

## English as a lingua franca in Colombia: insights from an emerging field

### El Inglés como lengua franca en Colombia: perspectivas de un campo emergente

Jhon Eduardo Mosquera Pérez<sup>1</sup>

#### Abstract

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is a field that has steadily gained traction around the world, and Colombia is no exception to this growing interest. Although there is still a relatively limited number of initiatives centered explicitly on ELF in English Language Teaching (ELT), researchers in the country are approaching the topic in diverse and enriching ways. In this article, I, an English teacher educator, non-native speaker, and researcher engaged with ELF, explore how Colombian scholars have been appropriating and engaging with ELF. By analyzing both empirical and conceptual initiatives that address not only ELF but also related notions such as World Englishes (WE), Global Englishes (GE), and even Global English Language Teaching (GET), I aim to illustrate how the field is gradually expanding within the territory. Rather than offering a superficial overview of ELF's growth in Colombia, this critical reflective piece seeks to share with the national and international ELT academic community the multiple ways in which ELF can be meaningfully addressed. In doing so, it invites broader dialogues aimed at moving away from long-standing Anglo-centric dynamics that have shaped the field for too long.

**Key words:** appropriation of English as a Lingua Franca, Colombia, English education, initial English teacher education.

#### Resumen

El inglés como lengua franca (ELF) es un campo que ha ido ganando terreno en todo el mundo, y Colombia no es la excepción a este creciente interés. Aunque existen pocas iniciativas centradas explícitamente en ELF dentro de la enseñanza del inglés (ELT), algunos investigadores en el país lo están abordando de formas diversas y enriquecedoras. En este artículo, yo, formador de docentes de inglés, hablante no nativo e investigador comprometido con ELF, exploro cómo académicos colombianos se han apropiado y han interactuado con ELF. A través del análisis de iniciativas empíricas y conceptuales que tratan no solo del ELF, sino también nociones relacionadas como los Ingleses del Mundo (WE), los Ingleses Globales (GE) y la Enseñanza Global del Idioma Inglés (GET), busco mostrar cómo este campo se expande gradualmente en el país. Más allá de ofrecer una visión superficial del crecimiento de ELF en Colombia, este texto crítico y reflexivo pretende compartir con la comunidad académica nacional e internacional de ELT las múltiples

---

<sup>1</sup> Docente de planta, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) Correo: [jhon.mosquera01@uptc.edu.co](mailto:jhon.mosquera01@uptc.edu.co) ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4027-3102>

formas en que ELF puede ser abordado de manera significativa, invitando así a diálogos más amplios que contribuyan a superar las dinámicas anglocéntricas que han dominado el campo durante demasiado tiempo.

**Palabras clave:** apropiación del Inglés como Lengua Franca, Colombia, enseñanza del inglés, formación inicial de docentes de inglés.

## Introduction

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is not a recent field of knowledge. Research in the area began to take place approximately 30 years ago when Jennifer Jenkins got interested in better comprehending how linguistic features of the L1 of a group of exchange students could potentially foster their L2 processes when using English as a vehicle of communication. However, ELF is an area that has just commenced to receive a moderate degree of attention in Latin America. Colombia is no exception to this situation.

The first official article acknowledging the term ELF in Colombia is the paper published by Diego Fernando Macías Villegas (2010), from the Southeastern region of the country. In that paper, this scholar made an open invitation to reflect about the traditional ELT model employed in the territory, and assume, instead, an ELF perspective. Specifically, Macías (2010) made this invitation because, in his view, national ELT has historically centered its attention on reproducing native-centered models while also emphasizing the use of materials and methods that do not really fit the Colombian context. Since then, various ELF contributions, although partially overlapping with other notions such as WE, GE, and even CE (Colombian English), or ECL (English as a Colombian language) have slowly but steadily come to light. This paper is a contribution to these dialogues, as it seeks to keep expanding ideas regarding ELF nationally.

In this article I, a non-native English teacher educator, researcher, and ELF advocate located in the central eastern region of the country, review the contributions that have been produced up to date nationally in order to gradually appropriate ELF. These contributions represent the interest that colleagues from various educational establishments have in pushing the field and make ELT something fairer and appropriate for those who, like us, are directly or indirectly involved in it and potentially affected by it. Additionally, these initiatives constitute interesting critical pedagogical, sociopolitical, and intellectual experiences which are taking ground progressively in the national panorama.

Before continuing, I would like to point out that in this analysis I will seek to honor the contributions concerning ELF by those before and after me in an attempt to continue expanding this perspective not only within the context of my country, but, potentially, other settings that might be influenced by our contributions. That is the reason why for writing this paper I have decided not to recur to technical, native oriented standards for writing academically. Rather, I have opted for using a narrative, comprehensible, and inteligible oriented tone to express my ideas. This with the intention of infusing in the paper one of the principles of ELF while also honoring my own cultural and linguistic background as a native Spanish speaker from the Global South.

## English, ELT research, and Colombia: a brief historical account

The introduction and officialization of the teaching and learning of English in Colombia did not occur by mere coincidences. It is the result of continuous relationships and support received by the

British crown in independentist times when Colombians were seeking their emancipation from the colonial yoke. However, before going deeper into these aspects, I will revisit some historical facts in an attempt to provide a more complete linguistic panorama of this territory.

Contrary to what many people internationally and even nationally might believe, Colombia is not a monolingual country. It is a multilingual nation characterized by the existence of 65 native languages, a creole (a mixture of English with African linguistic systems), Romani, and a Colombian sign language. These languages, although important like any of the other so called “contemporary linguistic systems” or “modern languages” of the globe, have failed to receive the degree of attention they deserve and urgently require. This is a consequence of wild neoliberalism, for which the de facto and indisputable language in today’s society is English. In Colombia, these detrimental attitudes toward aboriginal languages and other linguistic systems that may be potentially present in the territory, such as Palenquero and Romani, began with the arrival of European settlers to this land. Though I recognize this does not constitute the main theme of this paper, and deserves another one to fully tackle various sociolinguistic situations deriving from it, partially revisiting these aspects when considering how English came to Colombia is inevitable.

In the traditional Colombian education system, it is commonly taught that America in general, and the ancient territory of what is Colombia today in particular were “discovered” by Spanish travelers who were in an expedition to find new resources to continue expanding the colonial crown. However, while for some people we were “discovered”, others, especially those more critical toward this situation, manifest that Colombia was not “discovered”. For them, it was found and subjugated to a process of symbolic, linguistic, religious, and cultural annihilation that would strongly shape the future of the nation. This fact was poetically immortalized by Uruguayan scholar Eduardo Galeano: (They came. They had the Bible, and we had the land. And they said to us, "Close your eyes and pray." When we opened our eyes, they had the land, and we had the Bible - author’s own translation)<sup>2</sup> (Galeano, 1992, p. 29). Galeano gives an account of an indisputable situation: the arrival of the Spanish, and the eventual settlement of their first colonies, set the floor for a forced mixture of races and languages to take place.

These sociohistorical events progressively became four large periods. In the first (1499 – 1525) and the second (1525 – 1550) the Spanish colonizers arrived to the territory, subjugated the indigenous communities, and commenced an involuntary but inevitable racialization process. In the third (1550 – 1770) the evangelization of indigenous and the full establishment of the crown were actions at the core of the Spanish expansionist agenda. Finally, in the fourth period (1700 – 1810) a sentiment of discontent with the crown started, and a progressive but eventual detachment from the Spanish dominion took place. It is precisely at that time that English and its teaching commence to gain relevance (Bushnell, 1993).

Even though English is a linguistic system that was being already utilized in other global territories in previous centuries, it entered the national land as a result of the continuous visits of English, Irish, and other potential agitators (Racine, 2006) who were supporting local independentist movements. Some of the specific actions that the British contributed with were military training and education, naval assistance, and diplomatic relationships. This is the reason why Simón Bolívar, who is recurrently regarded as the father of Colombian independence, would continuously “make toasts to the health and continued success of the sons of 'the United Kingdom

---

<sup>2</sup> “Vinieron. Ellos tenían la Biblia y nosotros teníamos la tierra. Y nos dijeron: ‘Cierren los ojos y recen’, Y cuando abrimos los ojos, ellos tenían la tierra y nosotros teníamos la Biblia.”

of Great Britain and Ireland” (Racine, 2006, p. 50). Some think that without these contributions, the independence of the country would have not been possible (Brown, 2006; Brown et al. 2024), meaning that essentially, and interestingly, the teaching of English started in colonial Colombian as a way to show appreciation and strengthening relationships with the British crown and that contributed to the detachment from Spanish domination. However, it is vital to recognize that despite an initial interest in spreading English in the emergent nation of Colombia, it was not until 1994, during the presidency of Ernesto Samper, with the creation of the *Ley General de Educación* (Law 115 of 1994; Congreso de Colombia, 1994) that the government made the learning a foreign language like English official, making it compulsory for the education system. Although this Law remarked the need to formally teach English in the country it did not specify by any means, yet, that English would be the exclusive foreign language to learn, leaving in this way room for French and other languages to be taught.

After such first attempt, a more explicit push to formalize English instruction came to light with the release of the *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo* (National Bilingualism Program) in 2004 (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2004), which aimed to align students and Colombian society in general with international proficiency standards, particularly those of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in an effort to insert the country into globalization dynamics (Macías, 2010). While the above-mentioned law established a precedent in terms of formalizing English and its teaching, this initiative further marked a turning point by making English proficiency a national priority, linking it to economic development, globalization, and the country’s aspirations for international competitiveness. However, this law did not appear to have a positive impact in some sociocultural and educational scenarios where English was taught; according to some national Colombian scholars “it is not the same to learn English in a cosmopolitan city like Bogotá as it is in the countryside, or in a highly touristic town like Santa Fe de Antioquia as in a farming town like Yarumal” (Correa & Usma, 2003, p. 236). As a consequence, the previously mentioned program was replaced by other language policies such as the *Programa Colombia Bilingüe 2014–2018* (Bilingual Colombian program, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2014) and the *Plan Nacional de Inglés 2015–2025* (National English Plan, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015), which replaced the earlier initiatives.

Something highly captivating that has been occurring in the country since the creation of these policies is that from the very first moment of their inception, scholars from specialized ELT circles have manifested that these programs are insufficient to make Colombia, a multilingual country, a nation fully proficient in English. Some of the criticisms that ELT professionals would recurrently express are connected to a lack of contextualized practices and pedagogies, a blind reliance on approaches and materials promoting native speakerism and English-only ideologies. Such criticism also includes other orientations that kept maintaining the gap between powerful endonormative native nations and marginalized non-native communities from the periphery that, like us, have no other option than studying English as a top down decision. This, sustain authors such as Escobar (2013), Valencia (2013), Núñez-Pardo (2020; 2022) and Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024) seems to have caused a wide but persistent gap in Colombian ELT for many years. In other words, although initially designed following perhaps positive sentiment and expectations, ELT seems to have promoted, in its first years, a type of coloniality of power, being, and knowledge that kept marginalized groups of society, often, peasants, indigenous, African

descendants, in a position of disadvantage. Put another way, former national ELT, that is, the field before the 2000s, was disconnected from reality.

This fact was further reaffirmed by Guerrero (2008) and other critical ELT scholars (Correa & Usma, 2003; Escobar, 2003; Valencia, 2003) who undertook a series of research initiatives pertaining language policies and ELT from a critical perspective in the country. They concluded that although English education was being sold as an ideal action that could change the lives of many Colombian citizens by granting them opportunities to stay connected with the globalized world, the alignments dictating how English should be taught were indeed disconnected from reality. According to them, these policies did not take into consideration that sociocultural particularities affecting the teaching and learning of the language in an underdeveloped country like Colombia. This instrumental view of English education was being reproduced by a considerable number of English teachers nationally for whom English education was mostly (not to say uniquely) connected to develop language skills. As Núñez-Pardo and Telléz-Telléz's (2024) acknowledge, English educators would mostly carry out research and pedagogical initiatives to foster linguistic skills “replicating what other Colombian and international researchers have investigated for decades” (p.652). Fortunately, this situation has been changing over the last two decades. With the development, global spread, and local gradual adoption of critical, decolonial, and Global South epistemologies and lenses, which have set the ground for raising our voices, ELT research produced over the last few years has been promoting alternative ways of speaking, doing, and resisting (see Cruz-Arcila et al., 2024; Mosquera-Pérez, 2022b; Núñez-Pardo and Telléz-Telléz's, 2024 for a more detailed discussion about this). In a few words, these initiatives have sought to foster a “pedagogy of decoloniality” (Fandiño-Parra, 2021) through which our non-native particularities are given a voice. This fact was confirmed by the work developed by Cruz-Arcila et al. (2024) and Núñez-Pardo and Telléz-Telléz's (2024) who undertook the task of analyzing ELT research trends taking place currently in Colombia. A study I similarly conducted in the year 2022 is a testimony of that. English as a Lingua Franca adheres to this slow but growing epistemic detachment. This is the section I move on to now.

### **English as a Lingua Franca in Colombia: insights from an emerging field**

I think that to be coherent and responsible with what I think and feel, I should start by stressing that ELF is a field that is under continuous construction and definition. Although ELF was originally conceived as the way that non-native English users might utilize English as a vehicle of communication with other non-native speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, Jenkins (2015) affirmed that ELF is communication in English that goes beyond description and categorization.

This makes sense considering the fact that ELF is a linguistic manifestation that takes place in ways detaching from and going beyond standards. Nevertheless, while this definition of ELF transgressing formal categorizations is a rather new notion, the first studies and initiatives at large would see ELF as interaction between non-native English users.

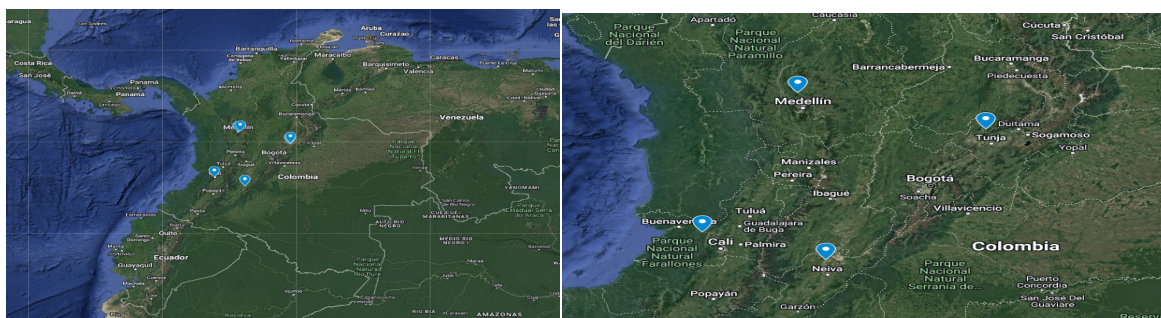
Making this distinction is important because even though there is no consensus in the academic community toward the particularities that define ELF and differentiate it from similar notions such as EIL, WE, and GE, in this paper I present not only contributions having ELF at their core, but also other initiatives potentially overlapping with the aforementioned terms.

To construct the analysis I will be presenting in the following lines, I undertook a second national scale literature review not only in Google Scholar, university repositories, but also in specialized ELT journals like *Profile*, *Issues in Teacher's Professional Development*, *Ikala*, *Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, *How Journal*, *Colombian Applied Linguistics*, *Signo y Pensamiento*, *Enletawa Journal*, *Folios*, and *Lenguaje*. These journals were selected because they are known for their rigorous peer-review processes and are likely venues for research related to English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and other pro-language variation approaches such as World Englishes (WE) and Global Englishes (GE).

The first action I performed for establishing the corpus I have been referring to until now consisted in searching in these journals' platforms research related to ELF and other overlapping concepts. Specifically, my prompts were terms such as "EFL", "EIL", "WE", "GE". From this action, I could gather a small but significant number of articles. However, something that guided my task was that I would only center my attention on articles, either empirical or conceptual, book chapters, these written by Colombian authors. Although I could initially identified a few resources related to World Englishes (WE) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) published in national journals, I excluded them from the final corpus because their authors were based in other regions of the world, and their discussions did not explicitly contribute to understanding the development of ELF in the South American context. Ultimately, I compiled a corpus consisting of seven peer-reviewed articles, four book chapters, three thesis projects developed in undergraduate level, and one in postgraduate education. After compiling the resulting corpus, I conducted a systematic review of each of the publications, focusing on how ELF was potentially theorized or represented in the Colombian context. Finally, I categorized the articles in some specific groups, putting together those specifically framed in ELF, EIL, WE, GE, or those that were simultaneously mixing any of these notions.

Categorically, I could determine that from the 16 total contributions compiled, seven of these are connected to ELF (González, 2024; Losada-Rivas, 2023; Macías, 2010; Mosquera-Pérez, 2022a; Parra-Baez, 2021; Pulgarín-Pérez, 2023; Torres-García, 2018), three to WE (Velez-Rendón, 2003; González, 2010; Castro-López, 2018), one to EIL (García, 2013), three to ELF and WE simultaneously (Macías & Mosquera-Pérez 2024; Mosquera-Pérez, 2024, Mosquera-Pérez, 2025), one to GE (Vargas-Arevalo, 2025) and one to CE (Colombian English) and ECL (English as a Colombian language) (Mora, 2022). Geographically, they are distributed as shown in figures 1 and 2:

Figures 1 and 2. Regions in Colombia where the contributions have emerged



Source: Author's own creation.

The overall task led me to establish that Macías' (2010) article was the first paper published using the term ELF in the country. Even though a conceptual article published by Velez-Rendón (2003) presented an initial state of the sociolinguistic state of English in the country from a World Englishes lens, Macías (2010) was the first Colombian scholar openly inviting other members of ELT circles to head toward an ELF view. Specifically, Macías (2010) grounded his discussion on three essential aspects of the field. As remarked in the initial section of this document, Macías highlighted the need to transgress traditional binary conceptions of native vs non-native English speakers, the need to develop context sensitive teaching methods, and the necessity to developed locally grounded ELT materials.

Macías (2010) centered his discussion around these three specific dimensions because they are essential for a field and enterprise such as ELT. These elements have the capacity to influence positively or negatively the field. This makes sense considering that methods, materials, and identity (ies) can be employed by English educators to keep “reproducing attitudes that will set them free, or that will continue subjugating and oppressing them as it has been historically happening” (León, 2018). In other words, methods, materials and identities have the potential to raise among learners and individuals more critical and reflective views toward English. If critical views are not promoted, oppressive deeds deriving from Exonormativism (Matsuda, 2012) and methodological nationalism (Baker, 2024) will remain.

Moving to the analysis of the other initiatives set in the ELF paradigm, while the papers by Párra-Baez (2021), Mosquera-Pérez (2022) and Losada-Rivas (2023) directly align with Macías (2010) as they follow a conceptual frame and provide thought provoking arguments on why ELF should be more actively adopted in the Colombia contexts, a differentiating factor is that while Macías (2010) focused on the binary concerning natives and non-native English users and educators, the methods used in ELT, and materials connected to the field, Párra-Baez (2021), Mosquera-Pérez (2022) and Losada-Rivas (2023) advance this discussion by pointing out that other essential components of ELT should be included. Among them, they mention testing and assessment, teacher's education and professional development, and more profound views of bilingualism that transcend average views of English as a market oriented element. Additionally, these authors present some practical examples and strategies of how ELF can be put at the core of initial English teacher preparation and English lessons across all levels, suggesting that whereas discussion oriented analyses are necessary, more concrete actions are being urgently required to begin the establishment of ELF in ELT in the nation. This will be a suggestion I include at the end of this article.

It is important to note that the other initiatives grouped in the first category provide an account of empirical works, as they mostly give an account of research processes undertaken by the authors. González (2024) gives an account of the potential that introducing ELF in formal classroom environments may have for those exposed to it. That study established that while ELT has been predominantly linked to traditional English as a foreign language models, for which the ultimate goal is making individuals know English at the expense of sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors potentially affecting the process, putting ELF at the core of her practices provided an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the existing super diversity of English in today's landscape. Accordingly, González (2024) suggests that when infusing ELF in English teaching environments, it does not only provide the opportunity to more critically engage with

analyses regarding the language but it sets the ground to reaffirm a sense of legitimacy as English users among those involved in these interactions. The studies conducted by Torres-García (2018), Pulgarín-Pérez (2023), focused in the perceptions that a group of pre-service EFL teachers and a group of in-service EFL teachers working in a bilingual school held toward teaching from an ELF perspective. In general, these authors found that while participants acknowledged the pedagogical potential that ELF might have in ELT, there are still some conflicting situations arising from it. Some of the issues they found were related to native speakers oriented practices, and to the inexistence of pedagogical materials successfully integrating ELF. Thus, while these studies report on experiences developed in a bilingual school, in the context of an undergraduate language teacher education program, and in the frame of a master's degree in language teaching, these papers suggest that an interest toward relying on ELF practices is emerging in various public or private settings and educational levels of the country. However, more research across scenarios and with diverse populations, is needed. With this in mind, potential future research studies digging into ELF could and should address not only undergraduate or postgraduate education levels, but also primary and secondary contexts to keep determining the impact of ELF as a pedagogical approach.

Having discussed the first group of initiatives, now I turn my attention to the second category, characterized by contributions directly framed in WE. Although smaller in number, this second group includes Velez-Rendón (2003), González (2010), and Castro-López (2018). Similar to Torres-García (2018), Castro-López (2018) sought to examine the perceptions that a group of in-service EFL teachers have not toward ELF in general, but toward English varieties in particular and whether or not those educators performed actions to address such varieties in their teaching practices. Through her inquiry, Castro-López (2018) found that even though her participants could manifest a rather low degree of motivation for English varieties differing from American Standard English (ASE) and British received pronunciation (RP), most of them acknowledged that standard English varieties should continue being taught. Primarily, the participants in Castro-López's (2018) study manifested not feeling prepared to assume such a perspective in their educational contexts because that would require specialized training and a set of actions intended to raise awareness about the existence of English varieties. Additionally, that would require a disposition from students and teachers, something which, according to the participants, might be difficult to encounter.

Even though Castro-López (2018) shared a rather pessimistic attitude from the participants toward English varieties, in their conceptual papers, Velez-Rendón (2003) and González (2010) infused a more hopeful tone. In her analysis of English and its spread in Colombia, Velez-Rendón (2003) manifests through a sociolinguistic perspective that English is inevitably permeating various sociocultural and socioeducational dimensions. This author affirms that while Colombia is a nation fitting the characteristics of expanding circle territories, an increasing interest, especially from the government, in spreading English, has become evident over the last few years. The reason underlying the motivations to foster English nationally lie in an attempt to insert the country into globalization dynamics (Macías, 2010). The feature that stands the most from Velez-Rendón's (2003) analysis is that although she presents a whole range of personal and innovative ways in which Colombians have been using English, she still recognized that Inner Circle dynamics defined how the norms to be followed when teaching English. This specific trait is further remarked by González (2010) who following a similar line of thought declares that



Colombia has historically attached to Inner Circle standards and varieties. However, while González (2010) also recognized the impact of such dynamics in the national territory, she went beyond and made an effort to provide some possibilities that could arise when trying to transgressing such Inner Circle standards. New professional development opportunities, the construction of local knowledge, the need to search for appropriate pedagogies to teach expanding and outer circle English varieties, and the collaborative construction of ELT agendas between policy-makers and scholars are some of the elements this scholar points out.

When further examining the papers by Velez-Rendón's (2003) and González (2010) it is evident that despite a strong national attachment to Inner Circle English varieties and dynamics, these authors think that Colombia has the potential to shift to more glocalized (Kumaravadivelu, 2008) views of English language teaching and learning. This idea is especially supported by Velez-Rendón's (2003) who argues that Colombians have been terrotorializing English. Explicitly, and drawing on Florez's (1977) work, Velez-Rendón (2003) presents some examples of said situation in Table 1 below:

Table 1. English loanwords assimilated into Colombian Spanish

<i>basquetbol</i>	basketball	<i>eslacs</i>	slacks	<i>lonchera</i>	lunch box
<i>bisté</i>	beefsteak	<i>estrés</i>	stress	<i>nilon</i>	nylon
<i>bluyines</i>	blue jeans	<i>filme</i>	film	<i>polución</i>	pollution
<i>bléiser</i>	blazer	<i>folclor</i>	folklore	<i>pulmán</i>	pullman
<i>buldóser</i>	bulldozer	<i>folder</i>	folder	<i>sánduche</i>	sandwich
<i>casete</i>	cassette	<i>fútbol</i>	football	<i>sueter</i>	sweater
<i>computador/a</i>	computer	<i>tenis</i>	tennis	<i>volibol</i>	volleyball

Source: Flórez (1977) (as cited in Velez-Rendón, 2003, p. 194).

Although at first glance these examples might merely constitute a list of English loanwords assimilated into Colombian Spanish, highlighting these particularities is fundamental because they represent, in my view, the first formal attempt to categorize Colombian English as a legitimate variety. Twenty-two years after Vélez-Rendón's (2003) analysis, there have been limited, if any, contributions to classify Colombian English, although there is a creole English in San Andrés Islands (González, 2010). Therefore, research is required "to more clearly and precisely define this particular socio-milieu of learning and use of English in order to create pedagogical responses that are more appropriate for the country and that better address the real needs of all learners at all levels" (Velez-Rendón, 2003, p. 196).

The third category only includes García (2013). Unlike other authors like Macías (2010), Parra-Baez (2021), Mosquera-Pérez (2022a), Pulgarín-Pérez(2023), González (2024), Losada-Rivas (2023), who decided to use the notion ELF in their work, García (2013) resorted to EIL to build his analysis. This scholar argued that since native English speakers have been increasingly outnumbered by native English speakers, current ELT models should accurately reflect such a reality. Nevertheless, García (2013) acknowledges that this has not occurred because of a wide and pervasive predominance of, once again, Inner Circle standards which keep shaping the field.

To counter act these particularities, García (2013) directly proposes shifting to the EIL paradigm. Interestingly, even though at the level of academic literature there does not seem to exist a clear differentiation between the terms ELF and EIL, and these have been rather interchangeably utilized (Macías, 2010), García (2013) affirms that EIL differs from traditional historical ELF/ESL models in the sense that EIL allows the active and fluid integration of particularities which the aforementioned models do not permit. Some of these include code switching, linguistic variations, linguistic exchanges between non-natives as well as between native and non-natives. Thus, while ELF and EIL may overlap in many ways, these two fields are intended, regardless of the theoretical notions employed, to dismantle pervasive native speakerism and other harmful practices which have been affecting the ELT field. Following the suggestion by León (2018) and Galloway (2024) beyond reaching agreements on what notions or terms to use across academia, prolanguage variation approaches, like ELF and EIL, should continue striving for a better field because, as Jenkins (2015) described it, ELF transgresses communicative dynamics, borders, and limits. In other words, ELF and, by extension, EIL are beyond human description, but are simultaneously connected to global actions seeking to balance what has remained unbalanced. It is worth bringing to the fore that, in order to finish his analysis, García (2013) claimed that the adoption of EIL could contribute to the legitimization of other non-standard English varieties in Colombia, suggesting, hence, that to him EIL is also inextricably connected to WE.

Continuing with the discussion, now I move to the fourth category, which comprises the work of scholars positioning their initiatives at the intersection of ELF and WE simultaneously. Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024), Mosquera-Pérez (2024) and Mosquera-Pérez (2025). Particularly, Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024) undertook a study bringing these two paradigms together with the intention of examining the impact of a series of student-led presentations on English varieties and their understanding of English teaching and learning. By implementing and systematically analyzing the incidence of a 16-week course held in an English language teacher education program at a public university in Southern Colombia, Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024) concluded that the experience triggered three general effects. First, being exposed to English varieties distinct to those that belong to the Inner Circle allowed pre-service EFL teachers partaking in the experience to develop new understandings of English. As affirmed by the participants, the study permitted them to “get closer to the culture and identity of English users from different parts of the world and realized that it is important to start appreciating the world for its diversity (Eduardo, IR, 05/16/2022)” (Macías & Mosquera-Pérez, 2024, p.8). Second, the research also led the participant pre-service EFL teachers to comprehend that WE can contribute to their professional development, since when the experienced finished they were convinced about the need to keep raising awareness by various means, including teacher made materials about the plurality of English worldwide. Finally, as the participants had the opportunity to be actively involved with WE through the classroom experience, they also positioned themselves as equally skilled users of English because as they acknowledged, “We tend to think that English-speaking visitors coming from abroad are better than us as local users of English, simply because of the way they speak English and ironically, we feel obliged to adapt to the way they speak (Diana, SSI, 06/10/2022)” (Macías & Mosquera-Pérez, 2024, p.11), suggesting that infusing actions deriving from ELF and WE have the potential to dismantle deep ingrained ideologies linked to standard English, users, and communities.

Similar results were obtained in the study by Mosquera-Pérez (2025) who, by directly interconnecting WE and ELF, concluded that these lenses had a rather positive impact on pre-service EFL teachers working with them. Even though the findings obtained in both initiatives partially concur with those reported in other studies from the international sphere, both, Macías and Mosquera-Pérez (2024) and Mosquera-Pérez (2025) suggest that completely embracing ELF in ELT in a country like Colombia is an endeavor full of obstacles. Therefore, even when raising awareness about the existence of ELF and English varieties may initially help, more concrete actions are still needed. This is why currently they are undertaking a study oriented to examining the elements that may facilitate or hinder the adoption of ELF in an initial English teacher education program from a public university located in Southern Colombia. With this inquiry, the authors are hoping to find some initial direction on how to begin to apply ELF nationally.

The last paper of the previous group is Mosquera-Pérez (2024). The author considered, from a conceptual orientation, a set of opportunities that might appear when intending to create ELT materials integrating ELF communication and features linked to global English varieties. Concretely, Mosquera-Pérez (2024) sustained that designing ELF and WE materials have the potential to serve a twofold purpose: First, they may help to develop a more pluralistic view of global English through which native and non-native English speaking contexts could be similarly appreciated. Second, they could also help to raise a higher sense of legitimacy and ownership of English among non-native users of English, as they have been seen as inferior or “illegitimate” users.. However, while Mosquera-Pérez (2024) argues that positive aspects may result from such a design task, he still recognized that some challenges and rather problematic issues may arise. What English varieties to include? and on what kind of resources to rely? are some of the aspects that may appear when designing ELF and WE aware materials, suggests this author. Therefore, although Mosquera-Pérez (2024) recommends progressively mixing the fields of materials design with the ELF and WE paradigms, he also warns that these steps should be systematically and rigorously undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of such materials in those potentially engaged with them. In other words, more research at the intersection between ELF/WE and materials design is needed to completely understand the long-term effects that designing and implementing these types of resources may have on ELT.

The fifth and last category of the group has at its center the work by Mora (2022) and Vargas-Arevalo (2025) who focused their papers respectively on examining the possibility and ground for transitioning from a traditional EFL model to a CE (Colombian English) or ECL (English as a Colombian language) framework, and on reporting a GE experience carried out in the frame of a phonetics and phonology course in an initial English language teacher education program at a public university located in the central-eastern region of Colombia. In the first place, Mora (2022) argued that while traditional EFL models may serve to continue basing the teaching of the English language in the country, this system has some epistemological deficiencies that hinder a complete appropriation of English in the country. Mora (2022) contends that etymologically, the very notion of “English as a foreign language” is problematic because “foreign” can be largely associated with other expressions such as “alien”, “strange”, and “weird”, embodying thus negative connotations of English education across society. Therefore, by emphatically remarking that the future of English and ELT in Colombia should go much further than mere “nomenclature” issues, Mora (2022) asserts, like Losada-Rivas (2023) that there is an imperative need to move to more ecological views of language as this lens has the potential to

promote more profound conversations regarding English and native languages coexisting in the territory. This may lead to, as similarly sustained by Losada-Rivas (2023), have “a future where our students and communities can own their second languages and not only use English in Colombia but English for Colombia” (Mora, 2022, p. 24). After all, and now more than ever, English is present in Colombian citizens’ reality whether they like it or not.

To finish, Vargas-Arevalo (2025) examined in her master’s thesis the effects that exposing a group of prospective English teachers to strategies and practices aiming to highlight Global English in the frame of one of the mandatory courses could have on their understanding of the language and of their potential role as future active agents. By continuously exposing them to global English varieties distant from those traditional from the Inner Circle by means of authentic materials such as podcasts, academic articles, tik toks, and by constantly engaging them with critical reflective cycles, Vargas-Arevalo (2025) established that GE and GELT (Global Englishes Language Teaching framework) is a paradigm that sets the ground for developing more conscious views of English. This initiative is highly interesting as after being in contact with GE most participants manifested positive attitudes concerning global Englishes. I am making this assertion because despite continuous efforts to raise more conscious positions toward global English varieties, GE scholars have consistently found that many of their participants still preferred standard varieties. Hence, future research initiatives could seek to determine why some participants feel more willing to embrace global English varieties while others, despite a rather comprehensive degree of exposure to global linguistic dynamics, are still supporting traditional conceptions of English; conceptions, which, frequently, keep oppressing NNESTs populations.

### **Concluding remarks and future venues**

Assembling together the initiatives I have analyzed in this paper, it is evident that the country is increasingly promoting ELF and notions inevitably linked to it. Although in previous years, that is, before 2010 there were no major contributions revolving around ELF, now there are 16 initiatives across various regions of the nation. To my knowledge (given that I am one of the two authors) there is even a study (Macías & Mosquera-Pérez, 2025 - forthcoming) examining the difficulties that prospective English teachers and English teacher educators from an initial English teacher education program at a public university from Southeastern Colombia think could hinder the implementation of ELF. This research, sets the ground to affirming that there is an interest to resignify English preparation following EFL. Therefore, and taken together, all these initiatives suggest that government entities and ELT circles should be ready to collaboratively sit down and converse about how to integrate the reality of English in upcoming years; a reality being largely shaped by lingua franca global interactions.

The previous comment also leads me to think that future research studies revolving around ELF and potentially connected notions should move to a more action oriented stance. Even though continuing research on the perspectives that pre-service EFL educators, in-service English educators, and other populations potentially involved in the field is not negative by any means of course, I personally believe that upcoming contributions should center their attention on determining the long term effects that exposing learners and teachers to ELF could have on their positioning as English users and as educators. Hence, future research in the field will have to recur to materials design, ELF, WE, GE, learners’ and teachers’ identity, professional development, and

even “invisible” or “profound” views of bilingualism to develop a more complete understanding of the aspects I have been developing thus far. By holistically integrating the aforementioned elements it is very likely that future research studies could even suggest that ELF/WE/GE could not be enough to properly tackle the multilingual nature of Colombia, suggesting, even, that a term such as “Multilingualism through English” as is being currently proposed in other territories with similar features, could be needed. This could have the potential to fully reflect the language ecology view that Mora (2022) and Losada-Rivas (2023) were so passionately defending, as aboriginal Colombian languages would have an incidence in this.

To finish, I would like to acknowledge that the review I have made here instills in me a sentiment of hope and relief. Being myself a non-native English speaker who felt partially discriminated at some point because of my accent and pronunciation in English, I think that the future looks promising. In some years, Colombians could understand that the idea of speaking English is not sounding like natives, or aligning with dominant Anglosaxon traditions which have shadowed Latin American realities. As Canagarajah's (1999) words say, which have always resonated in my mind and walked with me through my professional path, individuals will understand that we have a need to learn English because that way we are able to better and more efficiently resist a pervasive dominant machinery, and let our own voice and our overall self be heard. Needless to say it, this powerful stance takes further relevance considering the fact that historically English teachers have been discriminated (at least by some people, and in certain places of Colombia) only because we teach the language. What many people do not know, though (or seem to voluntarily ignore) is that there is a left wing in the field (aka critical applied linguistics and English language teaching) that continuously advocates for social justice and other humanistic dynamics and dimensions. However, to achieve such purposes, seedbeds, research groups, and professionals willing to discuss these aspects are needed. Additionally, having specialized centers like an official institute for the development of English in Colombia could help. Though this is not something simple to achieve, establishments founded to study Global Englishes and ELF like the Center for Global Englishes at Southampton University, the Center for English as a Lingua Franca in Tamagawa University, and the group ELF Brasil at Federal University of Bahia are a testimonio honoring this. Therefore, if you are wanting (and no, this is not a grammar mistake; it's a feature of Indian English) to begin to contribute to the expansion of these views, the time is now. Contributions focusing on ELF, WE, GELT, regardless of where they are conceived, will shed new lights on how to continue expanding our field.

## References

- Baker, W. [Jhon Eduardo Mosquera Pérez] (April 26th, 2024) *Transcultural awareness, Global Englishes and ELT: a Conversation with Dr Will Baker* [Video]. Youtube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7wyZgxUDHk&t=816s>
- Brown, M. (2006). *Adventuring Through Spanish Colonies: Simon Bolivar, Foreign Mercenaries and the Birth of New Nations*. Liverpool University Press.
- Brown, M., Crow, J., & Lea, J. (2024). Financing a revolution: The impact of Bolivar's British networks in the independence of Colombia. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 56(3), 389-413.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022216x24000488>

- Bushnell, D. (1993). *The making of modern Colombia: A nation in spite of itself* (1st ed.). University of California Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt4cgg7g>
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Castro-López, S. J. (2018). *The perceptions of English teachers on English varieties & English language teaching and their implications on current ELT practices in public schools in Cali, Colombia* [Master's thesis, Universidad Icesi] [https://repository.icesi.edu.co/biblioteca\\_digital/handle/10906/84250](https://repository.icesi.edu.co/biblioteca_digital/handle/10906/84250)
- Congreso de Colombia. (1994). Ley 115 de 1994: Por la cual se expide la Ley General de Educación. Diario Oficial No. 41.214, 8 de febrero de 1994. [https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-85906\\_archivo\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-85906_archivo_pdf.pdf)
- Correa, D., & Usma Wilches, J. (2013). From a Bureaucratic to a Critical-Sociocultural Model of Policymaking in Colombia. *HOW*, 20(1), 226–242.
- Cruz-Arcila, F., Donoso-Herrera, L., Moreno-García, N. P., & Ayala-Zárate, J. (2024). Tendencias Investigativas en Programas de Maestría en Lenguas: traspasando las fronteras del inglés. *Praxis & Saber*, 15(43), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.19053/upc.22160159.v15.n43.2024.17276>
- Escobar, 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
- Fandiño-Parra, Y. J. (2021). Decolonizing English Language Teaching in Colombia: Epistemological Perspectives and Discursive Alternatives. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 23(2), 166–181. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.17087>
- Flórez, L. (1977). *Apuntes de español [Notes on Spanish]*. Publicaciones del Instituto Caro y Cuervo.
- Galeano, E. (1992). *Ser como ellos y otros artículos*. Siglo XXI Editores.
- Galloway, N. (2024). What's in a name? Global Englishes—An umbrella term to address silo mentality or a misunderstood paradigm reinforcing silos? *TESOL Quarterly*, 59(1), 24-48. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3337>
- García, R. E. (2013). English as an international language: a review of the literature. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 15(1), 113–126. <https://doi.org/10.14483/udistrital.jour.calj.2013.1.a08>
- González, A. (2010). English and English teaching in Colombia: tensions and possibilities in the expanding circle. In Kirkpatrick, A. (ed) *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203849323>
- González, A. (2024). Introducing ELF-aware teacher education in Colombia: Voices of in-service teachers pursuing graduate studies. In S. Morán Panero, M. Martínez-Sánchez & G. Ronzón-Montiel (Ed.), *English as a Lingua Franca in Latin American Education: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 67-90). De Gruyter Mouton.

- Guerrero, 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.
- Jenkins, J. (2015). Repositioning English and multilingualism in English as a Lingua Franca. *Englishes in Practice*, 2(3), 49-85.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/eip-2015-0003>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2008). *Cultural globalization and language education*. Yale University Press.
- León, M. (2018). Standard Language Ideologies, World Englishes, and English Language Teaching: an Overview. *The Journal of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (JSLAT)* 25, 44-62.
- Losada-Rivas, J.J. (2023). Appropriating ELT in Colombia: A Critical Call to Localize Language Teaching. In Guerrero-Nieto, C.H. (eds) *Unauthorized Outlooks on Second Languages Education and Policies*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45051-8\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45051-8_5)
- Macías, D. F. (2010). Considering New Perspectives in ELT in Colombia: From EFL to ELF. *HOW Journal*, 17(1), 181-194.
- Macías, D. F., & Mosquera-Pérez, J. E. (2024). English as a Lingua Franca, world Englishes, and the preparation of language teachers: An awareness-raising experience in an English teacher education program in Colombia. *TESOL Journal*, 15(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.789>
- Matsuda, A. (2012). *Principles and practices of teaching English as an international language*. Multilingual Matters.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia. (2004). *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo*.  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia. (2014). *Programa Colombia Bilingüe 2014–2018*. <https://rutamaestra.santillana.com.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PROGRAMA-COLOMBIA-BILING%C3%9CE-2014-2018.pdf>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia. (2015). *Plan Nacional de Inglés 2015–2025*.  
[https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-343837\\_Programa\\_Nacional\\_Ingles.pdf](https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-343837_Programa_Nacional_Ingles.pdf)
- Mora, R. A. (2022). Toward more equitable language learning and teaching frameworks for our ELT community: Moving from EFL to ECL to CE. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 24, 25-42.  
<https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.1137>
- Mosquera Pérez, J. E. (2022a). From EFL to ELF: In the need to incorporate principles of English as a Lingua Franca in colombian ELT. *Enletawa Journal*, 15(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.19053/2011835x.14664>
- Mosquera Pérez, J. E. (2022b). Scholars raising their voices up: An approximation to discourses of hegemony and resistance in ELT in Colombia. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 27(3), 725-743.  
<https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v27n3a08>

- Mosquera-Pérez, J., E., (2024). English as a lingua franca and world Englishes in ELT: Challenges and opportunities for materials development and implementation. *ETAS Journal*, 41(1), 16-18.
- Mosquera-Pérez, J.E. (2025). Infusing English as a Lingua Franca and World Englishes in English Language Teacher Preparation: An Experience with Colombian Undergraduate Students. In Y. Herreño-Contreras. (eds), *Current Challenges and Emerging Teaching English as a Foreign Language Practice. English Language Teaching: Theory, Research and Pedagogy* (pp. 87–108). Springer.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-1566-7\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-1566-7_4)
- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2020). Inquiring into the Coloniality of knowledge, power, and being in EFL textbooks. *HOW*, 27(2), 113-133.  
<https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.2.566>
- Núñez Pardo, A. (2022). Indelible coloniality and emergent decoloniality in Colombian-authored EFL textbooks: A critical content analysis. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 27(3), 702-724.  
<https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v27n3a07>
- Núñez-Pardo, A. & Téllez-Téllez, M. F. (2024). From a colonial research tension to decolonial research trends: Analysing 100 Colombian MEd theses and reports. *Issues in Educational Research*, 34(2), 647-665.
- Parra-Baez, L., E. (2021). *The Importance of English as a Lingua Franca in Teaching Pronunciation to Spanish Speakers* [Undergraduate tesis, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia.]
- Pulgarín-Pérez, A. S. (2023). *English as a lingua franca and pre-service English teachers: Challenging beliefs in a course on English phonetics and phonology* [Master's tesis, Universidad de Antioquia].  
<https://bibliotecadigital.udea.edu.co/entities/publication/7684d3e9-881c-4ade-baea-00d9a8377ac4>
- Racine, K. (2006). Rum, Recruitment and Revolution: Alcohol and the British and Irish Legions in Colombia's War for Independence, 1817-1823. *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, 4(2), 45-53
- Torres-García, A.F. (2018). *English for Global Citizens. Non Native English Teachers Perspectives on Teaching English as a Lingua Franca in a Bilingual School in Cali* [Master's thesis, Universidad Icesi].
- Valencia, M. (2013). Language policy and the manufacturing of consent for foreign intervention in Colombia. *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(1), 27–43.
- Vargas Arévalo, M. C. (2025). *Challenging linguistic hierarchies in English language teaching (ELT) through Global Englishes* [Unpublished master's thesis, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia].
- Vélez-Rendón, G. (2003). English in Colombia: A sociolinguistic profile. *World Englishes*, 22(2), 185-198.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971x.00287>