meetings of practicum and in the official documents of the program for practicum, in plain words, student-teachers are conceived of, firstly, as individuals who carry an institutional image and a teacher's figure; secondly, and consequently, they are conceived of as student-teachers who must play a series of roles and do a series of tasks during practicum.

*Carrying an institutional image* demands of student-teachers to be the image of the university at the school where practicum takes place, and, at the same time, the image of the school in the English classes they give over there. In the analyzed discourses, these institutional images require that student-teachers embody the knowledges, behaviors, attitudes, discourses, and practices representative of the undergraduate program and of the school. The knowledges cover topics related to methods, approaches, strategies, and techniques of language teaching. The expected behaviors and attitudes should reflect qualities imparted in the program about what a competent teacher is, such as how to mediate, give advice, receive support, and manage students and classes. The discourses and practices should follow what a professional teacher from the university is when delivering lessons, motivating students to learn and do their assignments, and talking about lesson planning and delivery.

The analyzed discourses also affirm that representing the figure of a teacher demands from student-teachers to know, act, and do what is expected from a teacher at school, as well as from a language teacher and a language user or speaker in the classroom. This figure requires that student-teachers know processes and protocols (including the normativity, curricula, syllabi, etc.) for situations that may happen during practicum. It also requires that they perform as (language) teachers do in class; for instance, managing classrooms, knowing how to learn the language, and how to plan,

explain, practice, assess, and give language contents; and knowing how to listen, guide, and give advice to educate students. This teacher's figure also demands that student-teachers perform well in practicum by giving reasons of lesson planning and by taking part in reflections; student-teachers must also perform well around the school by supervising during breaks, reporting grades, and helping during school events. The teacher's figure as a language user or speaker demands that student-teachers be skilled and proficient speakers of the language they teach, know lots of vocabulary and cultural issues of that language, and prove their mastery of language abilities.

We present some examples of these discourses in the following Excerpt Set 3.

This conception of student-teachers carrying an institutional image and a teacher's figure overshadows them as thinkers of themselves about what type of (language) teachers they expect to be. The discourses that we encountered in the data indicate that the undergraduate program, the practicum and school coordinators, as well as the practicum advisors are the ones who more prominently define what images and figures student-teachers must represent during practicum. A great number of demands and requirements to sustain the established images and figures are loaded onto the student-teachers' shoulders. Thus, they must simply assume these demands and requirements and look for performing and broadening the established images and figures already mentioned.

### Excerpt Set 3

	Student teachers must be...	Student teachers must...
In the initial meetings at the university	<p>"The image of the university."</p> <p>"One who knows about the language to teach."</p> <p>"Not the students' friends but the teacher's image that students are going to keep in mind."</p> <p>"Patient, tolerant, but firm and strict at the same time."</p>	<p>"Start recognizing themselves as teachers of languages."</p> <p>"Do the teaching tasks well, so that they can dignify the profession."</p> <p>"Do the tasks that practicum demands."</p> <p>"Plan and perform exemplary lessons."</p>
In the initial meetings at the schools	<p>"The ones who start having the power of knowledge and education."</p> <p>"The mediators, educators, advisors, concealers, and class managers."</p> <p>"The teacher of a language, although not yet a homeroom teacher."</p> <p>"The support of the homeroom teacher in the language lessons."</p>	<p>"Know all the institutional documents of practicum and the school."</p> <p>"Know all the processes and protocols to follow when different situations happen at school."</p> <p>"Know the class, so that lesson planning is more fruitful and lesson giving easier."</p>
In the institutional documents	<p>"The knowers of how to integrate and teach communicative elements of the language."</p> <p>"The knowers of how to connect language, culture, and individuals in the context."</p> <p>"Pedagogical actors, critical subjects, L2 users, and competent professionals."</p>	<p>"Tackle pedagogical and didactic problems in the students' language construction."</p> <p>"Analyze and reflect on processes and knowledge of language teaching and learning."</p> <p>"Comply with the demands and responsibilities of the practicum."</p> <p>"Develop their communicative, pragmatic, and discursive skills."</p>

As a result of this conception, they are also conceived as student-teachers who must play a series of roles and do a series of tasks during practicum. *Mentioned roles* as educators, researchers, advisors, concealers, mediators, and language knowers are noticeable in the analyzed discourses. *Tasks* as lesson planning and delivery, reporting students' performance, observing and reflecting are also salient. Together, ELT student-teachers are the ones who know about the language and how to teach it, with everything that this fact implies, simply because this is what the program has taught them to do. The analyzed discourses insinuate that student-teachers must be conscious of everything that they are at the point of starting practicum: a language teacher who is in the final stage of his/her process of ITE, who starts his/her (language) teaching experiences and practices, and who is not yet a school teacher (or an in-service teacher), but is expected to be and act as one. Notwithstanding this premise, the analyzed discourses state that the way student-teachers are expected to be and act may vary in line with the particularities and requirements of the practicum contexts.

Giving more detail to these roles and tasks, we classified them into five types of must-be and must-do, which may converge or diverge indistinctively according to each practicum context:

1. *Academic*: lesson planning, school teacher's support for language (teaching), administering language teaching, learning, and assessment resources and materials.
2. *Teaching*: didactic and content knowledge, lesson delivery, identification of students' language-learning problems, implementation and evaluation of language teaching, learning, and assessment methodologies and strategies.
3. *Research*: reflective observation and analysis of teaching/pedagogical experiences, well-supported solutions for language teaching, learning, and assessment difficulties.

4. *Legal*: knowledge and actions corresponding to institutional language curricula, normativity, and protocols.
5. *Personal*: knowledge and actions that student-teachers must prove about their own self (self-control and self-management), and historical, life, and teacher consciousness.

In the analyzed discourses, discontinuities about language education and (language) teacher construction from self-awareness and self-reflection are little considered. As we have exposed thus far, the encountered discourses are majorly composed of large sets of statements about what practicum is and what a student-teacher must be and do in it. In our point of view, these statements standardize, on the one hand, a series of actions and skills necessary for performing during practicum. On the other hand, these statements look to reach the compliance of roles and tasks that student-teachers must play and do in this space and in the practicum contexts. Along the same line of thought, these statements becloud the discourse about knowing-to-be and knowing-to-do and impose a discourse of must-be and must-do. The rational construction of teacher educators is mostly transformed into an instituted, demanded, and even inflicted way of being and doing at the start of practicum.

All in all, in the analyzed discourses, we can say that student-teachers are initially constructed as subjects with an idealized profile of a series of expected roles and pre-established tasks for practicum. Equally, we can say that the analyzed discourses point to an efficient subject able and ready to perform well the expected roles and pre-established tasks as a student-teacher at the start of practicum. These insights leave us with several uncertainties, to wit: (a) How do student-teachers receive these discourses and assume these roles and tasks when they start practicum? (b) How do they really assume, re-configure, or (re)create these roles and tasks throughout practicum? (c) What type of student-teacher

subjects do they construct from the assumed roles and tasks during practicum? Why? These are questions we hope to answer in a subsequent study with other ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia.

### Conclusions and Implications

In our interest to offer an understanding about the way practicum is conceived, as well as the way student-teachers are constructed in this space in ELT undergraduate programs in Colombia, we have started exploring the discourses that take place in the communicative events of this space. In the study presented in this article, which can be replicated in other undergraduate programs, we have explored the discourses that take place in the initial meetings of practicum in an ELT undergraduate program. These discourses conceive of practicum and construct student-teachers in specific manners.

We have shown how practicum is a space in which elements of English teaching, learning, and assessment converge for their realization by student-teachers under practicum advisors' monitoring and accompaniment. As part of ITE, practicum fosters student-teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge primarily, then established conventional standards for English education consistent with the aims that MEN pursues for this phase; practicum is a space for the student-teachers to consolidate those learnings and to construct themselves as English teachers. A set of requisites is necessary to start practicum so that student-teachers can put in practice what has before been taught and learned in the ELT undergraduate program.

We believe that all this propounds a contributory conception of practicum; a situation that can likely happen in other undergraduate programs, too. The ideological meanings presented in the analyzed discourses seem to impose the idea that student-teachers accumulate a series of knowledges that enable them to teach the language in determined contexts; later, they

internalize and construct more pedagogical knowledge through being the mediators of their students' English learning process. We invite ELT undergraduate programs to think of practicum as a space in which its participants relate to themselves, to each other, to the contexts, and to (English) teaching knowledges, practices, and discourses in a more collaborative, dialogical, reflective, and transformative manner.

With respect to English student-teachers, we have shown that they are conceived of as individuals who are weighted with an institutional image and a teacher's figure, whose roles and tasks must be carried out as expected by institutional documents of practicum and practicum coordinators and advisors, as well as cooperating teachers at schools. By striking this, student-teachers tend to be subjectified as a particular type of English teachers and objectified as a person for doing determined tasks. The desired images and figures seem to be immersed in the understandings of the statements encountered in the institutionalized documents and discourses of practicum.

The fact that English student-teachers put into practice the set of knowledges learned throughout their major during practicum is paramount, so is the fact that they must internalize and construct more pedagogical knowledge through being the mediators of their students' English learning process. Opportunities for the student-teachers to generate processes that lead them to be aware of themselves as language teachers and of their own knowledges, practices, and voices are scarce, almost inexistent at the start of practicum. We are convinced that these opportunities can help scaffold their selves as language teachers, and make them aware of how they can construct their knowledges during practicum.

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