

**A Critical Exploration of the Effects of English Language Instruction in Colombian Higher
Education on Low-income Students' Capability Formation**

Lee Mackenzie, B.A. (English), MA (TESOL)

May 2021

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Educational Research,
Lancaster University, UK

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not
been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

The word-length conforms to the permitted maximum.

Signature 

Abstract

English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and many higher education institutes (HEIs) in the global South have prioritised English language education (ELE). In Colombia, the context of this study, English has become the *de facto* foreign language in Colombian higher education (HE) although little is known about its effects on the lives of HE students from low-income backgrounds. Addressing this knowledge gap is critical to ensure that ELE in Colombian HE is relevant and socially just. The current study used the capability approach (CA) to identify the substantive freedoms which English can enlarge or constrain in the lives of economically vulnerable graduates in Colombia, and to identify factors which are instrumental in this process. Since Sen and Nussbaum's normative framework has given insufficient consideration to questions of power and inequality, this study also draws on Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism. Qualitative interviews with 20 economically vulnerable graduates and four HE experts in the field of Colombian ELE were conducted to investigate this issue, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings show that English in Colombia, although implicated in global injustices, can cultivate economic, sociocultural and epistemic capabilities. However, they also show how this capability expansion is also shaped by a range of conversion factors. This thesis builds on the small number of qualitative studies exploring the relationship between English and development in the global South and extends this literature by improving our understanding of this relationship in the Colombian context, including the ways in which the spread of English can perpetuate asymmetrical North-South power relations. It also makes a valuable contribution to the capability literature by highlighting the importance of viewing linguistic capabilities as dynamic and relational. The findings of this thesis are therefore of interest not only to language policy experts and other language education stakeholders in developing contexts, but also to capability scholars.

Contents

Abstract	2
Contents	3
Acknowledgements	5
Publications derived from work on the Doctoral Programme	6
Abbreviations	7
Figures and Tables	9
1. Introduction	10
1.1 Introduction	10
1.2 Importance of the Study	11
1.3 Overview of Chapters	12
1.4 A Note on Terminology	12
2. Higher Education in Colombia	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Colombia: The Development Context	14
2.3 The Neoliberalisation and Massification of HE in the Global South	15
2.4 A Short History of HE in Colombia	17
2.5 The Neoliberal Massification of Colombian HE	18
2.6 Social Justice Implications	19
2.7 Chapter Summary	20
3. Colombia, English, and Development	21
3.1 Introduction	21
3.2 Foreign Languages in Colombia	21
3.3 English Language Policies and Colombian HE	21
3.4 English and Development	22
3.4.1 English and the economy	23
3.4.2 English and international mobility	25
3.4.3 English and access to knowledge	26
3.4.4 English and personal growth	27
3.5 Conclusions	27
4 The Capability Approach and Linguistic Imperialism	29
4.1 Introduction	29
4.2 The Capability Approach	29
4.2.1 Capabilities and functionings	29
4.2.2 Agency and conversion factors	30
4.2.3 Adaptive preferences and aspirations	32
4.2.4 Attending to power inequalities	32
4.3 Linguistic Imperialism	33
4.3.1 Reasons behind the spread of English	33
4.3.2 Criticisms	34
4.4 Theorising English as a Linguistic Capability	34
4.4.1 The capability approach and English	35
4.5 Chapter Summary	40
5 Methodology	41
5.1 Introduction	41
5.2 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions	41
5.3 Methodology	42
5.4 Sampling Strategy	42
5.5 Data Collection Methods and Rationale	48
5.5.1 Interviews	48
5.5.2 Interview guide	48
5.5.3 Interview procedure	49
5.5.4 Validity threats in interviews	49
5.6 Data Analysis Methods and Rationale	50
5.6.1 Procedure	51
5.6.1.1 Transcription and checking	51
5.6.1.2 Initial coding	51
5.6.1.3 Searching for themes	51
5.6.1.4 Reviewing themes	52
5.6.1.5 Defining and naming themes	52
5.6.1.6 Presenting and displaying the data	52
5.6.2 Atlas.ti	52

5.6.3 Validity threats in data analysis	53
5.7 Limitations and Trustworthiness	53
5.8 Ethics	54
5.9 Chapter Summary	54
6 Findings and Discussion	56
6.1 English and Development in Colombian HE	56
6.1.1 Developing the capability to communicate in English: A case of linguistic injustice	57
6.1.2 Overcoming linguistic injustice	62
6.1.3 Conclusion	64
6.2 English and Development in Colombian Society	65
6.2.1 Economic capabilities	65
6.2.1.1 Improving one's job prospects	65
6.2.1.2 Buying, selling, and exchanging goods	67
6.2.3 Sociocultural capabilities	69
6.2.3.1 Appreciating artistic and cultural expression	69
6.2.3.2 Communicating with people from different cultures	70
6.2.3.3 Sociality and participation	70
6.2.3.4 Respect, dignity, and recognition	71
6.2.3.5 Having international mobility aspirations	73
6.2.4 The epistemic access capability	74
6.2.5 Conclusion	75
6.3 Factors Shaping the Conversion of English into Valued Beings and Doings in Colombian Society	76
6.3.1 Factors shaping the conversion of English into economic capabilities	76
6.3.1.1 English level	76
6.3.1.2 Geographical location	78
6.3.1.3 Amiguismo	79
6.3.2 Factors shaping the conversion of English into sociocultural capabilities	81
6.3.2.1 English level	81
6.3.2.2 Visa requirements	82
6.3.2.3 Internet access	83
6.3.3 Factors shaping the conversion of English into the epistemic access capability	83
6.3.4 Conclusion	84
7 Conclusion	85
7.1 Summary of Main Research Findings	85
7.2 Contribution to Knowledge	85
7.3 Recommendations	87
7.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research	89
7.5 Final Reflections	89
8. Bibliography	90
9. Appendices	108
APPENDIX A: Participant information sheet and consent form	108
APPENDIX B: Themes and subthemes	110
APPENDIX C: Most relevant themes and subthemes	111

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Melis Cin for her patience and guidance throughout the programme. I would also like to thank other staff at Lancaster during Part 1 of the programme, particularly Dr. Jo Warin and Dr. Jan McArthur whose understanding and support gave me the confidence to keep going. Additionally, I would like to thank the research participants for making this thesis possible. Finally, I must also congratulate my wife, Deisy, and my daughter, Luna, for putting up with me during this arduous but rewarding journey.

Publications derived from work on the Doctoral Programme

- Mackenzie, L. (2019). A critical evaluation of the social justice implications of the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingualism policies. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 21(2), 117-134.
- Mackenzie, L. (2019). Evaluation of an English Language Peer Tutoring Intervention. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(5), 869-880.
- Mackenzie, L. (2020). A Case of Capability Expansion or Capability Reduction? An Exploration of Loan Recipients' Views of ICETEX: Colombia's Higher Education Student Loans Institute, *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, May 2020.
- Mackenzie, L. (2021). Discriminatory job advertisements for English language teachers in Colombia: An analysis of recruitment biases, *TESOL journal*, 12(1), 1-21.

Abbreviations

BANA	Britain, Australasia and North America
CA	Capability approach
CEFR	Common European Framework
DANE	National Administrative Department of Statistics
	<i>Departamento Nacional Administrativo de Estadística</i>
DNP	National Planning Department
	<i>Departamento Nacional de Planeación</i>
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELLs	English language learners
ELE	English language education
ELT	English language teaching
EMI	English as a medium of instruction
GoC	Government of Colombia
HE	Higher education
HEIs	Higher education institutes
HICs	High-income countries
ICETEX	Institute for Student Loans and Study Abroad
	<i>Instituto Colombiano de Crédito Educativo y Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior Colombia</i>
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries
MEN	Ministry of National Education, Colombia
	<i>Ministerio de Educación Nacional</i>
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SENA	National Learning Service

	<i>Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje</i>
TA	Thematic analysis
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WEF	World Economic Forum

Figures and Tables

Figure 4.1 Operationalising English in the current study.....38

Figure 7.1 Summary of key research findings.....86

Table 5.1 Participant profiles (graduates).....44

Table 5.2 Participant profiles (graduates).....45

Table 5.3 Participant profiles (graduates).....46

Table 5.4 Participant profiles (experts).....48

Table 6.1 Jobs obtained as a result of English skills.....66

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

English is currently the most widely spoken language on the planet (Eberhard et al., 2020). As such, mastery of the English language forms an important component of knowledge capital in a globalised world and is perceived by many governments in the global South as key to their development (Rassool, 2013; Sayer, 2015). Indeed, the positive relationship between English and development, often understood to mean economic development, permeates official language policy discourse in the global South (e.g. Euromonitor, 2010; Lunt & Hamlyn, 2007). In Colombia, the context of the current study, the Ministry of Education (MEN) provides an example of such discourse:

Being bilingual is essential in a globalised world which demands that one can communicate better, open borders, understand other contexts, appropriate and circulate tastes, understand and be understood, enrich oneself, and play a decisive role in the development of the country. Being bilingual broadens the opportunities to be more competent and competitive (2006: 3).

As other scholars have pointed out, the term ‘bilingualism’ is used by the government of Colombia (GoC¹) to refer exclusively to English and Spanish (Guerrero, 2010; Valencia, 2005). This quote therefore reveals how the GoC predominantly views dual competence in these hegemonic European languages as a tool for fostering the country’s development rather than as an end in itself (Fandiño-Parra et al., 2012; Martínez, 2016). The link between development and English is further underscored by the inclusion of English in the GoC’s national plan for development for 2014-2018 on the grounds that ‘it is currently the most commonly spoken language in the world for education, business and the dissemination of culture’ (DNP, 2015: 100). Underpinned by this discourse of English and development, the GoC has implemented a range of English linguistic policies in recent years. One such policy has mandated that HE graduates achieve an intermediate level of competence in a second language (MEN, 2015). In view of its status as a global *lingua franca*, this law has led to the introduction of compulsory ELE in most HEIs in Colombia (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). This decree may be justified so long as it does, in fact, lead to development, understood here as the expansion of individuals’ substantive freedoms (Anand & Sen, 2000). Thus, the current study aims to answer the following research questions:

- Which capabilities has ELE in Colombian HE fostered or thwarted in the lives of economically disadvantaged graduates?
- Which factors have a bearing on whether ELE in Colombian HE has a positive or negative influence on capability formation?

Following a qualitative research design, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Colombian HE graduates from low-income backgrounds in order to address these questions. These graduates constituted the main data source, but interviews were also carried out with Colombian scholars in the field of ELE as a means of enhancing the trustworthiness of the data, which were subsequently analysed using thematic analysis. The CA and Phillipson’s (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism constituted the theoretical tools that were used to inform data collection and interpret the findings.

¹ As the MEN is a ministry of the GoC, the terms MEN and GoC are used interchangeably in this paper.

1.2 Importance of the Study

The current study is of value for several reasons. First of all, on a personal level, this topic is close to my heart since I work as an English language educator in a prestigious private Colombian university whose population consists of a high proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Given the potential of English to marginalise those with limited resources (Mohanty, 2017), and to perpetuate unequal power relations between the global North and South (Phillipson, 1992), I have felt a growing sense of unease in recent years regarding the value of English for such students, and this has led me to question whether the profession to which I have dedicated most of my adult life may be doing more harm than good.

Second, such research is particularly timely given the recent decision by many governments in the global South to prioritise initiatives which promote ELE in their respective countries (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017; Khan, 2019). In Latin America these initiatives include the *Programa Nacional de Inglés*² in Mexico; *Inglés Abre Puertas*³ in Chile; and *Inglés, Puertas al Mundo*⁴ in Perú. These initiatives also extend to HE systems in the region. For example, university graduates in Ecuador are expected to achieve an English level equivalent to B1 on the Common European Framework (CEFR) (British Council, 2015a); while in Brazil English is a component on the university admissions exam (Oliveira, 2019); and in Peru second language education, which again usually means English, is compulsory for undergraduates (*Ministerio de Educación, Perú*, 2015). Thus, evidence of the contribution that English can make to human development in Colombia may inform language policy debates in other countries in Latin America in particular and in the global South more generally. Research in such contexts is especially important given the need for governments in developing countries to prioritise how the typically scarce resources available are allocated (Bamgbose, 1999; Bruthiaux, 2002). Indeed, while an emerging body of research investigates the context-dependent relationship between English and development in Africa and Asia, in Latin America this relationship remains underexplored (Ferguson, 2013; Mohanty, 2017).

Third, by investigating the relevance of English for HE students in Colombia, this study aims to contribute to the limited research on educational quality in the Latin American context. Important in this regard is the inclusion of individuals from technical and technological (T&T) subjects, some of whom studied at the largest autonomous state HEI in the country, *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*⁵ (SENA). Research involving such participants is particularly important given a) the lack of governmental oversight of SENA; b) the paucity of studies which include SENA graduates; c) growing concerns about the relevance of such education in Colombia; and d) the vulnerable status of the majority of T&T students (Ferreira et al., 2017; González-Velosa et al., 2015; OECD, 2016; Radinger et al., 2018; World Bank, 2013). Thus, I hope that the research conducted in this thesis can enhance the accountability of HE in Colombia, including SENA, and give voice to marginalised HE graduates in the country.

Finally, in using the CA to explore the ways in which English has shaped the opportunities of HE graduates, this thesis builds on the work of researchers who have applied the CA to issues relating to the use of English in educational settings in the global South (e.g. Adamson, 2020a; Erling, 2017; Tamim, 2014). However, the research presented here goes

² National English Programme

³ English Opens Doors

⁴ English, Doors to the World

⁵ National Learning Service

beyond this literature by enhancing our understanding of the relationship between English and development in Colombian graduates' broader social environment, the factors influencing this relationship, and the role that individual agency plays in these processes. In this regard the current study may be unique. Another important contribution that this paper makes to the capability literature is to highlight the value of conceptualising linguistic capabilities as relational, dynamic, and person-specific since doing so can have important social justice implications. Given that, up until now, the role of English within the CA has been undertheorised, such research can advance current thinking regarding linguistic injustice.

1.3 Overview of Chapters

This thesis falls into seven main sections. In chapter 2 I identify the main development challenges for Colombia, briefly summarise the global trends in HE, and trace the major transformations in Colombian HE in recent years. My main argument here is that two of these trends - neoliberalisation and massification - have contributed to several injustices in Colombian HE. Following this, chapter 3 provides an overview of the role of imported languages in Colombia and foregrounds some social justice implications of the imposition of English in Colombian HE. This chapter also discusses research in the field of English and development and identifies key domains where English can contribute to human development in the country. In chapter 4 I present this paper's theoretical framework, which draws together the theory of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) and core elements of the CA, before conceptualising English as a linguistic capability within the CA. Subsequently, the methodology chapter highlights this study's ontological and epistemological underpinnings, describes the methodological and ethical procedures followed, and introduces this study's participants. After this, chapter 6 reveals how English can promote human flourishing in a number of ways, contingent upon a range of enabling factors and human agency, even though it may at the same time be implicated in global injustices. Finally, the conclusion foregrounds the main theoretical and empirical contributions this study makes and proposes several recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. Here I also suggest directions for future research and reflect on my research experiences.

1.4 A Note on Terminology

For the sake of convenience, the terms "developed" and "developing", and "global North" and "global South" are used, although I am aware that these reductive terms oversimplify a complex reality and are inevitably contested (Appleby, 2010). In accordance with organisations such as the OECD and the WTO, "developing" and "developed" refer to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and high-income countries (HICs) respectively, and these terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis (Fantón & Serajuddin, 2016; WTO, n.d.). Similarly, following de Sousa Santos (2016: 18-19), the term global South does not refer to a geographical region,

Even though the great majority of its populations live in countries of the Southern hemisphere.

The South is rather a metaphor for the human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism on the global level, as well as for the resistance to overcoming or minimising such suffering. It is, therefore, an anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, anti-patriarchal, and anti-imperialist South. It is a South that also exists in the geographic North (Europe and North America), in the form of excluded, silenced and marginalised populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the

unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia, racism and islamophobia.

As for 'development', depending on the approach and the context, this term can take on different meanings (Chimbutane, 2017; Rassool, 2013). This paper adopts the human development approach definition which holds that development is about "expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value" (UNDP, 2001: 9). A distinction is also needed between the industrialised English-speaking countries which benefit from the spread of English (Phillipson, 1992) and former British colonies which have significant or predominantly English-speaking populations such as India, Nigeria, and Jamaica. To this end, I employ Holliday's (1994: 4) term "BANA" (Britain, Australasia and North America) to refer to the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the US.

2. Higher Education in Colombia

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. First, I provide an overview of key development priorities for Colombia. Second, I identify two key trends in HE in the global South - neoliberalisation and massification - and briefly explore the social justice implications of these trends. Third, I trace the major transformations in Colombian HE in recent years and show how these have been shaped by a neoliberal agenda and a massive surge in participation. Finally, I discuss the impact of these developments on students from low-income backgrounds.

2.2 Colombia: The Development Context

Colombia is an upper-middle-income country of approximately 50 million inhabitants (CIA World Factbook, 2021). Afro-Colombians (6.8%) and indigenous peoples (4.3%) constitute the largest minority groups, though the vast majority are a mix of ethnicities (CIA World Factbook, 2021). In terms of development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranks Colombia 90th out of 189 countries and territories (UNDP, 2018). Although the country is in the high human development group, its performance is below average both for this group and for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (UNDP, 2018). Indeed, as we shall see, Colombia is a deeply divided country, which faces many major development challenges.

One major barrier to Colombia's development is the unequal level of income distribution, which was the second highest in Latin America in 2019 (World Bank, 2021). In 2016, 28% of Colombians were living below the national poverty line, and 2.2 million people were living on \$1.9⁶ a day or less (World Bank, 2018). Inequality is a historic issue in Colombia, with the benefits of the country's wealth disproportionately accruing to an elite minority descended from the Spanish colonisers (World Bank, 2013).

The employment situation in the country can partly account for such inequality. For example, Colombia's jobless rate for the first quarter of 2020 (prior to the COVID-19 lockdown) was 11.2%, the fifth highest among all OECD countries (OECD, 2020), and an estimated 50% of the Colombian workforce subsists on either the minimum wage⁷ or less (OECD, 2017). Moreover, around 48% of the working population were informally employed from October to December 2020 (DANE, 2021). Informality is more likely to affect young people, and is characterised by job insecurity, poor remuneration and working conditions, and a lack of social benefits (OECD, 2016; Radinger et al., 2018). Thus, a lack of quality, well-paid employment presents another major challenge to Colombia's development (Radinger et al., 2018).

Another key obstacle to development is the rural/urban divide. Roughly a quarter of all Colombians live in rural areas, and on average, 43% of people in rural zones live in poverty, compared to 27% of those in cities (OECD, 2016; Radinger et al., 2018). Most of the country's ethnic minorities live in rural communities, and are therefore more likely to be affected by problems related to underdevelopment such as teenage pregnancies, underemployment, hunger, violence, lack of ambition, discrimination, and poor infrastructure (OECD, 2017; Radinger et al., 2018; USAID, 2014). This underdevelopment is also reflected in education. For example, the average number of years of schooling in rural areas is

⁶ \$ refers to US dollars, unless otherwise stated.

⁷ As of May 2021, the Colombian minimum wage was 908,526 Colombian pesos, or just under \$250 a month (Salario Minimo Colombia, 2021)

six, compared to ten in urban areas, which is one explanation for the lower levels of literacy and the dearth of HE graduates in rural zones (UNESCO, 2016, 2017).

One important reason for underdevelopment in rural districts is the decades-long civil war, which has internally displaced many of the eight million refugees to poor communities in Colombia's largest cities (CIA World Factbook, 2021; UNHCR, 2016). This armed conflict is still being fought in different areas of the country and has resulted in lower rates of participation in compulsory education in rural regions (OECD, 2017). The situation is complicated further by the illicit cultivation of coca, which continues to fuel the conflict and is used as a justification for continued US military and political involvement in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2019; OHCHR, 2018). Given this bleak reality, it is hardly surprising that the ongoing conflict is partly responsible for another barrier to Colombia's development: outward migration (Echeverri, 2017; Louidor, 2018). Indeed, in recent decades, Colombia has been a net exporter of migrants, with 4.7 million Colombians resident in foreign countries in 2014 (Louidor, 2018).

The education system also reveals profound inequality with public and private sector education segregated according to social strata (Radinger et al., 2018). As a result, socioeconomic status is a strong predictor of educational success with school life expectancy for those from the poorest backgrounds half that of students from the wealthiest (OECD, 2016). Moreover, the chances that students from state schools will perform well on the high school leaving exam, which regulates access to HE, are much lower than for their private school counterparts (Duarte et al., 2012; OECD, 2016). Added to this is the cost of HE in Colombia, which can range from around a few hundred dollars per semester for public universities to several thousand dollars per semester for private institutions (Gómez, 2021; "Matricula cero", 2021). This means that those from the poorest backgrounds are underrepresented in the HE system with only 11.3% of students from the lowest income quintile entering HE compared to 56.7% from the wealthiest (World Bank, 2018). At the international level, Colombia is also at a significant disadvantage. For example, the average Colombian is much more likely to repeat a grade than his/her counterparts in other OECD countries, and performs far worse on the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2017). In addition, when Colombian students are admitted to post-secondary education, they are younger and have typically completed fewer years of schooling than their OECD peers (OECD, 2016).

Added to these issues are others such as systemic corruption, which costs the country per year almost as much as it spends on education (OHCHR, 2018; *Transparencia por Colombia*, 2016); poor infrastructure (WEF, 2015); and deep inequality in terms of land ownership (USAID, 2014).

In sum, Colombia is a country which is divided along economic, geographic, political and educational lines. These divisions have implications for the country's development, and, by extension, for the role that English can play in development in Colombia.

2.3 The Neoliberalisation and Massification of HE in the Global South

Traditionally, access to HE in LMICs was limited to the wealthiest members of society (Schendel & McCowan, 2016). However, in recent decades HE worldwide has experienced unrivalled levels of growth, a great deal of which is occurring in the global South (Altbach, 2013; Marginson, 2018). Reasons for this expansion include globalisation; greater

urbanisation; rising middle-class incomes and aspirations; and a growing consensus regarding the importance of HE both for the knowledge economy and for national development (Altbach, 2013; Marginson, 2018; Naidoo, 2011; Schendel & McCowan, 2016). Parallel to this massification trend has been the progressive subordination of HE to market values and corporate interests, the effects of which include greater commodification of knowledge, a decline in non-vocational programme offerings, and more privatisation (Giroux, 2010; McCowan, 2016; Naidoo, 2011; Shin, 2016). This commercialisation has been attributed to the growing influence of neoliberalism on HE (Altbach, 2013; Giroux, 2015a, 2015b), which Giroux (2015b: 102) has described as “a savage form of free-market fundamentalism”. As such, a focus on civic values, critical thinking and democratic principles has gradually given way to a higher education agenda which prioritises the preparation of students - increasingly positioned as consumers - for the demands of the workplace (Giroux, 2010; Opazo & Gutiérrez, 2012; Marginson, 2018). In accordance with this neoliberal agenda, HE is more and more seen by students in instrumental terms as a private good which they, rather than the government, must pay for in order to improve their social status (Altbach, 2013; Giroux, 2002; Schendel & McCowan, 2016) while the role of educators is more and more reduced to that of implementers of standardised curricula (Mahony & Weiner, 2019).

As the developments outlined above suggest, the massification of HE worldwide, undergirded by a neoliberal agenda, has raised a variety of concerns, two of which are particularly relevant to our discussion: a sacrifice of quality for the sake of quantity; and, relatedly, a deepening of access inequalities. In terms of the former, in LMICs these quality concerns stem from, *inter alia*, insufficient regulation; a rise in the number of sub-standard commercial HEIs offering courses in the most profitable fields; an upsurge in students who are ill-prepared for the demands of HE; and a lack of qualified staff and funding (Altbach, 2013; McCowan, 2016; Naidoo, 2011; Schendel & McCowan, 2016). As a response to this lack of funding, many HEIs have diversified their income streams, by, for example, marketising hitherto non-profit generating services and functions, increasing the cost of tuition, and offering financial support (Altbach, 2013; Giroux, 2002). These responses have contributed to a rise in student debt and closed off educational opportunities for many economically disadvantaged students, which, in turn, is exacerbating national inequities (Giroux, 2002; Guzman-Valenzuela, 2016; McCowan, 2016). These inequities are also apparent at the international level as cash-hungry HEIs compete for the growing number of student-clients around the world who are seeking to maximise returns on their educational investment in the globalised HE marketplace (Giroux, 2015a; Marginson, 2006; Naidoo, 2011). Such students typically select to study in highly-ranked English-medium institutions in the global North, which often charge exorbitant fees (Altbach, 2013; Marginson, 2006). Not only does this rule out many high quality HE options for all but the wealthiest students from LMICs, thus exposing the neoliberal argument of free choice as a myth (Giroux, 2015a; Piller & Cho, 2013), but it is also leading to further stratification of the sector since HEIs in developing contexts typically lack the resources and prestige to attract such student investment (Altbach, 2013; Guzman-Valenzuela, 2016; Naidoo, 2011). The lure of the top universities for students from LMICs in an era of neoliberal globalisation and HE massification is also precipitating an unequal South-North transfer of human and financial capital in the form of tuition fees and talent, further entrenching global injustices (Altbach et al., 2009; Marginson, 2006; Naidoo, 2011). English, as the hegemonic language of HE globally, and a major selling point of HEIs in BANA countries, is an accomplice in this injustice, with non-English speaking HEIs often losing out not only in the competition for such students, but also in the rankings race (Altbach, 2013; Marginson, 2006).

So how has the process of massification, undergirded by a neoliberal globalising agenda, played out in Colombian HE? I take up this question below. In doing so I also briefly trace the history of HE in Colombia and describe the complex post-secondary education system in the country.

2.4 A Short History of HE in Colombia

The first universities in Colombia were established during the colonial period for the benefit of the elites (Levy, 1986; Montenegro, 1994). In this era the Catholic Church played a key role, and many institutions of higher learning were led or organised by religious orders (Levy, 1986). The post-independence period brought with it the challenge of building an independent Colombian Republic, which would require the assistance of a cadre of educated professionals (Melo et al., 2017). This led to the founding of several public universities, though these remained subject to the influence of the Church until the 1930s (Levy, 1986; Montenegro, 1994). This period also saw the establishment of the first private universities in Colombia, which, in contrast to other countries in Latin America, constituted a secular reaction to religious dominance in the public sector (Levy, 1986). In the 1930s, when the GoC finally decreed a separation of Church and State in public HEIs, the Catholics reacted by founding private universities. This meant that the Colombian HE system was already highly privatised by Latin American standards even at this early stage (Levy, 2010). The 1930s also marked the beginning of a period of modernisation and urbanisation in Colombia, which was accompanied by a considerable increase in both public and private HE enrolments (Melo et al., 2017; Montenegro, 1994). In response, the ruling classes sought refuge in elite private universities (Levy, 1986). In spite of this expansion, then, as now, the benefits of HE disproportionately accrued to the wealthy (Montenegro, 1994). During this period of growth SENA was also founded. SENA, which is part of the Ministry of Labour, offers free or low-cost apprenticeships and vocational training (OECD, 2016).

Perhaps the most significant development in Colombian HE in recent decades is Law 30 of 1992. This law transformed the HE system by broadening the definition of HE⁸ to include all academic and professional education which is completed after secondary school (MEN, 1992). Specifically, this law restructured the sector into four different types of HEIs: 1) technical professional; 2) technological institutions; 3) university institutions; and 4) universities (Castillo, 2013; Nel Páez & Teelken, 2016). Both public and private HEIs are represented in each of these four tiers (OECD, 2016). Although institutions of the first two types focus on vocational qualifications, technological institutions have a more scientific foundation and provide more in-depth instruction than technical professional institutions (OECD, 2016; World Bank, 2013). By contrast, the third and fourth types of HEI offer university programmes, the main difference between them being that the former conduct research and offer both undergraduate and graduate programmes while the latter only offer undergraduate programmes and graduate specialisations (Nel Páez & Teelken, 2016; OECD, 2016; World Bank, 2013). Not only do the qualifications offered by these four tiers differ in terms of complexity, cost and quality, but also in terms of length (UNESCO, 2003). As such, technical qualifications are typically of five to seven semesters in duration compared to university degrees, which usually take eight to ten semesters to complete (World Bank, 2013). Thus, in part owing to Law 30, the Colombian HE landscape, as with many HE systems in LAC, is complex and highly stratified (Gacel-Ávila & Rodríguez-Rodríguez, 2019; Nel Páez & Teelken, 2016). In Colombia, this hierarchisation is characteristic of the

⁸ Traditionally the term 'higher education' referred only to degree programmes, while 'tertiary education' referred more broadly to all types of post-secondary education (World Bank, 2013). However, the difference between these terms is blurring, especially in Colombia (Jaramillo, 2010; OECD, 2016). In accordance with Law 30, which clearly states that "educación superior" (MEN, 1992) refers to *all* post-secondary education qualifications, the same definition is used throughout this paper.

neoliberal turn in HE whereby the status of an HEI is associated with the economic value of the human capital it produces (Giroux, 2002).

Aside from restructuring the HE system, Law 30 of 1992 tied the funding of public universities to the country's economic growth in order to make them more fiscally responsible (Galindo et al., 2015; Rabossi, 2009). Unfortunately, however, this policy failed to take into account key considerations such as the expansion of coverage; internationalisation processes; quality improvements; the professionalisation of the teaching cohort; and technical upgrades (Castillo, 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2012; World Bank, 2018). This has led to a shortfall in public HE spending; increased competition for the limited number of places on offer to potential students (Galindo et al., 2015; World Bank, 2018); and, perhaps most importantly, the introduction of tuition fees or cost-sharing (Rabossi, 2009). The notion of cost-sharing is informed by a human capital perspective which holds that a higher proportion of graduates from post-secondary education in a country's workforce translates into greater economic growth for the nation, and increased earnings for the individual (Rabossi, 2009; Arango & Bonilla, 2015). This positions students as client-investors aiming to develop their productive capacities by means of the acquisition of human capital (Angulo, 2016; Giroux, 2011). Higher education, in such a panorama, is no longer considered a public good but is instead reconceptualised as a private privilege undertaken for the benefit of the individual rather than society (Altbach et al., 2009). Thus, Law 30 has accelerated the neoliberalisation of Colombian HE (Galindo et al., 2015; Rabossi, 2009). As the following section highlights, neoliberalism has also shaped other recent developments in Colombian HE such as its massification and marketisation.

2.5 The Neoliberal Massification of Colombian HE

As described above, HE systems globally have experienced unparalleled levels of expansion, and Colombia has not remained isolated from these global trends. For example, the participation of 17-21 year olds in post-secondary education increased from 25.8% in 2004 to 52% in 2018 (MEN, 2019), and between 2001 and 2011 the number of programmes on offer doubled (Camacho et al., 2016). The introduction of neoliberal reforms at the urging of intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund has played a key role in shaping this massification (Galindo et al., 2015; Peralta & Pacheco, 2014). One example of this is the expansion of student finance schemes offered by the government's student loans institute, *Instituto Colombiano de Crédito Educativo y Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior Colombia* (ICETEX)⁹ which was able to reduce interest rates and relax lending requirements on its "portfolio of products and services" (ICETEX, 2016: 11) thus expanding access to those from the lowest socioeconomic strata (Ferreyra et al., 2017; Melguizo et al., 2015). As ICETEX's (2016: 9) description of loans as "products and services" suggests, such schemes position students as human capital investors who aim to maximise returns on their investment upon entering the workplace (Mackenzie, 2020a; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018).

As stated earlier, the global trend of neoliberal massification has raised concerns regarding educational quality and inequities in terms of HE access. But what are some of the consequences of these trends for Colombian HE and for low-income HE participants more specifically? I turn to this issue in the section below.

⁹ "Institute for Student Loans and Study Abroad" in English

2.6 Social Justice Implications

As with HE globally, the massification process in Colombia may be having a negative impact on educational quality. Possible reasons for this in the Colombian context include a greater number of underprepared students entering HE combined with inadequate human and physical resources to meet the needs of these students (Ferreira et al., 2017; González-Velosa et al., 2015; World Bank, 2013). Unsurprisingly, poor educational quality disproportionately affects students from low-income backgrounds since they 1) lack the financial resources that are typically required to access high quality accredited HEIs, and are more likely to drop out as a result of non-academic issues such as looking after their family, or teenage pregnancies; 2) have typically received less adequate preparation for post-secondary education than their better off peers; and 3) are less likely to make informed choices about the best course of study and HEI for them. These factors help account for the overrepresentation of low-income students in cut-cost, profit-generating HEIs of questionable quality (Ferreira et al., 2017; González-Velosa et al., 2015). As a result, poor students have much higher dropout and repetition rates than their wealthier counterparts, and they can expect lower returns for their education when entering the labour market (Radinger et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2016).

As alluded to above, another characteristic of the neoliberalisation of HE is greater privatisation, which has also been widely adopted as a way of addressing the massive expansion of HE access in recent years (Schendel & McCowan, 2016). However, despite claims to the contrary (see for example Nel Páez & Teelken, 2016), the massification of Colombian HE has not been accompanied by a disproportionate growth of the private sector in Colombia in the strictest sense (although, as we have seen, public HEIs have become increasingly marketised). Indeed, in terms of overall figures, the number of public and private sector students has remained fairly stable (Ferreira et al., 2017; Melo et al., 2017, MEN, 2017). Colombia therefore appears to be an exception to the trend towards privatisation of HE in Latin America, which highlights how the effects of neoliberalism on HE have not been uniform throughout the region (Castillo, 2013; Melo et al., 2017; Rabossi, 2009).

One reason why Colombia has bucked the trend of privatisation is that the public sector has expanded a great deal to accommodate increases in enrolments. While admissions to public universities account for some of this expansion with admissions more than doubling between 1993 and 2011 (Jaramillo et al., 2012), a far larger share of the growth in public HE access is a result of the GoC's active promotion of technological and technical HE through SENA, which experienced a tenfold increase from just under 50,000 in 2003 to nearly 430,000 in 2015 (Galindo et al., 2015; Melo et al., 2017; Ferreira et al., 2017).

This prioritisation of T&T higher education by the GoC reflects a need to respond to the spike in demand for technicians following the neoliberalisation of the economy in the 1990s (Hernández, 2010; Soto, 2016). Importantly, though, the neoliberal narrative that HE should be geared towards the demands of the economy has not resulted in greater equity (Castillo, 2013; Ferreira et al., 2017). In fact, evidence suggests that in recent years access to HE for the richest quintile has grown more than from the poorest (Melguizo et al., 2015; World Bank, 2013). Moreover, individuals from low-income households who do manage to access HE can typically choose from a narrow range of HE options due to their limited budget. One option is to study in public universities, which are far cheaper than private sector institutions. However, since admission is determined by performance on the high school exit exam, such students often lose out to their wealthier

counterparts when competing for the limited number of places on offer (Ferreyra et al., 2017; World Bank, 2013). Indeed, whereas many students with greater financial resources but low educational attainment may gain access to high-end private HEIs, for many young people of low socioeconomic status, low-fee private T&T HEIs, or the free courses offered by SENA, are the only routes to a more prosperous future (Gonzalez-Velosa et al., 2015; World Bank, 2018).

Taken together, then, the neoliberal agenda, while ostensibly framed as in favour of individual choice, has “served to restrict rather than expand the choices of most people” (Piller & Cho, 2013: 24). In a neoliberal landscape, where the market value of individuals hinges on the reputation of their affiliated institution and the perceived value of their respective certification, this lack of choice has important social justice implications (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2003). For a start, for T&T graduates in Colombia, returns to HE are lower, or in some cases negative, while post-HE unemployment levels are higher (DANE, 2018; Gonzalez-Velosa et al., 2015). In addition, an education focused on the needs of the economy denies students the opportunity to develop important capacities such as critical thinking, civic responsibility, and democratic debate (Giroux, 2011). Developing critically conscious, deliberative, ethically principled individuals is especially important for addressing key development challenges facing Colombia such as forging a lasting peace after decades of internal conflict; strengthening democracy; and tackling systemic corruption (Altbach et al., 2009; Novelli, 2010).

2.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I summarised the key development challenges facing Colombia and explored some ramifications for social justice of the neoliberal massification of HE in the global South. Following this, I charted recent developments in Colombian HE and the negative consequences of these for students from low-income backgrounds. My central argument here was that the massive expansion of HE access in Colombia, undergirded by a neoliberal agenda, has several negative social justice implications, especially for those of low socio-economic status. Against this backdrop, it seems reasonable to question the decision by the GoC to make foreign language education compulsory for all HE students, regardless of type of HEI, course of study or educational background. What is the rationale behind this language policy? What is the role and status of English in Colombia? In what ways might this policy constrain or expand the freedoms of Colombian HE students from low-income backgrounds? These issues are discussed in the following chapter.

3. Colombia, English, and Development

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief history of European languages in Colombia and shows how they enjoy a higher status than local languages. Following this, I outline how English has become the hegemonic foreign language in Colombia, including in Colombian HE, and analyse some consequences of this from a social justice perspective. I then critically evaluate research in the field of English and development, and identify key domains where English can contribute to human development in Colombia. Due to the paucity of existing research on this issue in Colombia, this section draws on relevant literature from other developing contexts. A key argument here is that the potential of English to foster development depends upon a range of intersecting and contextually specific enabling and disabling factors. I also argue that the penetration of English into education systems globally is linked to social injustices and reproduces existing North-South power relations, which underlines the need for appropriate theoretical tools to interrogate the relationship between English and development.

3.2 Foreign Languages in Colombia

The history of European languages in Colombia can be traced back to the conquistadors, who brought with them their language. Although some effort was made by these early European colonisers to learn the indigenous languages of the continent, this was mainly done in order to facilitate the evangelisation of the local population and the gradual imposition of their own language (García & García, 2012; Guerrero, 2009). Thus, just as English was spread as part of the British imperial project, so too has Spain been responsible for the proliferation of its language in Latin America (Spolsky, 2004). Following independence, primary education became more widespread in Colombia, and Latin, which initially retained its status as the medium of instruction, was gradually replaced by Spanish (Ahern, 1991; Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016). At this time, English and French were the other main foreign languages taught in the Colombian education system, and over time the former has become more dominant (Villegas, 2017). The Colombian constitution of 1886, which conceived of Colombia as one political and cultural entity, reinforced the dominance of Spanish (Guerrero, 2009). In this era, indigenous people were still referred to as “savages” who had to convert to Catholicism and learn Spanish in order to become “civilised” (Gröll, 2009: 55). It was not until almost 100 years later that home-grown languages were recognised for the first time in the constitution of 1991 (Guerrero, 2009; Mora et al., 2019). In modern-day Colombia, 65 indigenous languages and two Creole languages have official status, although Spanish continues to supplant native tongues (García & García, 2012; *Ministerio de Cultura*, 2018).

3.3 English Language Policies and Colombian HE

As alluded to above, aside from Spanish, English has become the dominant imported language in Colombia. This is partly as a result of the GoC’s efforts in the last few decades to promote the language by means of various policies (British Council, 2015b; Mora et al., 2019). Two of these policies, which have had particularly far-reaching consequences for Colombian HE, are the inclusion of an English component on both the university admissions and exit exams (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017); and the introduction of a decree to ensure Colombian degree graduates achieve a B1 (intermediate) level on the CEFR in a second language (MEN, 2015). These policies have made English the *de facto* foreign language in HE in Colombia, and in most Colombian higher institutes of learning ELE is now mandatory (Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016; Martínez, 2016). They have also resulted in several social injustices in Colombian HE, two of which will be discussed

here. First, due to the lack of opportunities to speak the language, English as an academic subject may be of questionable relevance to many Colombians, especially for those in T&T education and individuals living in rural areas (Domingue et al., 2017; Hurie, 2018; Martínez, 2016). Despite this, the English language requirement leaves all those who wish to study at tertiary level no option but to improve their linguistic competence regardless of their opportunities or priorities. Not only does this undermine the neoliberal discourse of choice, but it also highlights how the GoC's linguistic policies may be constraining the freedoms of many HE students. Second, given the very low levels of English proficiency of many Colombians when entering HE, mandating that all students achieve a B1 exit level is unrealistic (Martínez, 2016; Sánchez, 2013). This has meant that some students have either required longer to complete their studies, or, in some cases, have failed to graduate in their chosen field because of poor fluency in English (Isaza-Restrepo et al., 2016; Martínez, 2016). Since economically disadvantaged students typically have much lower English language proficiency when entering HE than their more privileged counterparts, they are more likely to suffer the injustice of failing their English classes, which, in turn, can delay or prevent graduation (Pérez-Pulido et al., 2016; Sánchez, 2013). This is because cash-strapped Colombians do not normally attend the expensive, better-resourced private schools which are more likely to have higher standards of English language instruction, and cannot afford to pay for costly private English language classes (Álvarez et al., 2011; Correa & González, 2016; Sánchez, 2013). This highlights not only how publicly-funded schooling, which serves Colombians from the lower economic strata, is ill-equipped to provide quality ELE (Cárdenas & Miranda, 2014), but also how those of more modest means will typically require greater resources than the well-off to meet the English language requirements imposed by Colombian HEIs. Consequently, rather than being a tool for social advancement, the imposition of English in Colombian HE may act as a means of social stratification and thus can represent a structural barrier to navigate (Mackenzie, 2020b; Usma, 2009).

Summing up, this section began with a brief overview of the role of European languages in Colombia. Following this, I analysed some of the social justice implications of the GoC's legitimisation of English as the *de facto* foreign language in Colombian HE for low-income students. But in what ways might the English skills acquired in Colombian HE expand or constrain their opportunities after their graduation? Given that the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between ELE in Colombian HE and human development, the following section takes up this issue.

3.4 English and Development

Due to English's association with largely unsuccessful efforts to "develop" the "Third World" (Phillipson, 1992), its positive role in development is debatable (Ferguson, 2013). The relationship between English and development also remains far from clear cut since a) the effects of English vary across settings due to a range of contextual factors (Ferguson, 2013; Kubota, 2011); b) understandings of development are contested (Arcand & Grin, 2013; Ferguson, 2013); and c) language overlaps and intersects with many areas such as education, trade, aid, the media, employment, migration, tourism, and diplomacy (Erling, 2017; Grin, 2016; Phillipson, 2010). Despite these methodological difficulties, some attempts have been made to outline the broad domains where English can foster development (e.g. Chan, 2016; Coleman, 2010; Focho, 2011). This section builds on these typologies to explore the ways in which English might expand or constrain the substantive freedoms of Colombian HE graduates.

3.4.1 English and the economy

For HE students from lower economic strata, improving their financial situation is probably the most important way in which English can positively contribute to their development. Two key ways in which this can be done is by improving their employment prospects or by facilitating the cross-border trade of goods and services. In terms of the former, a body of research has focused on the employment benefits of acquiring English linguistic capital in LMICs. For example, Azam et al. (2013), using data from the India Human Development Survey, conclude that fluency in English can increase wages in India for women by 22% (34% for men), while some knowledge of English can increase their earnings by 10% (13% for men). Similarly, Erling and Power (2017) describe two studies from Bangladesh which record increases in earnings of between 20% and 30% for English speakers over non-English speakers. Finally, Euromonitor (2010) conducted interviews with 42 companies in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Pakistan, and Rwanda. The majority of respondents stressed the importance of English skills for their businesses, and reported salary increases of up to 30% for English-proficient employees.

While this body of research highlights the positive benefits English can confer on its speakers, at least three observations can be made about such studies. First, they use aggregate figures as indicators of development, which tell us little about the factors constraining capability formation, including the acquisition of English linguistic competence, at the individual level (Erling, 2017). Thus, these quantitative studies, which are underpinned by human capital notions of the value of language, may obscure injustices (Ferguson, 2013; Tamim, 2010), and yield no insights regarding how individuals navigate these injustices in order to turn their English skills to their advantage (Erling, 2017).

Second, these studies reveal how intersecting factors can impact on outcomes, which make it difficult to establish a causal relationship between earnings and English skills. For instance, in Azam et al's (2013) study, English speakers from India's Scheduled Caste reported lower returns for their English skills than those from higher castes. This is in line with Levinsohn's (2004) research which found increased financial gains for white English speakers during South Africa's period of opening up to the world economy, but no such gains for Black English speakers. Thus, greater returns do not merely reflect better English skills, but are also dependent on race and societal status. Another factor which impacts the benefits to individuals of their English linguistic resources is education. For example, participants in Azam et al's (2013) research did not see an increase in earnings unless they had completed secondary schooling, and this increase was significantly lower for newcomers to the workforce. Yet another factor which may impact earnings for English speakers is gender as illustrated in Azam et al's (2013) study, which reports differential earnings increases for women and men. An additional factor which may impact on the dividends to English-proficient individuals is mentioned by Euromonitor (2010) which reports that 68% of large businesses in the countries surveyed were situated in urban areas. As such, geographical location may also have a bearing on whether an individuals' English skills yield benefits or not with a greater likelihood that such skills will be advantageous in urban contexts. A final factor which influences whether English can yield employment-related benefits is an individual's proficiency level. According to the Euromonitor study, the vast majority of companies surveyed expected employees to have achieved an intermediate level of English, which indicates that English only becomes beneficial after a certain threshold level has been reached. Given these intersecting enabling and disabling contextual factors, it seems unlikely that English on its own will lead to upward mobility (Erling, 2017; Guerrero, 2010; Warriner, 2016).

A third and final observation we can make about the aforementioned studies is that they were conducted in settings which differ significantly from the Latin American context. One key difference is that in all of the countries surveyed, with the exception of Rwanda and parts of Cameroon, English is the language of colonialism while in Latin America, this language is Spanish. The differential status of English in these settings may affect the contribution that this language can make in people's lives. Such an interpretation is consistent with Grin (2001, 2003) who found that in German-speaking Switzerland, English competence is more highly valued whereas in French-speaking Switzerland, German skills are more highly valued. The shifting value of English depending on the context therefore appears to be related to the number of speakers and the demand for their language skills in any given region (Arcand & Grin, 2013; Grin, 2016). In other words, since English, like HE, is a positional good, the benefits it confers on speakers are context-dependent (Grin, 2001; Marginson, 2006).

Although no research could be found which explores the relationship between earnings and English in Colombia, Herazo et al.'s (2012) analysis of databases and job portals found that between 0.08% and 6.75% of jobs listed English as a requirement. They conclude that "the mobility of Colombians and their chances of interlingual contact with English speakers may be too few and far between to provide opportunity and incentive for learning English" (Herazo et al., 2012: 209-210). More recently, a British Council (2015b) survey of 1,000 individuals and 78 employers in the country found that English skills were needed in the workplace by only 8% of respondents. This suggests that the need for English linguistic capital may be on the increase in Colombia although these more recent figures are still very low, and only provide information about opportunities to use English in the formal sector where English seems much more likely to yield benefits (Bruthiaux, 2002; Ferguson, 2013). This highlights yet another factor which affects the value of an individual's English language skills: the type of employment an individual is engaged in (Grin, 2001). As a result, in light of Colombia's relatively high unemployment and informal employment rates, together with the fact that proficient English speakers are far more likely to be from higher socioeconomic strata, we can expect English to provide social mobility opportunities for only a small number of poor Colombians.

Another way that English can improve an individual's financial situation is through the international trade of goods and services, which, by fostering economic growth, may also result in better job opportunities for English speakers. Evidence for the positive relationship between English language skills and trade can be found in Ku and Zussman's (2010) quantitative survey of 100 non-English speaking countries. Using GDP and national scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) over the last 30 years, they found that English improved international trade. Lee's (2012) research, which also used TOEFL test scores and GDP to explore the relationship between English and economic growth, is less conclusive. This study found differential benefits based on geographical region, providing evidence for stronger growth for Asian and European economies with good English language skills, but not for Latin American and African economies. This once again underscores the importance of contextual factors such as geography which can limit or increase an individual's potential to put their English language abilities to work (Kubota, 2011; Lee, 2012). Finally, Arcand and Grin's (2013) study of postcolonial countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, which also used TOEFL scores and GDP as proxy indicators, found no relationship between English and economic development, and they demonstrate how

multilingual societies actually have a higher GDP than those which are less linguistically diverse. The authors therefore caution against introducing linguistic policies which prioritise English since other languages can also be used for trading.

3.4.2 English and international mobility

Another key way in which English is linked to development relates to the role it can play in various forms of either temporary or permanent migration (Canagarajah, 2017; Erling et al., 2019). Indeed, the fact that over 700,000 Colombian migrants were living in the US in 2013 - a predominantly English-speaking nation - suggests that English might influence this process (UNICEF, n.d.). Moreover, the correlation reported by several studies between proficiency in the language of the receiver country and greater economic opportunities (e.g. Bleakley & Chin, 2004; Chiswick & Miller, 2002; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Grin, 2016) indicates that this influence is positive. Unsurprisingly, though, evidence also suggests that migration is less problematic for the well-off and well-educated (Özden, 2005). For those who do not fall into this category, migrants may suffer the same fate as participants in Warriner's (2016) qualitative investigation into the language ideologies in an English language programme for refugees in the US. She highlights how the notion that English as the language of opportunity is a neoliberal myth given the structural barriers to social mobility for the study's participants.

The fact that no amount of hard work will change this sad reality exposes the neoliberal fiction that the accumulation of human capital combined with individual effort will inevitably lead to upward mobility.

It is important to bear in mind, though, that not all migrants are refugees in search of better economic prospects. Indeed, a significant number of people also migrate for study, and the fact that globally most international student mobility is to highly-ranked English-medium institutions in the global North suggests that English may also be contributing to such migration (Altbach et al., 2009; Özden & Kone, 2017). In fact, the predominantly English-speaking US is by far the most popular destination country for Colombian students (British Council, 2015b), and in 2012 over 50% of Colombian PhD students in the country planned to stay there after completing their studies (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). Interestingly, the GoC is also partly responsible for encouraging foreign study opportunities as made clear in a speech by former Colombian President Santos (2016, para. 41) during his visit to the UK in 2016: "the UK will continue to be a top destination for Colombian students in pursuit of world-class postgraduate and technical education, to develop the skills that the new world economy requires". To this end, Santos, who himself studied in the UK and speaks fluent English, agreed to expedite the validation process for HE qualifications in both Colombia and the UK (Santos, 2016). By signing such an agreement the former president may have hastened the flight of skilled labour from Colombia to English-speaking countries in the global North (Mackenzie, 2020b). In other words, by promoting foreign study, which in turn leads to an outward flow of human capital, the GoC and English language skills may be contributing to the brain drain (Mackenzie, 2020b).

In addition to human capital, English is complicit in the unequal transfer of financial capital from Colombia to the global North in the form of tuition payments, visa fees and living costs (Mackenzie, 2020b). Given that, in 2010, foreign students represented nearly £23 billion for the UK economy (Phillipson, 2010), it is hardly surprising that student migration has been actively promoted by BANA governments through organisations such as the British Council (2019), which is 'influential in attracting international students, international tourists and foreign direct investment' (p. 17) to the UK. The role of such inter-state actors in facilitating a South-North flow of human and financial resources shows how the

proliferation of English in the global South is far from incidental, apolitical and agentless (Pennycook, 2017) and serves to benefit interests in BANA countries. Moreover, given the financial outlay required to study academic institutions in these countries, study abroad opportunities are typically limited to a small number of wealthy Colombians, thus perpetuating national inequality at the international level (Corbett, 2014; Guerrero, 2010).

3.4.3 English and access to knowledge

Thus far I have looked at two key domains where English may foster development at both the individual and national level - English for financial gain and English for international mobility - and I have also analysed how English is interwoven with injustices in these domains. A third area where English may be beneficial is by facilitating access to knowledge, and most research into the role of languages in development falls into this category. More specifically, a body of work has focused on the use of language in childhood education in LMICs in Asia and Africa where several local languages are spoken alongside an official, imported language (e.g. Bamgbose, 1999; Bruthiaux, 2002; Chimbutane, 2017; Williams, 2011). Access to knowledge, the argument goes, can be expanded in multilingual societies if instruction is in a mutually intelligible language such as English. However, in Colombia, unlike in many developing contexts in Asia and Africa, English is not required in childhood education to access knowledge since, where necessary, Spanish can perform the function of a *lingua franca* (Ministerio de Cultura, 2018).

While it may not be necessary as a medium of instruction, at least not in Colombia, English is instrumental in accessing knowledge in HE in the country, not only because the vast majority of academic research is published in English (Lillis & Curry, 2013), but also because English is the language of choice in most academic disciplines (Li, 2012). However, the hegemonic status of English in HE may be restricting the scope of scientific endeavour in other languages and may be leading to the adoption of the English language in educational contexts where its relevance has not been established (Altbach et al., 2009). Thus, while English can clearly benefit societies and individuals as a result of its importance in HE, it may also, in certain contexts, stifle development.

Outside of HE, the spread of English as a result of neoliberal globalisation provides many opportunities for English speakers to marshal their linguistic resources to gain access to knowledge. Undoubtedly the most important way of accessing such knowledge in contemporary society is the internet, and the fact that over 80% of virtual content may be in English (Steger, 2017) underlines the value of English linguistic capital in this regard. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that participants in Oliveira's (2019) study into Brazilians' English language ideologies emphasised the importance of English when using technology. Similarly, the British Council's (2015b) study into English in Colombia reports that 21% of English learners surveyed were learning the language so that they could access knowledge, including through the internet. However, for those lacking in the language skills needed to participate in the international knowledge economy, English can act as a barrier to access, thus exacerbating the "digital divide" (Pattanayak, 2017: 13). This highlights once again the potential of English to both constrain and thwart capabilities.

The internet, however, is not the only source of knowledge in a globalised world as Erling's (2017) paper on the relationship between English and development in rural Bangladesh highlights. This research, which is one of the few qualitative studies that could be found on the relationship between English, education and development at the community

and individual level, reports that English skills are considered beneficial for a variety of reasons including for improving employment prospects both at home and abroad, and, for accessing information (Erling, 2017). Similarly, in the Colombian context, globalisation has led to a surge in references to English and popular US culture in commercial signs (Martinez, 2015). Martinez's (2015) analysis of the prevalence of English in advertising messages in four major Colombian cities found that references to the US and its primary language, English, accords status to businesses and their products, even though this English may be misused or misunderstood:

In the particular case of English in commercial signs in Colombia, consumers associated this language mainly with American cultures, values, goods, and products and tend to think they are better than the Colombian ones, especially technology, shoes, clothing, beauty products, medicines, music, and even education (Martinez, 2015: 616).

The fact that Colombian culture is viewed as inferior to US language and culture represents a clear case of cultural and linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). On the one hand, at the micro level, individuals may experience enhanced wellbeing as a result of the consumption of products associated with the hegemonic culture. On the other hand, at the macro level, the preference for American products when Colombian alternatives are readily available has clear negative consequences for Colombia's economy while benefiting BANA countries, in this case the USA.

3.4.4 English and personal growth

A final way in which English may contribute to development is by fostering personal growth. The importance of English in this domain for the Colombian context has been highlighted by the former Minister of Education, who acknowledged that learning a second language can "empower citizens" ("Mineducación anuncia", 2014, para. 2). Similarly, a foundational document outlining the standard for English language learning in the country, which was developed by the MEN and the British Council in order to assist the implementation of the GoC's English language policies, lists "social, cultural and cognitive development" (MEN, 2006: 8) as potential benefits of learning another language. Despite this, the literature is largely silent on the relationship between English and these domains of development (Grin, 2016), which is partly owing to the difficulty of operationalising these concepts; the largely instrumental value of English in most LMICs (Sayer, 2015); and the challenges of isolating the role of English from other factors which foster social, cultural and cognitive growth (Acosta et al., 2015). At any rate, research into socio-emotional and cognitive skills, which are developed in the process of learning an additional language such as English, shows that these skills can boost employability and earnings, and increase the likelihood of participation in HE (Acosta et al., 2015; Cunningham et al., 2016; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). However, these intrinsic benefits can potentially accrue to speakers of *any* second or additional language, rather than exclusively to English speakers.

3.5 Conclusions

All in all, two main conclusions emerge from this discussion of English and development. First, the neoliberal view that English is the gateway to a better life is complicated by the presence of a range of enabling and disabling factors (Ferguson, 2013). This means that there is no guarantee that English, even when combined with a great deal of hard work, will expand the horizons of individuals living in the global South and highlights the importance of contextual considerations. In other words, the language "will open doors for some but not all" (Matear, 2008: 143). However, given

the right set of circumstances, English has the potential to “open doors” in a variety of domains that would otherwise remain closed. In either scenario, the BANA countries stand to gain from the proliferation of English in education systems in the global South. This highlights the “imperialism-empowerment” (Lai, 2019: 12) paradox of English and foregrounds the need for conceptual tools which can be used to interrogate the relationship between development and the spread of English in LMICs. In the current study, one of these tools is Phillipson’s (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The second conclusion which emerges is that most research in this field has focused on the economic value of English at the macro level, paying only limited attention to its non-instrumental benefits (Ferguson, 2013). Such research tells us little about the variety of ways in which English does and does not contribute to development at the individual level, or the range of contextual factors influencing this relationship (Erling, 2017; Kubota, 2011). This underscores the importance of situated, qualitative studies such as the current one in this emerging field (Tamim, 2010). In this regard, the CA is a useful framework since it looks at the real opportunities available to individuals, the impact of language policies on their well-being, the role of English in capability formation, the enabling and disabling factors involved in this process, and how individuals use their agency to navigate these disabling factors (Calitz, 2019; Erling, 2017; Tamim, 2010). This leads us to the following chapter, which provides an overview of the theoretical tools used in this study.

4 The Capability Approach and Linguistic Imperialism

4.1 Introduction

Drawing on related literature, in the previous chapter I identified key domains where English could play a role in development in the global South and in Colombia specifically. I also demonstrated how the positive relationship between English and development is qualified by a range of factors, and how English is tied to global injustices which perpetuate asymmetrical power relations between the global North and South. This chapter also showed how much of the research into English and development has focused on the economic contribution that English skills can make at the macro level. These studies, which are typically large-scale and quantitative, provide limited insights into the multitude of contextual factors which may shape the relationship between English and development at the micro level. This foregrounds the need for conceptual tools which a) are sensitive to the ways in which English may be implicated in injustices in developing contexts, and b) enhance our understanding of how English can promote development at the individual level in a variety of ways, the role of agency in this process, and the influence of contextual factors. These considerations provide a rationale for this study's theoretical framework, which is presented below. The chapter starts by describing the key constructs from the CA which this study draws on and explains their relevance for the current study. It then discusses the theory of linguistic imperialism before surveying capability research which has looked at the role of English in development. I draw on this literature to better conceptualise the relationship between English and development from a capability perspective.

4.2 The Capability Approach

The CA is a normative framework proposed by the economist Amartya Sen as an alternative to previous measurements of human development (Nussbaum, 2011). Instead of evaluating development “in terms of resources or primary goods” (Sen, 1992: 81) that people hold as alternative approaches had done, Sen's framework shifts the space of evaluation from the means of human well-being to the ends, which are understood to be the freedoms individuals “actually enjoy to choose the lives that they have reason to value” (Sen, 1992: 81). The evaluative potential of the CA also makes it useful for analysing policy decisions that can impact the well-being of individuals (Alkire, 2005; Lopez-Fogues & Cin, 2018; Robeyns, 2017), which, in the case of the current study, is the introduction of mandatory ELE in Colombian HEIs. Further justifications for my use of specific components of the CA in this study are given in the sections which follow.

4.2.1 Capabilities and functionings

As the title of Sen's framework implies, capabilities are central to the approach, and this construct, together with the related notion of functionings, forms a cornerstone of this study's theoretical framework. Sen (1992: 48) defines capabilities as opportunities which constitute “a person's freedom to achieve well-being”. Capabilities are distinguishable from skills since the former reflect a rational choice. In other words, “capability is freedom and rationality combined” (Walker, 2006a: 165). In the CA, capabilities are used to evaluate well-being freedom in contrast to functionings, which are used to evaluate well-being achievement (Robeyns, 2018; Tao, 2010). Functionings, then, represent the achievement or realisation of individual capabilities, while capabilities represent unrealised or potential achievements (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009).

In the current study, the concept of capabilities allows us to evaluate the contribution of English to development in terms of the diverse range of human freedoms it expands or undermines rather than purely in terms of the financial dividends it can

bring. In other words, the construct of capabilities supports a multidimensional analysis of the relationship between English and human development in contrast to much of the literature surveyed in chapter 3 which focuses only on the economic benefits of learning English (Adamson, 2020a). However, focusing on outcomes (functionings) as well as opportunities (capabilities) is important since evidence of a capability is often deduced from its corresponding functioning (Nussbaum, 2011). Nonetheless, looking only at functionings can provide a distorted view of individual well-being and obscure sources of disadvantage as similar functionings may conceal quite different sets of capabilities (Sen, 1992; Unterhalter, 2009). To give an example of this relevant to the current study, an English exam taken by a rich and a poor student at the end of their HE studies reveals that both have achieved the same level of competence in English, which might suggest an equitable education system. However, looking at capabilities could show that the rich student enjoyed more opportunities to develop her English skills, such as access to quality education, a supportive family environment, and money to spend on learning materials, while the poor student managed to achieve the same functioning despite being denied these opportunities. From a policy perspective, interventions would therefore focus on ensuring both students enjoy the same opportunities (or capabilities) to develop their competence in English regardless of their achieved functionings (Robeyns, 2018).

4.2.2 Agency and conversion factors

As Sen's definition of "capabilities" implies, agency is central to the CA (Sen, 1999), and it forms another core pillar of this study's conceptual framework. Within the CA, human agency, defined by Sen (1985: 203) as "what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important", is a critical element of human well-being (Lozano et al., 2012). What is more, it allows us to view individuals not as "passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programmes" (Sen, 1999: 53), but rather as active participants in "their own destiny" (ibid.). Despite the importance of individual choice in accounting for variations between individuals' capability sets, as Sen (1999: xi–xii) explains:

The freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom.

In CA parlance, these social arrangements or influences are referred to as "conversion factors", which "determine the degree to which a person can transform a resource into a functioning" (Robeyns, 2017: 45). These factors, which can be both enabling and constraining, and either static or dynamic, show how the CA accounts for the influence of internal features and external conditions on individuals' well-being (Ballet et al., 2011; Calitz, 2019; Wilson-Strydom, 2017). Moreover, these conversion factors, as with capabilities and functionings, are unique to each individual, which demonstrates how the CA, in contrast to other approaches to development, is sufficiently sophisticated to explain the complex and plural nature of human beings (Ballet et al., 2011; Robeyns, 2018). In addition, the concept of conversion factors highlights that, while agency is central to the CA, the approach developed by Nussbaum and Sen does not neglect the role of structure in capability formation (Lozano et al., 2012). In light of this, the charge that CA's excessive concern

with the individual can lead to an insufficient focus on social context and interpersonal relations seems unjustified (Stewart & Deneulin, 2002; Stewart, 2005). Indeed, while the CA may be ethically individualist in the sense that “individuals, and only individuals, are the units of moral concern” (Robeyns, 2005: 107), this does not mean that the CA is methodologically or ontologically individualist (Lopez-Fogues & Cin, 2018; Robeyns, 2005). In fact, Sen (2002: 81) argues that the CA is antithetical to the view of individuals as solitary beings removed from their social context:

Individual human beings with their various plural identities, multiple affiliations, and diverse associations are quintessentially social creatures with different types of societal interactions, but their thoughts, choices, and actions are critically important parts of the society in which these individuals live.

Thus, despite its focus on the individual, the CA can be used to explore the relationship between individuals and social arrangements (e.g. Feldman & Gellert, 2006; Tikly, 2016). One recent capability study which has highlighted the merits of the CA for exploring this relationship is Calitz’s (2019) qualitative exploration of the lives of vulnerable HE students in South Africa. Her analysis shows how structural conversion factors can intersect to create multiple barriers to equitable participation in HE. Calitz’s (2019) study thus provides evidence to support Sen’s (2009: 256) assertion that “there can...be some ‘coupling’ of disadvantages between different sources of deprivation”. Importantly, though, by acknowledging the importance of human agency, Calitz’s (2019: 67) research resists taking a “deficit approach” of her study’s financially insecure individuals, and shows how they can mobilise their agency to negotiate structural constraints.

Following Calitz, incorporating human agency into my theoretical framework challenges a deficit view of economically vulnerable graduates, which could lead to further marginalisation (Calitz et al., 2016). A focus on agency is also useful for deepening our understanding of the often complex reasons for individual variations in well-being (Mkwananzi, 2019). These interpersonal differences in well-being may also be attributed to the interplay of agency with conversion factors, which highlights the value of including such factors as a conceptual tool in this study’s theoretical framework (Mkwananzi, 2019). In the context of the current study, conversion factors can shed light not only on the injustices that individuals face as a result of ELE in Colombian HE, but also on some reasons why different individuals may struggle to turn their English language skills to their advantage. This information can be particularly useful for policymakers and practitioners seeking to equalise opportunities for individuals to both acquire the English linguistic capability and to use this capability to expand other valued freedoms (Wilson-Strydom, 2015a). But what if this study reveals that a range of conversion factors shape the capability deprivation or expansion that participants experience? In this regard, Wolff and de-Shalit’s (2007: 10) notion of “corrosive disadvantages” is particularly useful. According to these authors, this concept refers to disadvantages, “the presence of which yields further disadvantages” (2007: 10). A contrasting notion conceptualised by Wolff and de-Shalit (2007: 133) is that of “fertile functionings”, defined as valued beings and doings “which benefit other functionings”. An understanding of the corrosive disadvantages in any given situation can direct policymakers to injustices which are particularly pernicious, and fertile functionings can help them identify ways of addressing these (Nussbaum, 2011; Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007). By the same token, identifying conversion factors particularly corrosive or fertile conversion factors can guide policy-formation by indicating which development areas to prioritise.

4.2.3 Adaptive preferences and aspirations

In addition to conversion factors and agency, individuals' valued achievements and opportunities may also be shaped by limitations on their aspirations as a result of persistent disadvantage (Dejaeghere, 2019; Sen, 2013). These limitations, known as "adaptive preference[s]" (Sen, 2002: 80), arise from adverse conditions which lead individuals to accept their lot and cease striving for a better life (Crocker, 2009; Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2002). Importantly, quality education can enable learners to reflect on their lack of aspirations, take control of their lives, and adapt their preferences upwards (Dejaeghere, 2019; Walker, 2006a; Watts et al., 2008). Thus, education can foster the capability to aspire (Hart, 2016) and can help individuals bridge the gap between their current level of well-being and the well-being they hope to achieve (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013). By contrast, as Walker and Mkwanzan's (2015a: 44) study into the challenges and aspirations of marginalised young South Africans highlights, a lack of educational opportunities can thwart aspirations and lead to "cruel optimism", that is, optimistic aspirations, but with little realistic possibility of attaining them, which is then deeply injurious". This does not mean, however, that there is no hope of ever achieving these aspirations since a) the presence or absence of conversion factors may only be temporary, and b) different individuals may perceive these aspirations constraints differently and therefore may be able to use their agency to negotiate them (Calitz et al., 2016; Mkwanzan, 2019).

In the current study, a focus on adaptive preferences is important since they may help account for why individuals may fail to navigate obstacles to the development of the English linguistic capability, or why this capability does not foster capability expansion. For example, unable to access quality ELE, students may simply adapt to this reality and cease striving to become proficient in English. In addition, evidence of adaptive preferences would point to capability deprivation, which, as Calitz (2019: 55) highlights, "can contribute towards an argument for structural transformation".

4.2.4 Attending to power inequalities

The CA has been criticised on various grounds, and while a longer thesis would address each of these criticisms in more depth, of most relevance to the current study is the charge that the CA has failed to adequately account for unequal relations of power which give rise to oppression and domination (e.g. Crocker, 2009; Tikly, 2016; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Although I would tend to agree that Nussbaum, and to a lesser extent Sen, have not paid sufficient attention to how power inequalities at the macro and micro level are shaped by historical, social, political, and economic considerations (Dejaeghere, 2019; Feldman & Gellert, 2006), the CA does not constitute a theory, but rather a framework for theorising injustice, and its open endedness allows the researcher to supplement it with other appropriate theories in order to address this shortcoming (Sen, 1993; Unterhalter, 2003; Walker, 2010). As should be clear by now, the relevant theory in the current study is Phillipson's conceptualisation of linguistic imperialism. I draw on this theory to shed light on questions of power, ideology, and inequalities which are linked to the past and present spread of English in educational systems in developing contexts (Phillipson, 1992; Tikly, 2016). Given the ways in which English is implicated in social justices in the global South while benefiting entities in the global North, it would be irresponsible not to include theoretical tools which allow us to better explore how this language "serves the interests of some much better than others" and "includes some and excludes others" (Phillipson, 2010: 28). The section below provides an overview of the elements of this theory which complete this study's theoretical framework.

4.3 Linguistic Imperialism

Writing within the field of critical applied linguistics, Phillipson's original work, *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), examined whether and to what extent foreign aid in the domains of education and English language instruction had contributed to development in the global South. In this book, Phillipson brings together concepts from the fields of critical theory, development studies, post-structuralism, and post-colonial theory in order to draw attention to the hidden structural forces driving the spread of English (Phillipson, 1992, 2010). Phillipson (1992) shows how the expansion of English around the globe and its status as the global language benefits the "core English-speaking countries" (Phillipson, 1992: 17) where English is spoken as a first language (i.e. Britain, Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand), at the expense of the "periphery" (ibid.) (i.e. countries where English is used as an international or second language). The author defines linguistic imperialism as "the dominance of English asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural (material properties) and cultural (ideological properties) inequalities between English and other languages" (1992: 42). For Phillipson (1992), linguistic imperialism is a subcategory of cultural imperialism and is bound up with other mutually supportive forms of imperialism, including, but not limited to, economic, political and military imperialism. He also posits that linguistic imperialism is a type of linguicism (Phillipson, 2008), a term coined to account for "discrimination on the basis of language or one's mother tongue(s)" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2015: 1). Linguistic imperialism, which provides an explanatory framework for linguicism (Phillipson, 2018), is not unique to the current globalised era; nor is linguicism unique to English. Indeed, for the Roman Empire and the Soviet Union, Latin and Russian, respectively, also acquired the status of hegemonic languages. Notwithstanding, the most recent manifestation of linguistic imperialism, which is the focus of the vast majority of Phillipson's intellectual output, is English.

4.3.1 Reasons behind the spread of English

According to Phillipson (1992), the global expansion of English can be attributed to several factors. One key factor is the past and present promotion of this language by the UK and US governments, and by organisations wedded to Anglo-American interests such as the World Bank and the British Council (Phillipson, 1992). By way of an example, Phillipson quotes the former British Minister of Education in Employment David Blunkett who asserted that, "it makes good sense to use English fluency as a platform to underpin our economic competitiveness and to promote our culture overseas" (as cited in Phillipson, 2001: 191). Similarly, Phillipson (2012) reports how the US state department, in partnership with TESOL International Association launched a large-scale initiative to cash in on the growing popularity of English. The support for the global proliferation of English by the "core" English-speaking countries should come as no surprise given that English is the second largest commodity for the UK after North Sea oil, and highlights how the multi-million dollar English language teaching (ELT) industry, which sustains publishing houses, exam providers, academic institutions, and industry professionals from HICs, is implicated in the spread of English (Phillipson, 2008, 2010).

Clearly, then, English is deeply connected to the chiefly political and economic objectives of the "core", which, in our current era, are aligned with the efforts of neoliberals to harness the forces of globalisation for their own ends (Pennycook, 2007; Phillipson, 2008). States Phillipson: "We can see global English as the capitalist neoimperial language that serves the interests of the corporate world and the governments that it influences so as to consolidate state and empire worldwide" (2008: 33). Thus, just as the colonial era has given way to the era of neoliberal empire, so too has linguistic imperialism given way to linguistic neo-imperialism (Phillipson, 2008; Shahjahan, 2014). With this in mind, and considering

that linguistic imperialism is not unique to English, the term “English linguistic neo-imperialism” (Lai, 2019: 1) more accurately delineates this theoretical construct. However, for the sake of convenience, the term “linguistic imperialism” is used throughout this thesis.

4.3.2 Criticisms

Some have criticised Phillipson’s politicisation of the spread of English, arguing instead that the current global hegemony of English is the result of fortuitous circumstances (Crystal, 2003; Spolsky, 2004). However, this “laissez faire liberal” (Pennycook, 2001: 51) view fails to account for the political, cultural, economic and ideological dimensions shaping language policies thus absolving English of any responsibility for any injustices that it might generate (Pennycook, 2001; Park, 2011; Tollefson, 2000).

One consequence of a strictly apolitical stance is that it leaves no room for resistance: since the spread of English is a natural process, it cannot be opposed. This leads us to a second criticism of Phillipson’s theory, namely, that an excessive focus on the structural forces driving the imposition of English de-emphasises the role of agency in resisting them (Appleby, 2010; Pennycook, 2017). However, this appears to be a misreading of Phillipson (2018: 1), who has made clear that, “linguistic imperialism is invariably contested and resisted”. Indeed, Phillipson’s theory highlights not only the role of external agents such as the UK and US governments, but also the role of individuals whose internalisation of language ideologies buttresses the imposition of English. Thus, while he writes that “the Americans and British have invested heavily in promoting their language globally since the mid-1950s” (2010: 19), he also reminds us that “for linguisticism to be in force in any given postcolonial periphery context or in continental Europe presupposes the willing complicity of local elites and professionals” (2010: 17). The implication, then, is that although certain vested interests endeavour to propagate the spread of English, critically informed individuals can choose not to be complicit by, for example, co-opting English for their own ends (Phillipson, 1998). In other words, subaltern populations, rather than merely assimilating the dominant variant of the global hegemonic language, have the agency to adapt this language to local exigencies (Kumaravadivelu, 2016).

Another perhaps more valid criticism of Phillipson is the somewhat outdated, reductive, and inaccurate distinction he makes between the core and the periphery. Instead, as stated in the introduction, I employ Holliday’s (1994: 4) term “BANA” (Britain, Australasia and North America) to refer to the “core” English-speaking countries (the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), while the terms “developing countries”, “LMICs” and “global South” are used interchangeably to refer to “periphery” contexts.

4.4 Theorising English as a Linguistic Capability

Despite the dominance of English in education systems in the current era of neoliberal globalisation, capability theorists and researchers have paid insufficient attention to the relationship between this language and human development. As a result, from a capability perspective, English and the role it can play in human flourishing remains undertheorised. Since this study investigates the ways in which English might lead to capability expansion or reduction, this section engages with the extant literature in order to better conceptualise the role of English in relation to development within the CA. This section also highlights how “English” is operationalised in this study.

4.4.1 The capability approach and English

So what are capability theorists' views on the contribution of hegemonic languages such as English to human flourishing? For Nussbaum (2016: 304), the teaching of the dominant world languages is necessary because of the importance of a global perspective:

Each nation needs to focus on teaching its own history and the struggles of its various groups —while also preparing students for a larger global culture. Literary education must obviously perform the same twofold task, focusing on the national and on the learning of national languages, while not forgetting the world and the major languages of the world.

The implication here is that major languages should not be taught at the expense of national languages, but Nussbaum clearly acknowledges the importance of non-national languages in education. Elsewhere Nussbaum (2006: 390) suggests that learning a language is useful in multilingual societies for promoting a “multicultural education” where the language in question forms part of the cultural heritage of that country. Similarly, Sen (2010), referring to language policy in India, is supportive of the official status of English in his home country since it helps “economic integration as well as international relations” (Timestamp: 1:00), which indicates that it may play a role in development in other contexts. Although these comments might suggest that the value of English for Sen is purely instrumental, he also highlights that language is central to human existence and our identity, and advocates a pragmatic approach to language policy (Sen, 2010). The instrumental and intrinsic value of languages is also briefly alluded to by Robeyns (2006), who acknowledges that while communication with unfamiliar people in their mother tongue fulfils a “non-economic instrumental role” (71), studying a language can be “intrinsically satisfying” (70).

In contrast to his optimistic view of the role of English in India, in his work with Dreze (2013: 132), Sen takes a more critical stance:

There are also other important social divisions in India....[F]or instance, there is the division between those who know English and those who don't... Indeed, knowing English opens all sorts of doors in India, even to someone who may not be particularly qualified otherwise. English is the language of the courts...of higher education, of modern business, of high-level official documents, and to a large extent still, of the Internet. This division is increasingly reflected in the schooling system, split as it is between privileged 'English-medium' schools and the rest. It is a major barrier against the integration of all children in a common schooling system. Here again, one form of inequality stands in the way of tackling another.

Sen, therefore, is clearly cognizant of the fact that English limits opportunities for some and expands opportunities for others. His use of the phrase “English opens doors”, however, suggests that English can play a positive role in development, at least in India.

More substantial theoretical contributions which have explored issues related to English and development from a capability point of view have tended to focus on the role of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) (e.g. Tikly, 2016; Mohanty, 2008, 2017). Tikly, for example, highlights how a lack of competence in the language of instruction can stifle

development of Nussbaum's list of central capabilities (which, incidentally, makes no explicit reference to language). Not only does this underscore the importance of mother tongue instruction in early years education, but it also shows how language can be fundamental to an individual's well-being (Tikly & Barrett, 2011; Tikly, 2016). Tikly (2016: 409) also draws on postcolonial theory in order to highlight "the continuing hegemony of colonial languages in the context of contemporary globalisation and the marginalisation and under-development of indigenous languages" as well as the "historically based inequalities in access to 'powerful' global languages between postcolonial elites on the one hand and those who have historically been denied access to dominant languages on the other". As for Mohanty, his conceptual work has drawn on Nussbaum's and Sen's ideas to look at the role of English in multilingual education in India. One key contribution he makes in this regard is to view language, and by extension, English, as "an enabling factor for access to quality education" (2008: 103), which suggests that its absence can lead to "unfreedom" (118). In other words, just as illiteracy can stifle freedom so too can a lack of English skills (Mohanty, 2017). Mohanty (2017) also argues that the relationship between English and development has been exaggerated, and shows how the proliferation of English, which is promoted by interests in the global North, is implicated in the marginalisation of local languages and the reproduction of inequality. As a result, he concludes that English in India "empowers some and disempowers many" (Mohanty, 2017: 266).

This theoretical work has been supported by empirical research which draws on the CA to explore the effects of English in postcolonial contexts (e.g. Adamson, 2020a, 2020b; Erling, 2017; Tamim, 2010, 2013, 2014). Tamim's (2010, 2013, 2014) research, for example, investigates language-related inequalities in Pakistan resulting from the poor standard of English language instruction in state schools. She reports how, due to the high status accorded to English in the country, the working class pupils in her studies, who graduated from government schools with less "linguistic capital" (Tamim, 2014: 288) than non-poor students in private schools, suffered injustices both in educational settings and in urban Pakistani society at large. Among other injustices, limited competence in the hegemonic language restricted government-school students' access to knowledge and employment opportunities, and constrained their participation in HE, leaving them more vulnerable to economic exploitation. Tamim's work thus demonstrates how English can act as a social stratifier, which is in line with Dreze and Sen's (2013) earlier observation that English is associated with privilege. By drawing on Sen's and Nussbaum's ideas to investigate linguistic injustices, Tamim demonstrates the potential of the CA for yielding fresh insights into the impact of English on human wellbeing. However, in common with the current study, she also draws on additional theories to better account for "issues of power" (2014: 296) which emerged from her analysis.

In addition to research into the impact of English in the global South, a handful of studies have looked at English from a capability perspective in a high-income country. Crosbie (2013, 2014a, 2014b), whose work draws on classroom-based research with English language learners in an HE setting in Ireland, explores how English can be used as part of an intercultural education to promote capability expansion. She reports that her English-medium course for international students, which aimed to cultivate "a deeper understanding of globalization framed by social justice" (Crosbie, 2013: 185), fostered 12 capabilities, but only three of these - L2 (second language) learning and communication, affiliation, and mobility - were directly related to ELE. Notably, English is widely spoken in Ireland, which means that, unlike in Colombia, participants' experiences with the language go far beyond the classroom context. Indeed, participants in Crosbie's research were already proficient in English as the course was aimed at learners with a CEFR level of B2 (upper-intermediate) to C1 (advanced). With this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that Crosbie's studies make no

mention of how English might frustrate capability development, or any other ways in which the language is linked to disadvantage. By contrast, as shown above, capability research in LMICs is less enthusiastic about the contribution that English makes to human flourishing.

Finally, although not directly dealing with issues related to English and development, several capability scholars working in South Africa, where English is used extensively, including within HE, touch upon the role of English in this context. For example, Conradie and Robeyns (2013: 570), who investigated the aspirations of women living in a township in the English-speaking city of Cape Town, point out that poor English proficiency can represent a “capability obstacle” to aspirations achievement. Similarly, Calitz et al. (2016: 64) identify one university’s EMI policy as a “structural barrier” to be navigated since it meant that many students could not be educated in their mother tongue. Although the authors state that this “complicated access to learning and demanded additional academic resources that were not equally available to all students” (2016: 64), they do not delve into the wider implications of this linguistic policy (Phillipson, 2008). The importance of English for access to university in South Africa is also acknowledged by Wilson-Strydom (2015b, 2016) who developed an empirical list of key capabilities for the equitable progression of students from high school to university. This list includes the capability of language competence and confidence, which Wilson-Strydom (2016: 152) defines as “being able to understand, read, write and speak confidently in the language of instruction”. The fact that insufficient “levels of competence” (Wilson-Strydom, 2015b: 95) in the language of instruction adversely affected university access and participation for the participants in her study highlights how significant this capability can be. The language capability is similarly identified by Mkwanzanji (2019: 139) as “language skills”, which she shows as important for enabling the vulnerable young migrants in her study to achieve valued educational aspirations in their host country. As Mkwanzanji and Cin (2020) show, these language skills can include English, which was used as a medium of instruction in a school for migrant youths because of the lack of resources needed to teach native South African languages. Finally, Calitz (2018: 64) describes how the black undergraduate women in her study were marginalised at university because of their “ethnic” English accents, which she categorises as a problem with the institutional culture. A more recent paper by Gore and Walker (2020) substantiates this finding and reports how a black student in HE was deprived of the capability of respect and recognition owing to his low level of English.

Taken together, at least four observations can be made about the literature reviewed in this section. First, for some researchers, English can be considered a capability, while for others, poor English language competence can function as a capability obstacle and therefore a negative conversion factor. A natural corollary to this is that, as Mohanty (2008) has remarked, strong English language competence can be a positive or enabling conversion factor. At the same time, as it can form part of a literary education (Nussbaum 2016), English can also be considered a capability input. Thus, just as education can be understood as a conversion factor, capability input (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013; Walker, 2015), or a capability “in its own right” (Tikly & Barrett, 2011: 7) so too can English. These contrasting understandings are useful for operationalising English in the current study as Figure 4.1 illustrates. The distinction between conversion factors related to HE and those related to society at large is relevant since interventions and strategies can be formulated to address constraining conversion factors in Colombian HE, but removing barriers to capability expansion in the wider society is not practicable. Nonetheless, the second set of conversion factors helps us to better make sense of how agentic individuals

operate within, interact with, and are constrained or enabled by features of their social environment (Wilson-Strydom, 2015b).

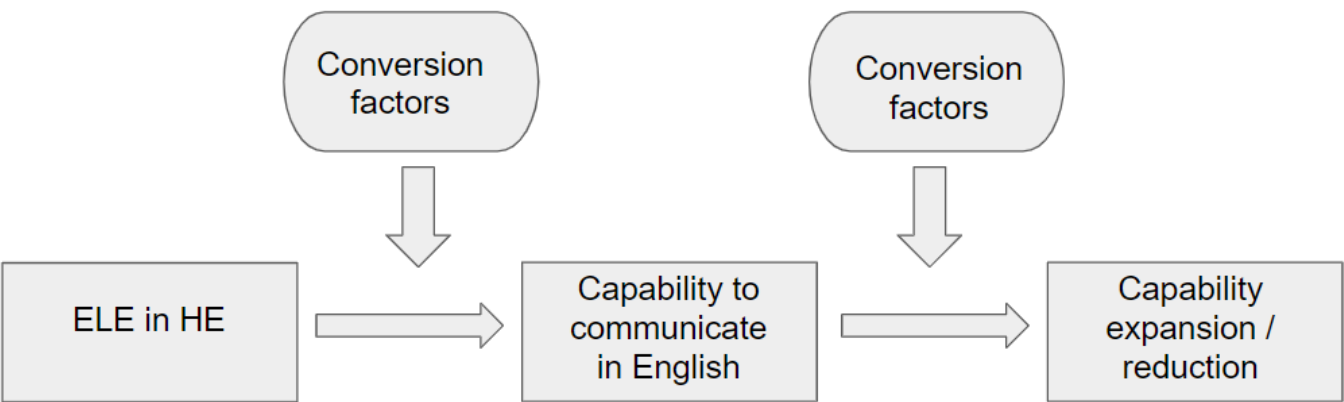


Figure 4.1 Operationalising English in the current study

For our purposes, then, as Figure 4.1 shows, English (ELE in HE) is understood as a capability input which can foster the capability to communicate (i.e. read, write, speak, and listen) in English, contingent upon an array of conversion factors. These factors may include poor competence in English (a constraining factor) or strong competence in this language (an enabling factor). The capability to communicate in English developed through ELE in HE can, in turn, open “all sorts of doors”, resulting in capability expansion, but this also depends on a range of enabling and constraining factors, which again may include level of competence in English.

A second observation which can be made regarding the literature reviewed above is that, as with education more generally, in some contexts English can potentially act as a capability multiplier (Wilson-Strydom, 2016) or “fertile capability” (Nussbaum, 2011: 99) while in other contexts it may have disempowering and harmful effects (Unterhalter, 2003; Walker, 2006a). As the work of Tamim (2014) and Tikly (2016) indicate, critical perspectives can yield greater insights into these negative effects. For example, viewed through the lens of linguistic imperialism, the use of English in postcolonial settings such as Pakistan and India, which as we have seen, is separating these societies into “English-speaking haves” and “non-English-speaking have-nots” (Phillipson, 2001: 189), is simply a continuation of imperialist educational policies (Phillipson, 1992). Hence, from this more critical viewpoint, English, far from promoting development, can limit access to domains such as employment and education while disproportionately benefitting English-proficient ruling classes in these contexts and perpetuating colonial era power asymmetries (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 2017). This demonstrates the potential of critical lenses to throw additional light on the relationship between English and human development in the global South and shows cause for the inclusion of Phillipson’s theory as part of this study’s theoretical framework.

The fact that English can both thwart or expand other capabilities, depending on the context, points to a third observation we can make regarding English as a valued human freedom: the relational dimension of linguistic capabilities (Smith & Seward, 2009). This is illustrated by the fact that, as we have seen, English is a positional good, which means that the value of English skills partly depends on the demand for such skills and the number of speakers in a particular setting (Arcand & Grin, 2013; Grin, 2001). In other words, a low level of English in a context with few English speakers may enable the expansion of other valued freedoms, while the same level of English in a context with an abundance of English speakers may not do so (Sonntag, 2003). As Smith and Seward (2009) note, the relational aspect of some capabilities is also acknowledged by Nussbaum in her explanation of combined capabilities. According to Nussbaum (2008), combined

capabilities are a combination of an internal capability, which is the in-built capacity of individuals nurtured by education, and appropriate conditions to activate them. While Nussbaum (2008: 249) gives the example of “an educated person capable of free speech and association but is living in a repressive regime that denies those freedoms”, a more relevant example would be a person who is capable of communicating in English but is living in a society where no other speakers of this language are present. In such a context, in the absence of enabling factors such as the internet or telephone, this person will struggle to convert their internal capability into a combined capability (Tikly, 2016). Thus, the capability to communicate in English, as with language capabilities more generally, is “inter-subjective” (Ballet et al., 2011: 34). As Smith and Seward (2009: 228) argue, the relational aspect of capabilities is important since “to fully understand a person’s capabilities, one must understand how their position in the social structure shapes their incentives and opportunities, as well as how these opportunities and incentives are interpreted”. The relational nature of linguistic capabilities such as English is also highlighted by the fact that they must be regularly converted into functionings in order to continue to be available in the future (Adamson, 2020a). In other words, the development of foreign language competence requires a combination of exposure and practice (Council of Europe, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This observation is in line with Nussbaum (2000) who notes that some capabilities - such as the capability of play - cannot be developed unless they have been practised. As a result, “promoting functioning rather than simply capability” (Nussbaum 2000: 91) is sometimes justified.

The final and perhaps most important observation we can make about the capability literature surveyed above is that linguistic capabilities, as with many other capabilities, are not “positive freedoms instantaneously transferred to individuals” (Comim, 2012: 28) but rather are nurtured over time and thus vary in degrees of “robustness” (Robeyns, 2017: 97). This understanding of linguistic capabilities as dynamic and evolving (Ballet et al., 2011) rather than static and fully formed is also in line with the literature on foreign language learning. For example, the official CEFR document, which provides guidance to education systems across the globe in the development of language teaching materials, testing and curricula, states that: “the process of language learning is continuous and individual. No two users of a language, whether native speakers or foreign learners, have exactly the same competences or develop them in the same way” (Council of Europe, 2001: 17). While it is true that many scholars do refer to the process dimension of some capabilities and functionings (e.g. Ballet et al., 2011; Nussbaum, 2006; Pettit, 2001; Smith & Seward, 2009; Walker, 2006a), it is also true that the implications of conceptualising capabilities as in varying stages of development have not been sufficiently explored in the literature. One notable exception to this is the work of Adamson (2020a; 2020b) who has highlighted how varying levels of competence in English correspond to varying degrees of participation in EMI classrooms in Tanzania. This would indicate that, just as a person’s level of education can promote different degrees of human flourishing (Lozano et al., 2012; Terzi, 2007), so too may a person’s level of English. Since, as we have seen, proficiency in English correlates positively with financial resources, viewing English as a process capability may also call attention to other injustices. This, in turn, can inform policy and curricular decisions such as the different amounts of resources that individuals or groups of individuals may need to attain capability parity. By contrast, viewing linguistic capabilities in binary terms masks the disadvantage that those with low levels of this capability face and precludes the possibility of exploring potential reasons why some possess more of this capability than others. Thus, the importance of theorising linguistic capabilities as person-specific and either partially developed (in the case of beginner or elementary users) or more fully developed (in the case of advanced or proficient users) (Council of Europe, 2001) should not be disregarded.

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have outlined this study's theoretical framework, which comprises core elements of the CA in partnership with the theory of linguistic imperialism elaborated by Phillipson (1992). As discussed, by conceptualising development as the expansion of human freedoms, the CA can offer a rich and contextually-sensitive understanding of the manifold ways in which English can promote development at the micro level, and, as such, is particularly useful for examining the effects of ELE in Colombian HE. More specifically, I have argued that the construct of conversion factors can help us identify injustices related to the provision of ELE in Colombian HE as well as reasons for the failure of this study's participants to put their English skills to work. Identifying relevant conversion factors - especially those which are particularly corrosive or fertile - is therefore important as this can inform the development of more socially just linguistic policies. I have also argued that, by acknowledging the active role that individuals play in their lives, the construct of agency challenges a deficit approach to research participants and helps account for individual differences in well-being. The notion of adaptive preferences is also useful in this regard as it can offer insights into why individuals may not use their agency to promote human flourishing, and can point to instances of capability deprivation. Such deprivation may also stem from the fact that individuals can claim language capabilities to different degrees, which highlights the value of viewing these linguistic freedoms as either more or less developed rather than in binary either/or terms. Another argument I have made in this chapter is that the development of language capabilities requires opportunities for practise and exposure. This aspect, together with the fact that their value and utility is context-dependent, demonstrates the relational nature of linguistic capabilities, and underlines the importance of studies such as the current one which explore how they might contribute to human flourishing in particular settings. Additionally, in this chapter I have also shown how "English" is conceptualised in this study as Figure 4.1 illustrates. Finally, I have shown how the theory of linguistic imperialism usefully complements the CA because it keeps us alert to historical, social, political and economic processes which have contributed to the spread of English in LMICs, and which implicate the hegemonic language in global injustices. Having outlined this study's theoretical framework, I now turn to a discussion of the methodology.

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- Which capabilities has ELE in Colombian HE fostered or thwarted in the lives of economically disadvantaged graduates?
- Which factors have a bearing on whether ELE in Colombian HE has a positive or negative influence on capability formation?

I aim to answer these questions by using a qualitative research design. For generating the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted, which were subsequently analysed using thematic analysis (TA). The study's main participants were Colombian HE graduates from lower social strata, but prominent Colombian scholars in the field of ELE were also interviewed as a means of enhancing the trustworthiness of the data.

In the section that follows, I describe my ontological and epistemological stance, and how this has informed my methodological decisions. After this I explain the sampling strategy used, why I employed this strategy, and introduce the study's participants. I then describe how I conducted the interviews and the reasons for choosing this data generation method. Potential threats to the validity of using interviews and how these were addressed are also discussed in this section. Next, I outline the TA procedures I followed, and provide a rationale for choosing this data analysis method. Here I also consider trustworthiness issues relating to the data analysis process, and what I did to address these. Finally, I discuss relevant methodological limitations and ethical considerations.

5.2 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

While there is some debate regarding whether the researcher's ontological assumptions should inform her epistemological assumptions, or vice versa, it is generally agreed that these set of assumptions have a bearing on the research design and choice of research questions (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Grix, 2010; Mack, 2010). As a researcher, it is therefore important to be upfront about these assumptions (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Broadly speaking, I believe that good research should not only, where appropriate, challenge injustice, but should also aim to understand the subjective perspectives of research participants (Kincheloe et al., 2017; Mack, 2010). As such, my research design and research questions are informed and guided by both the critical and interpretivist paradigms. A central endeavour of the former is to explore inequality, its root causes, and its effects (Mack, 2010; Rubin, 2003). This critical orientation is reflected by the inclusion of the theory of linguistic imperialism in my theoretical framework in order to help uncover and interrogate the ways that English is implicated in social injustices (Phillipson, 1992). As for interpretivism, this paradigm acknowledges that individuals are embedded in, shape, and are shaped by their social and historical contexts (Miles et al., 2014; Richardson, 2007). Research in the interpretive tradition seeks to understand a specific setting or set of circumstances from the perspectives of participants and is accepting of multiple viewpoints and versions of reality (Cohen et al., 2005; Miles et al., 2014; Willis, 2007). This interpretivist orientation is reflected in my interest in exploring the nuanced complexities of individuals' subjective and socially situated encounters with English, and how these affect their well-being (Grix, 2010; Richardson, 2007).

The critical and interpretivist paradigms have much in common, and interpretivism “is sometimes viewed as part of, or at least closely related to, critical theory” (Willis, 2007: 95). Both, for example, acknowledge the importance of contextual factors and the influence of the researcher in the research process; both aim to make sense of individuals’ socially-situated perceptions of reality; and both view research as value-laden (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mack, 2010; Willis, 2007). However, whereas critical research aims at empowering participants and bringing about social change, interpretivism has no such goal and has been criticised for not paying attention to social injustices and the injurious effects of power (Cohen et al., 2005; Mack, 2010; Willis, 2007). Interpretivism has also attracted criticism for its rejection of an objectively knowable reality in favor of a socially constructed relativism (Mack, 2010; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In this regard, my ontological assumption is closer to the critical paradigm’s acknowledgement of a historically constituted external reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Willis, 2007). In any case, interpretive investigators still strive for objectivity in the data analysis process (Mack, 2010).

As for a critical orientation, this has attracted criticism for eschewing ideological neutrality, but as all inquiry is informed by the researcher’s epistemological and ontological assumptions, research is never value-free (Mack, 2010; Willis, 2007). Another relevant criticism of the critical paradigm is that “by assuming that everyone needs to be emancipated, critical theorists assume that they have been emancipated and therefore are better equipped to analyze society and transform it than someone else” (Mack, 2010: 10). I would therefore like to stress that it is not my aim to “emancipate” the research participants in the current thesis, nor do I consider myself “better equipped” to transform society than anyone else. This does not, however, rule out the possibility that research such as the current study may do some good, not only by making me a more critically aware researcher, but also by giving voice to the marginalised (Mertens, 2013).

5.3 Methodology

Both the interpretivist and critical research traditions commonly draw on qualitative methods (Richardson, 2007; Willis, 2007). Whereas quantitative methods tend to capture numerical data, qualitative methods tend to generate non-numerical data such as text and images (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2005). A qualitative research design was considered more useful for answering this study’s research questions because it can provide more in-depth insights regarding how individuals make sense of situations and society (Thanh & Thanh, 2015; Willis, 2007). Such methods are also more appropriate when we are working with small sample sizes as in the current study (Berg, 2001).

5.4 Sampling Strategy

Qualitative research typically uses non-probability sampling strategies, and a type of non-probability sampling known as snowball sampling was used to select participants (Cohen et al., 2005; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). As such, personal contacts who agreed to be part of the study put me in touch with other potential participants, who then recommended additional suitable candidates (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2005). This type of sample was chosen because of difficulties I encountered recruiting participants through other means. Although snowball sampling is not representative of the wider population, which means that the research is not generalisable, the value of qualitative research lies less in its potential to lead to generalisable conclusions and more in the rich and complex insights it provides into particular contextualised instances (Cohen et al., 2005; Miles et al., 2014).

The snowball sampling method provided me with more participants than I needed, so in accordance with my interpretivist orientation, I tried to select research participants who would provide multiple perspectives on the issue being investigated (Rudestam & Newton, 2015; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). It was felt that any commonalities that emerged across such a heterogeneous sample would reveal particularly salient aspects of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002). Indeed, as the HE landscape in Colombia is particularly complex, I felt it was important to enlist participants who reflected this complexity (Cohen et al., 2005). Consequently, as Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 show, graduates of different types of HEIs (both public and private), qualifications, subjects, and regions (both rural and urban) participated in the study. As these tables also show, some participants had only obtained a technical or technological diploma while others had obtained a degree, and in three cases an MA. Similarly, while some participants only had one HE qualification, others were either studying for a second qualification, or had already completed two HE qualifications. The time period to obtain these qualifications also varies depending on whether students had to interrupt or change their course of study. Obtaining such a heterogeneous sample would not have been possible without the internet. For this reason, many interviews were conducted virtually.

	Jose	Kylie	Samuel	Katherine	Juan Carlos	Ariadne	Theo
Age at time of research	28	24	25	26	22	26	30
Years since graduating from first HEI	5	4	3	5	5	1	4
Qualifications	Technological qualification (IT)	T&T qualification (Logistics & Commerce)	T&T qualification (IT); Degree (Social Sciences)	T&T qualification (Logistics & Commerce)	Technological qualification (IT)	Degree (Public Accounting)	Degree (Modern Languages); MA (Translation)
English level	A2	A1	A2	A2	A1	A1	C1
Type of institute	Private technological institution	Public technological institution	SENA; public university	Public technological institution	SENA	Private university	Public university (degree); university in Brazil (MA)
Length of studies (years)	4	2	4 (degree); 3 (T&T)	2	1	5	6
Stratum	2	2	2	2	3	2	3
Current occupation	Studying a degree in Philosophy	Call centre / Studying a degree in Architecture	Studying an MA in Philosophy	Studying a technological qualification in Document Management	Studying a degree in Systems Engineering	Assistant accountant	English teacher (public)
Monthly salary	None	Minimum wage	None	None	None	2.1 million ¹⁰	2.5 million
Previous jobs after graduating from HE	IT support & administrative duties	Call centre	Adjunct university teacher; high school teacher	Call centre; car repair shop assistant	None	Accounting related jobs	English & Spanish teacher in Brazil.
Interview format & language	Face-to-face; Spanish	Face-to-face; Spanish	Face-to-face; Spanish	Face-to-face; Spanish	Face-to-face; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; English
Location of HEI	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Bogotá	Andean region

Table 5.1 Participant profiles (graduates)

¹⁰ All amounts are in Colombian pesos, unless otherwise stated.

	Yorgelis	Rebecca	Melanie	Katrina	Mariluz	David	Alirio
Age at time of research	26	23	29	28	30	21	25
Years since graduating from first HEI	4	½	5	5	½	1	3
Qualifications	Degree (Economy)	Degree (Spanish & English)	Technical qualifications (Gastronomy)	Degree (Industrial Engineering)	Technological qualification (Business Management); technical qualification (Public Health)	Technical/ Professional qualification (Judicial Investigation & Forensic Sciences)	Degree (Public Accounting)
English level	A2	B2	A2	A2	A1	A1	A1
Type of institute	Public university	Public university	Technical professional institutes	Private university	SENA	Technical professional institute	Private university
Length of studies (years)	5	5½	3½	5	3	4	5½
Stratum during studies	3	1	3	2	2	3	3
Current occupation	Administrative assistant in a university	English teacher (public)	Chef	University researcher/ project manager	Studying a degree in Business Administration	Informal (buying & selling agricultural products)	Accountant
Monthly salary	1 million	2 million	Minimum wage	2.2 million	None	Variable	2.5 million
Previous jobs after graduating from HE	Student loans advisor	Science, Religion & Social Studies teacher in a private English-medium school	Chef	Network manager & quality manager	Continued studying after graduating	Investigator in a public prosecutor's office	Accountant
Interview format & language	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; English	Face-to-face; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish
Location of HEI	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast / Bogotá	Caribbean coast	Bogotá	Caribbean coast	Bogotá

Table 5.2 Participant profiles (graduates)

	Alpha	Andy	Luna	Jackson	Jeremy	Diana
Age at time of research	24	21	28	27	27	23
Years since graduating from first HEI	3	4	4	5	3	1
Qualifications	Degree (Psychology)	Technical qualification (Metallurgy, Heavy Machinery & Welding)	Degree (International Relations); MA (Social Development)	Technological qualification (IT)	Degree (Spanish & English); MA (Didactics of Spanish Literature & Language)	Degree (International Business)
English level	B2	A2	B2	A2	B1	B2
Type of institute	Private university	SENA	Private universities	Private technological institution	Public universities	Private university
Length of studies (years)	5	2	5 (degree) 2 (MA)	3	5 (degree) 2 (MA)	5
Stratum	2	2	3	1	2	2
Current occupation	Teaching assistant in a private English-medium school (part-time)	Studying a degree in Foreign Languages	University lecturer & coordinator (English)	Technical support worker in a call centre; studying a professional qualification in Telematic Engineering	Spanish teacher (public)	Pharmacy manager
Monthly salary	1.5 million	None	2.7 million	1.1 million	2 million	2-2.5million
Previous jobs after graduating from HE	University research assistant; unemployed; informal employment	Nanny	Administrative assistant	Call centre agent	Private tutor (Spanish)	Internship in advertising & marketing; marketing analyst
Interview format & language	Face-to-face; Spanish	Face-to-face; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; Spanish	Virtual; English
Location of HEI	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Caribbean coast	Andean region	Caribbean coast / Andean region

Table 5.3 Participant profiles (graduates)

Specifically, participants were chosen who:

- Had completed an HE qualification in the last five years
- Lived in strata one to three during their studies
- Were over 18 at the time of the research
- Attended English classes during their studies

One key reason for including only individuals who had graduated from HE within the last five years is that the law to ensure Colombian degree graduates achieve a level of B1 on the CEFR in a second language was only introduced in 2015 (MEN, 2015), making it less likely that students who graduated before this date would have attended English classes during their studies. Conversely, stipulating a shorter time period would have resulted in a less heterogeneous sample and would have made it more difficult to recruit participants. With regards to the strata specification, in Colombia, communities are demarcated based on the quality of housing in different zones, with utilities and public university fees cheaper for those from the lower social strata (one to three) than those from the upper strata (four to six) (Jessel, 2017). Thus, participants from strata one to three were chosen as they are typically from poorer backgrounds. As for the specification that participants be at least 18 years old, this was included in order to make ethical procedures more straightforward, although graduates of HE are seldom younger than 18 in Colombia. Finally, as the research is concerned with English in Colombian HE, participants were sought who had attended English classes during their studies.

As the tables above show, three participants chose to study English as part of their major. Such participants were included since they have a higher level of English, which, as pointed out in the literature review, may have a bearing on the opportunities afforded by such English skills, and also made for a more heterogeneous sample.

In qualitative research, sample sizes are typically quite small (Cohen et al., 2005; Rudestam & Newton, 2014). However, qualitative researchers are reluctant to specify the exact number of participants for various reasons, not least because qualitative studies generally continue until saturation point is reached, which can differ depending on the purpose of the study (Kvale, 1994; Rudestam & Newton, 2014). I initially aimed to interview 30 participants since I felt it was better to have too much information than too little, and because this figure also allowed for participant attrition. In the end, 20 main participants were interviewed. When I felt that the data had become saturated (i.e. when no fresh insights emerged and participants' responses began to share similarities), I stopped enlisting additional participants (Seidman, 2013; Suter, 2012).

In addition to the study's main participants, key scholars in the field of English in Colombian HE were interviewed. These interviews were useful for corroborating data obtained from graduates and provided greater insights into institutional, political and societal factors related to English in Colombia. In total, four university lecturers from different HEIs were interviewed (see Table 5.4). Convenience sampling, whereby the researcher "chooses the sample from those to whom she has easy access" (Cohen et al., 2005: 102) was the method used to recruit these scholars, all of whom have published in the field of English and HE in Colombia. All interviews with experts were conducted online in English.

	Lis	Celia	Vicky	Gerry
Years in HE	25	27	12	27
Highest qualification	MA (TESOL/Linguistics)	PhD (Second Language Acquisition & Teaching)	PhD (Linguistics)	MA (TESOL/Linguistics)
Type of university	Public	Public	Private	Public
Occupation	Associate Professor in Linguistics & Languages	Associate Professor of Education	English lecturer / researcher	Associate Professor in Linguistics & Languages
Location of HEI	Andean region	Bogotá	Caribbean coast	Andean region

Table 5.4 Participant profiles (experts)

All potential participants were given information about the project and what it would involve by email (see Appendix A). About one quarter of all those contacted did not respond to my initial invitation, but all of those who did agreed to participate. From the total of 20 HE graduates interviewed, only four were known to me personally; and from the four experts, one is a colleague while the other three were contacted through a social networking site for Colombian researchers.

5.5 Data Collection Methods and Rationale

5.5.1 Interviews

Data in the current study were generated by means of interviews. Interview formats generally fall on a continuum between structured, formal, and quantitative on the one hand, and unstructured, informal, and qualitative on the other (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2005; Denscombe, 2007). Since they help us make sense of participants’ unique ways of viewing reality, and “may contribute to the empowerment of the oppressed” (Kvale, 2006: 497), interviews are consistent not only with my interpretivist but also my critical research orientations (Cohen et al., 2005; Suter, 2012).

For the purposes of the current study, semi-structured interviews were considered most appropriate. Not only does the semi-structured format allow for a degree of systematicity and control which is absent from the unstructured format, but it is also more personal and open-ended than a more structured approach would allow for (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale, 2006). This open-endedness was useful when, during several interviews, I felt it necessary either to change the sequencing and/or wording of questions in my interview guide so that the conversation flowed more naturally and misunderstandings were avoided; or to add in probes, checks and prompts so that I could explore a particular issue in greater depth and clarify previous responses (Berg, 2001; Denscombe, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Conversely, the degree of systematicity and control made my task easier when it came to analysing the data as there were greater similarities among responses than would have been the case following an unstructured format (Cohen et al., 2005).

5.5.2 Interview guide

The domains where English can potentially contribute to development as highlighted in chapter 3 were instructive in the development of the interview guides. The first set of questions in the guide were factual background questions, which were useful for establishing rapport and putting the interviewee at ease before more challenging questions were posed (Cohen et al., 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The guide also contained several versions of the same question as a way of

corroborating participants' prior responses and to account for the potential impact that differently worded questions might have (Berg, 2001; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In all cases, I was careful to ensure that the questions were phrased in such a way as to avoid any potential confusion, wordiness or bias (Cohen et al., 2005). Finally, where possible, questions were open-ended in order to elicit more detail regarding participants' life-worlds (Mann, 2011).

As participants could choose the language of the interview, I had to translate the English version of the guide into Spanish. The Spanish version was validated by an experienced researcher who is fluent in both languages, and the same researcher also agreed to let me pilot both guides with her. At all three stages - translation, validation and piloting - several important changes to the phrasing and language of the questions were made, which enhanced the reliability of the instrument (Berg, 2001; Silverman, 2006). The interview guide for experts did not need to be translated as all speak fluent English, but was also piloted with the same researcher who piloted the guide for graduates. Aside from enhancing the validity of the instrument, piloting was useful for giving me a sense of how long the interviews would take, and what kind of responses I might expect (Cohen et al., 2005).

5.5.3 Interview procedure

All interviews were conducted between March and October 2020 and lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. Prior to the interview, participants were invited to ask questions about the research and their involvement through e-mail, which also helped "build a foundation for the interview relationship" (Seidman, 2013: 50). On the day of the interview proper, and before I started recording, I reassured informants that their data would be secure and confidential; made sure they had understood and signed the informed consent form; explained that they could withdraw without giving a reason until two weeks after the interview; fielded any questions about the research project; briefly discussed my aims and motivations for the research; and also engaged participants in chit chat (Denscombe, 2007). Following this, I commenced recording using an encrypted smartphone. Throughout the interview I showed an interest in what participants had to say by echoing their responses and using non-verbal cues such as nodding and smiling where appropriate (Berg, 2001). After I had stopped recording, I continued to chat to respondents, which provided an opportunity "to thank them for their participation [and] answer their questions" (Cohen et al., 2005: 59). Recordings were subsequently transferred from my smartphone, uploaded to my encrypted laptop, and then deleted from my phone. Following this, I labelled each audio with a reference code indicating the first initial of each participant's name and gender, and the format, date, and language of the interview (e.g. L-F-Online-Eng-March2020) (Denscombe, 2007). As per Lancaster University guidelines, these data, along with the transcriptions, were then stored in the university's cloud service.

5.5.4 Validity threats in interviews

The validity of semi-structured interviews can be influenced by factors such as gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, body language, social standing of the participants, personality, profession, and age (Cohen et al., 2005; Denscombe, 2007; Mann, 2011). Such influence is inevitable given the role of the qualitative researcher as the research instrument, together with the co-constructed nature of such interviews (Kvale, 2006; Mann, 2011). Nevertheless, I tried to be sensitive to how these interview effects might bias the data, and, in line with my interpretivist research orientation, I endeavoured to remain cognizant of how my own assumptions, values, positioning, experiences, and perceptions impacted on the research (Kvale, 1994; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This reflexivity was particularly important given the power differential between most participants (young underprivileged individuals from the global South) and myself (a comparatively wealthy white male from the global North). This power differential can pose a severe threat to the validity of any data produced

(Kvale, 2006). I took steps to address this issue by building rapport, showing deference to participants, and giving them more control of the interview process. In terms of giving participants more control over the interview process, I let participants choose not only the pseudonym that they would like to be known by in the study (Baird, 2009), but also, where possible, the place, time, and language of the interview. Another threat to the validity of interview data is the phrasing of questions (Kvale, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012), but the piloting of interview guides in both languages helped to reduce such bias. Finally, all remote interviews were conducted without cameras, which meant that there was no visual information to facilitate understanding (Denscombe, 2007). However, not using video was a conscious choice, not only due to the unreliable internet connection throughout Colombia, but also because I felt that only recording the audio would be less intrusive.

In addition to the techniques described in this section, I also strove to address validity threats to the data by drawing on more than one type of informant since checking data across a diverse group of interviewees increases confidence in the data more than not doing so (Maxwell, 2004; Rudestam & Newton, 2014). Moreover, recruiting informants with multiple perspectives is consistent with an interpretivist research orientation and was useful for obtaining richer insights into the phenomenon being investigated (Givon & Court, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To this end, I interviewed participants from a range of HEIs in different geographical locations. This helped reduce “the effect on the study of particular local factors peculiar to one institution” (Shenton, 2004: 66). In addition, as stated previously, university lecturers working in different contexts were also interviewed since, as Denscombe (2007: 201) explains, “[t]he ‘key players’ are picked out precisely because they are specialists, experts, highly experienced – and their testimony carries with it a high degree of credibility”.

5.6 Data Analysis Methods and Rationale

A wide range of qualitative data analysis methods exist, but for the purposes of this study, thematic analysis (TA) was considered most appropriate. TA has been defined as:

A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79).

I felt that TA, which is compatible with both deductive and inductive approaches; may or may not be used to highlight the frequency of themes within the data set; and can analyse qualitative data exhaustively or selectively to uncover either explicit or hidden themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), best suited my purposes for several reasons. To begin with, the versatility of TA meant that, unlike some other data analysis methods such as content analysis, it is consistent with my interpretive research orientation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Schreier, 2013). This was important since I wanted not merely to describe the data but rather to interpret them (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cresswell, 2013). This versatility also meant that, in contrast to a grounded theory approach, which would have required a comprehensive coding of each and every utterance made by participants, it was perfectly acceptable to code only relevant sections of interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This was a key consideration given the amount of data I had to analyse. Indeed, one distinct advantage of TA is that the reasonably clear-cut and adaptable procedures can yield qualitative data which are just as trustworthy, vivid, and penetrating as those produced by more sophisticated or time-consuming methods (Attride-Stirling,

2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Finally, TA is also compatible with the predominantly data-led approach that I took in contrast to methods such as template analysis, which would have required the development of a set of codes prior to analysing the data (Gibbs, 2013).

5.6.1 Procedure

Procedures for TA have a lot in common with other versions of qualitative analysis, but different interpretations of TA also exist. However, since I neither used a coding frame, nor made extensive use of a field journal (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Tuckett, 2005), my analytical procedures were closest to those outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). In keeping with their version of TA, data analysis progressed as follows:

5.6.1.1 Transcription and checking

The first stage in the data analysis process was transcription since this involves both interpreting and condensing the original data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cohen et al., 2005). Following this, I checked transcripts against the original audios, and added, where relevant and feasible, any non-linguistic features such as lengthy pausing, sighs, and laughter (Denscombe, 2007; Seidman, 2013). This was also a good opportunity to make salient notes and observations and immerse myself in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al, 2017).

5.6.1.2 Initial coding

Fully acquainting myself with the data set enabled me to approach the initial coding with some preliminary impressions regarding what might be significant or meaningful (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Denscombe, 2007). This initial coding stage involved systematically assigning categories to participants' utterances (typically phrases, sentences or paragraphs) where these were of relevance to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tuckett, 2005). I found preliminary coding useful for breaking the transcripts down into potentially interesting units of meaning before I started to look for themes, but it can also help the researcher to take a more reflexive stance regarding the data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013). When coding, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations to retain some of the context around the code; to code anything that might be relevant; and to code utterances into as many different categories as I felt was appropriate. This helped ensure that all potentially significant data would still be available for subsequent stages of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5.6.1.3 Searching for themes

Identifying themes enabled me to “unravel the mass of textual data and make sense of others' sense-making, using more than intuition” (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 402), which, I feel, is a key strength of TA. Specifically, this step involves,

Sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Essentially, you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 89)

As I was not testing a hypothesis, and I wanted to limit the extent to which my pre-existing assumptions clouded the coding process, the emergence of themes was more inductive than deductive (Berg, 2001; Nowell et al., 2017). However, during this stage, I did start thinking about how to link key concepts from the literature review and theoretical framework to

the data and the research questions, which meant the process was not wholly inductive (Jensen & Laurie, 2017; Suter, 2012). Drawing on the literature at this point helped sensitise me to subtleties in the data and involved shuttling between the codes, the literature, and the emergent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tuckett, 2005).

5.6.1.4 Reviewing themes

Once I had come up with a collection of promising themes, I began distilling these into more distinct themes, organising them into related clusters, and building “web-like illustrations that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text” (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 385). Building such a “thematic network” (Attride-Stirling, 2001: 388) was particularly useful for engaging with the meaning of participants’ utterances at a more profound level, and uncovering thematic patterns (Nowell et al., 2017). If there was too much overlap between themes, adjustments were made, new themes were developed, or these themes were collapsed into one superordinate theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tuckett, 2005). Consistent with my interpretivist research orientation, themes were not merely descriptive, which meant attention was also paid to the latent content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After this, I went over the data again to verify the set of themes and ensure all relevant data had been coded under the corresponding themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process continued until I was satisfied that the themes were fairly well defined, reflected the data, and were relevant to the research questions (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

5.6.1.5 Defining and naming themes

In this stage I thought more carefully about how I would write up the findings, and I wrote brief definitions of the themes I had identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Defining themes was useful for demonstrating how they were located in the data, but also for exploring how to convey the findings to the reader (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

5.6.1.6 Presenting and displaying the data

As Miles and colleagues (2014) point out, data display is also part of the analysis process since the researcher has to make decisions about how best to organise and present the data to the reader. This final stage began once I felt that I had arrived at a well-defined and distinctive set of themes, and I understood how these themes were related to each other, the theoretical framework, and the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative data are most commonly presented as “extended text” (Miles et al., 2014: 13), and this tradition is continued in the current thesis. However, I also represent the key research findings in tabular form and using thematic networks, as can be seen in Appendices B and C respectively. This stage also involved translation of some data extracts from Spanish into English.

In line with qualitative research procedures, these stages were not consecutive but overlapping, cyclical and concurrent (Miles et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017; Tuckett, 2005). To assist with the analytical procedures described here, I used Atlas.ti, as I explain below.

5.6.2 Atlas.ti

Qualitative analysis is typically much more labour intensive than quantitative analysis, so I decided to use computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to help analyse the hundreds of pages of interview data that had been generated (Nowell et al., 2017; Roulston, 2013). CAQDAS software can 1) provide a clear and traceable audit trail of the data analysis process; 2) efficiently retrieve and store codes and categories; 3) assist in the process of making connections between codes and themes; 4) make it easier for the researcher to rename, refine, remove, create or

combine themes; and 5) can easily count frequencies and codes (Denscombe, 2007; Gibbs, 2013; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Mayring, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). I chose Atlas.ti specifically because a wealth of training and support is available for users; it is relatively user-friendly; and, as with many CAQDAS programmes, it is also compatible with TA (Gibbs, 2013).

5.6.3 Validity threats in data analysis

There were several validity threats during the data analysis phase. First, during the transcription process a great deal of data were lost from the original because it is difficult to accurately render features such as tone of voice, speech tempo, and silences (Cohen et al., 2005; Denscombe, 2007), and since I chose not to use cameras, visual data were also not generated. A second threat was the danger of selecting data and developing codes and categories which serve to corroborate the researcher's pre-existing assumptions (Jensen & Laurie, 2017; Suter, 2012). These two threats were addressed by being reflexive about my impact on the data, which is a key means of increasing the credibility of qualitative research (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Rudestam & Newton, 2014), but also by employing the technique of peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This entailed inviting a fellow researcher to code some samples of raw data to check the consistency of the categories I developed, after which any discrepancies were discussed (Suter, 2012).

A final threat to the validity of the data analysis concerned the translation of the Spanish interviews into English. To address this issue, data were translated only after they had been analysed thoroughly (Temple & Young, 2004). This enabled me to preserve as much of the intended meaning in its original context of use as possible, which is consistent with my interpretivist orientation. I also enlisted the same Colombian researcher who helped with the translation of the interview guides and ethics forms to check my translation, and we discussed any divergent interpretations.

5.7 Limitations and Trustworthiness

Given my interpretivist orientation, I recognise that any claims made in this paper are limited, subjective, provisional, and context-bound (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Willis, 2007). However, some qualitative investigators take issue with the application of positivist standards, which are strongly associated with the quantitative paradigm, to qualitative studies, arguing that such studies do not aim to generalise, at least not in the same way (Kvale, 1994; Willis, 2007). Instead of transferring concepts from the quantitative paradigm to qualitative research, Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed alternative criteria for judging what they call the "trustworthiness" of qualitative studies. Specifically, these authors argue that in qualitative research trustworthiness, which is comparable with the positivist notion of validity, can be evaluated in terms of transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility. While some of these criteria are contested, and are not used consistently (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Suter, 2012), most qualitative researchers would acknowledge the importance of both credibility and trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004; Suter, 2012). As discussed above, I have tried to maximise the current study's trustworthiness by using a variety of research techniques. In addition to these techniques, I have attempted to furnish the reader with a clear audit trail charting "the path and key decisions taken by the researcher from conception of the research through to the findings and conclusions derived from the research" (Denscombe, 2007: 298). By offering the data generation and analysis procedures used by the investigator up to scrutiny, an audit trail can enhance the confirmability and dependability of qualitative studies (Guba, 1981). A final technique I employ to enhance trustworthiness is to provide a "thick description" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 359) of the phenomenon under investigation. This can help the reader to judge whether the findings are transferable to other contexts, and to

evaluate the extent to which they correspond to reality (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At the same time, too much detail might have violated the principle of non-identifiability, which meant a balance had to be struck between methodological and ethical considerations (Cohen et al., 2005). These ethical issues are discussed below.

5.8 Ethics

Approval for the research was granted by Lancaster University, and throughout the research project, I adhered to the ethical principles outlined by BERA (2018). As such, prior to the interviews, voluntary informed consent was obtained (BERA, 2018). This involved translating the original consent form (see Appendix A) into Spanish to ensure that participants clearly understood the potential benefits and drawbacks for participants of taking part (Cohen et al., 2005; Kvale, 2006). In addition, I offered to keep participants' identities confidential, which meant ensuring that they could not be identified from the data (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2005). This involved using pseudonyms and omitting other identifying features (BERA, 2018; Cohen et al., 2005). These steps make it impossible for anyone who does not have access to the stored, encrypted data to identify the research participants.

A key concern throughout the research project was whether I had done all I could to ensure that participation benefitted participants and caused them no harm (BERA, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). One issue in this regard pertained to the power asymmetries when conducting qualitative interviews, which, besides posing a threat to the trustworthiness of the data, can also have ethical implications (Kvale, 2006: 482). However, I never got the sense that participants were uncomfortable either with the power imbalance or with disclosing information about themselves, and several participants actually thanked me for the opportunity to speak about their experiences.

A final concern relates to the potential misrepresentation of participants and their views (Cohen et al., 2005; Epigeum, 2012). From a critical perspective, it is questionable whether a person of relative privilege like myself should ever speak for underprivileged groups or individuals (e.g. Spivak, 1988; Temple & Young, 2004), and this is a particularly thorny issue in studies which involve an interpretation of participants' beliefs, experiences and attitudes such as the current one. However, as Alcoff (1991: 29) points out, "[i]t is not *a/ways* the case that when others unlike me speak for me I have ended up worse off, or that when we speak for others they end up worse off. Sometimes...we do need a "messenger" to advocate for our needs". This "messenger" role was particularly relevant in the current study since in most cases I also had to translate interview excerpts into the hegemonic language. While this makes the perspectives of participants accessible to a wider audience, it also invisibilises the original language, thus perpetuating English linguistic hegemony (Temple & Young, 2004). In order to address this issue, I hope to publish a paper based on the current thesis in Spanish in collaboration with the Colombian translator, whose help during the research project was invaluable, and to share this paper with the participants.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The present chapter has shown how this qualitative study is situated within the interpretivist and critical research traditions. It also outlined the methodological procedures that I followed, introduced the research participants, and discussed validity threats to the study and how these were addressed. Lastly, this chapter highlighted this study's

methodological limitations and discussed relevant ethical considerations and procedures. The following chapter presents and discusses this study’s findings.

6 Findings and Discussion

The central aims of this study were to identify which capabilities English language education in Colombian HE has fostered in the lives of economically disadvantaged graduates as well as the factors which influence to what extent ELE positively or negatively influences capability development. In terms of research, it addresses the dearth of studies into the interface between English and development in the region and advances our thinking regarding the ways in which English in this context can promote or constrain human freedoms and the role of agency and conversion factors in this process. In terms of policy, given that many governments in the global South in general and LAC in particular have prioritised English in their education systems in recent years, such research is particularly timely and may help inform decisions about language planning and educational quality in such contexts. Finally, in terms of theory, employing the theory of linguistic imperialism allows us to better examine the ways in which the spread of English is implicated in injustices, while the application of the CA to the issue of English and development yields fresh insights into the nature of linguistic capabilities. Considering that, up until now, the role of English within the CA has been undertheorised, such research can make a significant contribution to the capability literature.

As explained in chapter 5, the qualitative interviews were analysed using TA. A total of 38 categories emerged from this analysis, and these were grouped into five themes (see Appendix B for a comprehensive list of categories and themes). Three of these themes (see Appendix C) were directly related to the research questions: 1. English and Disadvantage; 2. Capabilities and English; and 3. Conversion factors. In accordance with Figure 4.1, these conversion factors were divided into two categories: a) those which shape the development of the English linguistic capability during schooling and HE; and b) those which shape participants' opportunities to convert their English skills into valued functionings after graduation. This distinction is relevant since while policies can be formulated to target barriers to the development of the English language capability in educational settings, it is much more difficult for policy to remove impediments to the conversion of English into valued beings and doings in society at large (Lewis, 2017). Nevertheless, the second set of conversion factors are also relevant since they enhance our understanding of the obstacles that must be navigated by economically vulnerable Colombian HE graduates if they want to make the most of their English skills (Wilson-Strydom, 2015b). In addition, they cast doubt on the neoliberal perception of English as the language of upward mobility, and instead suggest that English "will open doors for some but not all" (Matear, 2008: 143). Accordingly, this chapter first focuses on conversion factors which have influenced participants' capability to communicate in English and how this shaped their capabilities during HE. Thereafter, I consider how the English linguistic capability has promoted or thwarted the development of capabilities in Colombian society after graduation. Following a discussion of these capabilities, I identify relevant conversion factors which were instrumental in this development. This thesis ends by summarising the main research findings, rearticulating the research contribution of this study, and highlighting recommendations and suggestions for further research.

6.1 English and Development in Colombian HE

As mentioned above, this section focuses on participants' experiences of ELE in higher education in Colombia. It highlights how many of the economically vulnerable graduates in this study suffered capability deprivation in HE as a result of their poor English competence. By identifying barriers - conceptualised here as constraining conversion factors (Calitz, 2019) - which have curtailed the development of participants' capability to communicate in English, this section

can inform policy efforts aimed at addressing injustices related to ELE in Colombian HE. Since conversion factors act on individuals' freedoms in person-specific ways (Robeyns, 2018) this section focuses on those which emerged as most relevant for the majority of participants. As we shall see, the intersection of these factors can create multiple barriers to the development of English language skills, though we will also see how some participants were able to use their agency, together with educational resilience, to navigate these obstacles (Mkwananzi, 2019; Wilson-Strydom, 2017).

6.1.1 Developing the capability to communicate in English: A case of linguistic injustice

When entering their respective HEIs almost all participants could only draw on the capability to communicate in English to a very limited extent, in contrast to their wealthier counterparts whose English language capability was typically much more developed. This linguistic inequality gave rise to several injustices experienced by participants during their HE studies. This is exemplified in the following extracts from Jeremy and Theo, who both opted to study English as part of their degrees in languages, and were placed in English classes alongside more proficient students:

The majority of my classmates who spoke English had done courses, had a more advanced level of English because they had studied in other schools, in private schools...by contrast, those of us from public schools had not had the possibility to learn certain vocabulary, and it was very difficult for us to learn and acquire new words, and the structure was also very complex [Jeremy].

The first two semesters [at university] were really hell because as I told you I didn't know anything, so it was like everything was new. I needed to learn from zero, and it was scary at the beginning because at the university they started speaking English all the time, and at the beginning I didn't understand anything, and there were people that had studied at the Colombo¹¹ or the British Council. They were able to interact with the teacher, but my first month...I thought I wouldn't make it [Theo].

These extracts show how linguistic disadvantage - in this case participants' poor English proficiency - can exacerbate the disadvantage experienced by students from lower socioeconomic strata when commencing post-compulsory education. In particular, the incipient nature of Jeremy's and Theo's capability to communicate in English made it more difficult for them to participate in ELE on an equal footing with their wealthier classmates, increased their workload and stress, and constrained their capability for voice (Walker, 2006a). These extracts also suggest that poor competence in English when entering HE can have negative consequences in terms of academic achievement. Additional examples of this are offered below:

Researcher: Did you have to work harder in your English classes at university?

Diana: Well in the first semester I had to work harder [and] I took a course in the Colombo, but it wasn't enough to be at the level of the other people in the classroom

Researcher: So were your grades not as good as theirs?

Diana: No, they weren't very good.

¹¹ A private US-Colombian language school endorsed by the US embassy in Colombia (Centro Colombo Americano, 2020).

The only [one] surviving the first semester [from those who did not speak any English] was me and then in the second semester we started a writing class. That was hell. That was even more difficult than the first semester, but what I tried to do was to be closer to the best ones to learn from them. [Theo].

I didn't have the time for it [learning English]. That's what made it difficult for me. I couldn't dedicate myself 100% to English, so I withdrew from my English classes [Samuel].

For these participants English has diminished their substantive freedoms in HE: Diana had lower grades than her classmates, despite investing financial resources in private English language tuition; Theo experienced high levels of stress; and Samuel had no time for English, which led him to drop out of the subject. Not only do these findings substantiate Conradie and Robeyns's (2013) assertion that a lack of linguistic competence in English can act as a "capability obstacle", but they are also in keeping with earlier studies which report that the foreign language requirement in Colombian HE has led to higher desertion rates and can delay graduation (Isaza-Restrepo et al., 2016; Martínez, 2016). As such, poor English skills can function as a corrosive conversion factor in Colombian HE.

However, poor English proficiency need not be a corrosive conversion factor if HEIs have structures and arrangements in place to address this linguistic injustice. One such arrangement would be to provide support mechanisms for fresher students with limited or no competence in English. That these were not provided suggests that the quality of ELE that students receive in their respective higher educational settings can also operate as a constraining conversion factor. Indeed, the majority of participants were unsatisfied with the standard of English language instruction they received during their HE careers, as suggested by the low levels of English competence most had attained upon graduation. Although all but one participant who studied at SENA reported the standard of ELE at this organisation as very low, graduates of other T&T institutes were also less than complementary regarding the quality of their English classes:

Basically, the English instruction we received in high school was the same as we got at [name of HEI]...I thought they would review the English we had learned in high school, and then focus more on English related to my core subject – I studied business – but in reality everything was basic and general [Kylie].

The English instruction [in HE] was like what we studied in high school...I feel that I didn't learn anything [Katherine].

Yet, poor quality HE is not restricted to T&T institutes, as the following participants, who both studied in private universities, explain:

It's difficult for a teacher when there are 30 students and some understand and others don't. So those who understood were held up...everyone studied for the grade, but not because it was important. We saw it as just another subject, not as something necessary [Ariadne].

In one semester I remember I learned almost nothing because we spent class time watching movies, so we showed we were not happy with the teaching methods, but they didn't take the

necessary steps to ensure that the teacher did something about it, so we always finished classes early, or sometimes we didn't go to class and gave no reason for not going [Katrina].

In addition to these experiences, the fact that Ariadne and Katrina did not achieve the B1 exit level in a foreign language expected of university graduates by the MEN (2015) raises further questions about the quality of ELE in private universities. These findings are in line with Martínez (2016), who reports that the majority of graduates from a private Colombian university failed to achieve even an A2 proficiency level in English. At the same time, Yorgelis, the only public university graduate from a non-language related subject included in this study, also failed to attain the required B1 level, and, as we have seen, both Theo and Jeremy also experienced difficulties related to educational quality when commencing their degrees in languages at their respective public universities. This suggests that low quality ELE is an issue in both university and non-university institutes, be they public or private, and thus corroborates research which has shown that the mandated exit CEFR level of B1 in a foreign language may be unattainable for many degree students (Benavides, 2021; Sánchez, 2013).

While the evidence presented above raises concerns about the quality of ELE in Colombian HE in general, the low levels of the capability to communicate in English that participants could claim when compared with their wealthier peers at the start of their HE studies can be taken as an indication of inequalities in the provision of English language education prior to HE. Consider the following extract:

If we compare the public sector with the private, a wealthy individual can enrol her child in a bilingual school, and from pre-school onwards they receive English instruction, but in a public institution the educational content is the same every year. For example, I never got beyond the verbs 'to be' and 'to have'. That was the basis of every year of English I had. In contrast, in the private bilingual schools where the fees are high, from a very young age they play songs, do presentations in English. There's much more teaching, much more material to explore... [Yorgelis].

As Yorgelis explains, private bilingual schools, which are typically attended by individuals from well-off backgrounds (British Council, 2015b), are expensive, and were beyond the budget of all but three of this study's participants. However, even these three individuals couldn't afford to attend private institutes for the entirety of their compulsory schooling. In this regard, the following excerpt from the interview with Luna, who transferred to a public school for economic reasons, is illuminating as it clearly shows the gap in quality between these two types of institutions:

Researcher: How many hours of English did you have per week?

Luna: Two.

Researcher: And what was the quality of instruction like?

Luna: Awful. Before studying in a public school I had attended a private one. That's where I acquired a foundation in English. When I had to switch to a public school for economic reasons, all the pupils who were in my situation, in other words, all those who had learned English in the private sector, were the ones who taught the students in the public school because the teacher didn't even come to class.

As this example demonstrates, one reason for the poor quality of ELE in public schools is teacher absenteeism, and this was corroborated by several other participants. Another reason is the amount of classroom time allocated to English. According to the MEN (2015) public school pupils should receive three hours a week of English, which is more than Luna was supposed to receive even if her teachers had been present. This highlights one key aspect of linguistic capabilities: the importance of practice and exposure (Council of Europe, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). As with the capability of play, promoting the functioning of communicating in English is necessary if the capability is to be developed (Nussbaum, 2000). However, in contrast to private schools, which typically allocate much more time to English, and may even deliver content in this language, in public schools, opportunities for exposure and practice are more limited (Guerrero, 2010).

The poor standard of English instruction in public schools in Colombia has been reported elsewhere (e.g. Cárdenas & Miranda, 2014; Gonzalez, 2010) and supports findings from other studies which show a negative relationship between poverty and English proficiency in the country (Pérez-Pulido et al., 2016; Sánchez, 2013) and in the global South more generally (e.g. Adamson, 2020a; Tamim, 2014). As such, English in Colombia appears to be separating society into well-off “English-speaking haves” and economically underprivileged “non-English-speaking have-nots” (Phillipson, 2001: 189). Not only does this highlight how the diffusion of English in Colombia is implicated in injustices, but it also foregrounds the importance of financial circumstances for developing the capability to communicate *well* in English, as Mariluz indicates:

Public education is not as good as private education. Perhaps when you pay you have the right to demand more unlike in the public sector where you have to settle for what’s on offer.

This quote is disconcerting since Mariluz appears to have internalised the logic that an education which is paid for directly is superior to an education which is funded indirectly through taxes, and shows the extent to which quality education is seen as a privilege of the wealthy in Colombia. Given that participants’ access to better quality private schools was limited for economic reasons, it is perhaps not surprising that this can lead individuals to adapt their preferences to unjust conditions (Sen, 2002) as in the case of Mariluz who has to “settle for what’s on offer”. Thus, by restricting participants’ educational choices to public schools of generally low quality, economic situation intersects with low quality ELE in both compulsory and higher education to constrain the development of the English language capability. In other words, just as a combination of factors can enable individuals to navigate capabilities constraints, so too can a combination of factors converge to frustrate their capabilities (Calitz, 2019; Mkwanaenzi, 2019).

Added to the negative conversion factors of poor quality ELE, limited proficiency in English, and unfavourable economic situation is the fact that HE students in Colombia are forced to study English in order to graduate. Indeed, some of the injustices experienced by some participants as a result of the low levels of the English linguistic capability that they could claim when taking up their HE studies could have been avoided had they not been obliged to take English classes in their respective HEIs. Moreover, for participants who had no choice but to attend English language classes - in other words all those not majoring in languages - mandatory ELE constrained their agency and undermined the capability of autonomy, which is partly constitutive of the capability for voice (Walker, 2006a). This lack of autonomy can stifle “confident

participation in learning and in dispositions to learn” (Walker, 2006a: 174), and limits the acquisition of knowledge, as exemplified in the following extract:

You see it as a subject not as something indispensable for our studies, our future, so you learn what you have to learn but not for the long term, only for the moment. So this is how they pressure you, and what you learn is nothing [Ariadne].

Deprived of the capability for voice, and denied the agency to choose whether or not to study English, this quotation highlights how Ariadne was a reluctant participant in her English class while at university and echoes Calitz’s (2019: 157) finding that “when pedagogical arrangements were imposed onto students without consultation, the potential benefits and perceived value of resources were diminished”. Thus, in the same way that English-medium instruction acted as a structural barrier for black South Africans in Calitz et al’s (2016) study, so too does compulsory English in HE appear to perform a similar function in Colombia. As explained by Celia, one of the experts who I interviewed, this can mean that English is simply seen as an obstacle to graduation, lacking in intrinsic value:

When they feel they are forced to do so [learn English] they do it just to fulfill their requirement and that’s it. So they don’t see the value and the richness of speaking another language.

Aside from creating an incentive to learn English which would not have otherwise existed (Herazo et al., 2012), the instrumentalisation of English as a means to the end of graduation can lead to a lack of interest in the subject, and truancy:

Students don’t see it as important. They don’t go to class. The course starts with 20 people and it ends with five because the students simply don’t go to class [Luna].

This instrumental view of ELE may also be contributing to the commodification of ELT in the country (García & García, 2012; Usma, 2009), not least because, in addition to having to take English, regardless of whether they wanted to or not, in several cases participants also had to pay an additional fee ranging from between \$200 to over \$1000 to take these classes. Paying these large sums of money for obligatory English instruction created another layer of disadvantage, exacerbating the injustice participants suffered. In addition to these fees, several participants also had to purchase learning materials such as books:

The price was more or less 60 to 70,000¹² [Colombian pesos]. Some students bought one book per group. Others preferred to buy on their own. Others didn’t have the means, and we also disagreed with buying a book that we would only use for one semester [Yorgelis].

Yorgelis couldn’t afford the expensive coursebook from a British publishing house, which impacted her capability to access knowledge as well as her capability to participate on an equal footing with other members of her English classes.

¹² Approximately \$16-\$19 dollars.

In addition, in order to pass their English classes, several other participants turned to educational institutes with links to BANA countries such as the Centro Colombo Americano, or purchased - willingly or not - learning materials and language tests produced in these countries. These examples thus highlight how mandatory English instruction in HE is facilitating the economic, cultural and linguistic incursion into Colombia of interests located in wealthy Anglophone countries which shows how such policies are contributing to English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992).

6.1.2 Overcoming linguistic injustice

The previous section has demonstrated how multiple factors can intersect to constrain participants' freedoms to develop competence in English prior to entering HE. However, these barriers are not insurmountable. In fact, despite the injustice of having to study English alongside wealthier and more proficient students, all participants in this study eventually managed to pass their English language classes and graduate in their chosen fields. A close analysis of the data revealed that for some participants this was possible on account of their educational resilience. This capability, which entails being "able to negotiate risks, to persevere academically, to be responsive to educational opportunities and adaptive constraints. Having aspirations and hopes for a successful university career" (Wilson-Strydom, 2015b: 118), has been identified as instrumental in negotiating obstacles to capability expansion (e.g. Mkwanzani, 2019; Wilson-Strydom, 2015b; 2017). Importantly, for Wilson-Strydom (2017) resilient responses arise from the interplay between agency and the social environment. This understanding of resilience helps us to move beyond a neoliberal framing of failure as the sole responsibility of the learner since it also acknowledges the role of contextual factors (Wilson-Strydom, 2017). Evidence for the socially embedded nature of resilience in the current study includes the experience of Diana, who, as we have seen, had to "work harder" than her classmates, and even took a course at a private language institute to avoid falling behind. As such, it was not resilience on its own which enabled Diana to succeed in English, but rather resilience in interaction with factors such as access to private tuition (which, in turn, is contingent upon financial situation). Additional examples of educational resilience are offered below:

The little that I know of English is not because of SENA, but because I've done several free online courses [Mariluz].

Theo: I felt really behind them. I really had to work hard to catch up with them

Researcher: But you caught up?

Theo: Yeah. Actually, in my fourth semester I was really doing really well

Researcher: Why do you think they didn't stay ahead of you?

Theo: Because they were able to talk to the teachers, and I wasn't. They were understanding things.

These instances further demonstrate how resilience operates within particular contexts. For Mariluz, resilience and the internet enabled her to develop the capability to communicate in English rather than resilience alone. Clearly, though, internet access is contingent upon other contextual factors such as geographical location, and financial situation, which underscores the importance of locating resilient responses within the broader social environment. Similarly, had Theo's peers been as hardworking as he was, resilience on its own may not have enabled him to close the gap between his

English level and theirs. Further evidence for the lack of effort made by privileged students is provided by Vicky, one of the experts I interviewed, and Diana:

Researcher: The ones that come from low income backgrounds, do you think their English level is lower when they begin university?

Vicky: When they begin, yes, because they come from schools that are not bilingual in general. So they are at a disadvantage. But...they try very hard to improve. And the attitude is 'we have to fight for this and we have to do it', and at the end you see the results. So they are fighters because they don't have everything, and I think that is the attitude.

At university you can find certain students that are interested in learning English and certain students that are not interested. And I don't know why, but the students that are not interested in learning English are the ones that came from a private school that already learned English and have no interest in learning in the university [Diana].

Strikingly, far from having an advantage over their less proficient classmates, privileged students' prior learning experiences with English may foster disinterest, which, in turn, can impact academic performance. By contrast, low-income students' experiences of disadvantage can motivate them to use their agency to succeed in English. This finding substantiates Wilson-Strydom's (2017) assertion that adverse circumstances can provide opportunities for individuals to draw on their capability for resilience.

A final example of educational resilience is provided by Theo, who not only had to catch up with his classmates in order to avoid dropping out, but also lived further away from university than these students:

The second semester we started a writing class. That was hell. That was even more difficult than the first semester, but what I tried to do is to be closer to the best ones to learn from them, but what was difficult...was outside the classroom because the people that were in front of the class that were better had a different lifestyle. They went to different places. They lived closer to the university. For example, my neighborhood was far from the university. Some of them arrived in cars. I was riding my bicycle because the first semesters I used my bicycle to go from my neighborhood to the university.

This quote shows how Theo had to negotiate barriers both inside and outside the classroom in order to claim the same amount of the capability to communicate in English as his wealthier peers. However, since Theo's dream was to become proficient in English, he was able to use his resilience to associate with the high-performing students, and a bicycle helped him to navigate the geographical obstacles he faced. Thus, as this example indicates, conversion factors can interact to shape the English language capability in complex and person-specific ways (Calitz, 2019; Mkwanzani, 2019). For some, these barriers can stifle the development of the English linguistic capability, but for others, they become an obstacle to surmount.

The findings reported in this section show how resilient individuals do not operate in a vacuum, but rather in social contexts where a range of enabling and constraining conversion factors are at play. An understanding of these conversion factors, which, as we have seen, include financial situation, access to private English tuition, geographical location, internet access, learning context, and level of English, can be useful for shaping institutional responses to the injustices participants faced as a result of their poor English skills (Wilson-Strydom, 2017). The above findings are also in line with Calitz (2019) who has demonstrated how marginalised undergraduates in South Africa were able to use their agency to navigate barriers to equitable participation in HE. This interpretation of vulnerable young people as resilient and agentic challenges a deficit view of disadvantage. Nevertheless, success stories in overcoming injustices should not imply that nothing should be done about them. Indeed, as Radinger et al. (2018: 64) show, in Colombia “only 11.4% of disadvantaged students were considered ‘resilient’ in 2015, that is they scored among the top quarter of students in all participating countries”. This is in contrast to the OECD average of 29.1% of disadvantaged students who “beat the odds against them” (Radinger et al., 2018: 65). Thus, while resilient Colombians of low socio-economic status can transform their circumstances, the chances of doing so are slim compared to other OECD countries.

6.1.3 Conclusion

Summing up, this section has highlighted the value of viewing English as a dynamic process capability, or a “becoming” (Comim, 2003: 1) which is unique to each individual since the low levels of the English linguistic capability that participants could exercise when entering HE points to the injustice of substandard ELE in public schools. The failure of HEIs to address this linguistic inequality, together with the low levels of English that most participants reported upon graduation, illustrates how the quality of ELE in HE was also below par. Additionally, a lack of proficiency in English undermined participants’ capabilities in HE in various ways by adversely influencing their academic performance and participation, and increasing their workload and stress. This finding is similar to those of Tamim (2014), who has reported on the struggles faced by working class students in Pakistani HE as a result of their limited English language capital, and shows how linguistic disadvantage can result in other forms of disadvantage. Clearly, had ELE been optional, some of these injustices could have been avoided, which highlights how making English a graduation requirement operates as a negative conversion factor or a capability obstacle (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013). Not only did compulsory English instruction deprive participants of the capability for voice and autonomy, limit their access to knowledge, and negatively affect their economic circumstances and academic participation, but it may also be contributing to the instrumentalisation and commodification of English language learning in the country. On this evidence, there are grounds to reconsider the policy of mandatory foreign language instruction across all HEIs in Colombia, and economically disadvantaged HE students may benefit the most from the removal of this structural conversion factor. At the same time, the capability to communicate *well* in English appears to be linked to socioeconomic status, so the elimination of this barrier would not address the linguistic divide in the country, which can be partly attributed to the low quality of ELE in compulsory public schooling. Yet in spite of the range of obstacles that poor Colombians face to attaining competence in English, some participants were able to use their agency and resilience to beat the odds, catch up with their wealthier, more proficient classmates, and pass their English classes. Importantly, though, since resilience interacts with contextual factors, it is more accurate to say that, given certain enabling conditions, resilient individuals may choose to use their agency to overcome the linguistic inequality they face (Wilson-Strydom, 2017).

6.2 English and Development in Colombian Society

Having looked at some of the ways in which ELE impacted participants' well-being freedoms during their HE studies and the conversion factors which were influential in this process, I now turn to the relationship between English and human development in Colombian society at large. In other words, whereas the focus in the previous section was on English and capability formation *prior to* graduation, in this section the focus shifts to English and capability formation *after* graduation. Accordingly, this section discusses capabilities which English can be instrumental in promoting or diminishing for this study's participants in their wider social contexts. These have been broadly categorised as follows: 1) economic capabilities; 2) sociocultural capabilities; and 3) the epistemic access capability. These groupings provide a useful organising structure, but the capabilities identified here should not be taken as a definitive list of valued freedoms that English can advance or thwart in the lives of Colombian HE graduates from low-income backgrounds since they were not arrived at through a process of public deliberation (Sen, 2009). Nevertheless, they could inform the drawing up of such a list by future researchers (Tao, 2010). It is also relevant to mention that, in view of the centrality of human diversity to the CA (Robeyns, 2018), some of these capabilities matter more to some participants than others. However, the capabilities which are identified below were of value for most participants, at least to some degree. In addition to identifying the most salient human freedoms that English enabled participants to claim, this section draws on Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism in order to foreground the ways in which participants' use of English, while advancing their well-being, also reaps dividends for interests in BANA countries.

6.2.1 Economic capabilities

For participants aiming to turn their English skills to their advantage two economic capabilities emerged from the data analysis as significant. According to Cin (2017: 44), economic capabilities refer to those which enable individuals to "generate an income, own property, inherit property and to control their own earnings". As shown in chapter 3, the economic dividends for English speakers have been well documented and point to two overlapping capabilities identified in the current study: the capability of improving one's job prospects; and the capability to buy, sell and exchange goods. While both these economic capabilities can generate an income, they are distinct since one can be unemployed and still buy, sell and exchange goods, and purchasing goods also refers to shopping, which is typically understood as a valued pastime rather than a means of making a living.

6.2.1.1 Improving one's job prospects

The employment capability has been variously identified in the literature as having a good job (Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015b); being able to choose desired jobs (Flores-Crespo, 2007); and paid work (Walker, 2006a), and across the interviews there was widespread acknowledgement of the instrumental role that English can play in fostering this capability. The following extracts are representative of this view:

Here there are lots of call centres that are working remotely at the moment, but you can seek out one of these positions and still continue your studies, and when you graduate you can get work in your area. But if you don't speak English, you're losing a great opportunity [Luna].

You know that English is fundamental nowadays, and for professionals in different jobs a second language, which is English, is a requirement [Mariluz].

In fact, many participants cited the importance of English in the world of work as a key reason why English should continue to be an obligatory subject in Colombian HE. Yet despite this optimistic view of the value of English for employment, as Table 6.1 illustrates, English helped only five of this study’s 20 participants improve their job opportunities.

Participant	Jobs
Diana	Internship in advertising & marketing; marketing analyst
Alpha	Teaching assistant in a private English-medium school
Luna	University lecturer & coordinator for English in a public university
Rebecca	Teacher in a private, English-medium school (Science, Religion and Social Studies); English teacher in a public school
Theo	Internship in the US (low-skilled, low-paid jobs e.g. cleaning, and fast-food restaurant cashier); Internship in Brazil (Spanish and English teacher); English teacher in rural public schools in Colombia

Table 6.1 Jobs obtained as a result of English skills

As this table shows, Diana was the only participant whose English skills proved beneficial for finding work in a non-education related field within Colombia. Specifically, English helped her find employment as an intern with an international organisation in the final year of her degree in International Business. When her internship ended, she was offered a position as a marketing analyst with the same company. This job required her to use English on a daily basis:

I was working there doing marketing analysis, so I had to talk in English. I had to write in English for some suppliers, and it was very easy because I had previous knowledge because of the courses that I took at university.

Notably, though, while this position was helpful for gaining experience in a foreign company where she could practise her English, Diana left this job to return to the city where she had studied in order to start her own business. One factor in giving up a well-paid job that her degree had specifically prepared her for was the working conditions:

Diana: I was working like eight hours, but in reality sometimes I started at 8am, and I finished at 10pm or 11pm, so it was a lot of hours in the day.

Researcher: Did you get paid extra for those hours?

Diana: No, I didn’t. Companies don’t do that.

In addition to working long hours without additional remuneration, Diana’s salary was equivalent to just over \$400 a month, which is less than double the minimum wage (and, incidentally, far less than she paid for her English language education at university). Thus, while English skills may be useful for getting a job, if the working conditions are exploitative, this may not necessarily lead to capability expansion, and may not compensate for all the hard work and

financial resources needed to develop the capability to speak English. Indeed, for Diana, the injustice of not being fairly remunerated is compounded by the fact that she was only able to study her degree because of a student loan which left her with tens of thousands of dollars in debt. However, Diana was able to mobilise her agency to change her less than favourable employment circumstances. In her new position as the manager of a pharmacy, Diana has few opportunities to use her English, but has more time to do her “own things”.

Like Diana, Alpha also studied a non-language related subject at university although she was unable to find work within her field, and after her contract as a research assistant at the private university where she had studied ended, she was unemployed for more than a year. For Alpha, a Psychology graduate, her part-time position teaching assistant position in an English-medium school therefore positively contributed to her well-being:

Currently I’m working in a context where I have to use English, and the work I have now is better than what I could have hoped for as a graduate in Psychology from a low social stratum...and the type of contract I have allows me to do other work. It has improved my lifestyle.

As with Diana, English has improved Alpha’s employment situation, which, in turn, has expanded other substantive freedoms.

In common with Diana and Alpha, Luna’s HE qualifications are in non-language related subjects. However, Luna, like Alpha, failed to find employment directly related to her studies. After over a year without work, she eventually found a job as an English lecturer and coordinator in a public university, which drastically changed her life circumstances:

In all the time that I...couldn’t find work, and then after that to end up in the university... it was a very profound change, and if I hadn’t spoken English, I wouldn’t have the job I have now.

In contrast to Luna, Alpha and Diana, who majored in other subjects, Rebecca and Theo majored in languages with a strong focus on English. Since the natural career choice for such graduates is language teaching, it is not surprising that English helped them find work in this field. In fact, all of Rebecca’s opportunities, both prior to and subsequent to graduation, were in the education sector. Similarly, the only work Theo had found in Colombia immediately after returning from working in Brazil as an English and Spanish teacher was as an English public school teacher in rural communities.

6.2.1.2 Buying, selling, and exchanging goods

Aside from improving employment opportunities, English was useful for cultivating another economic capability: buying, selling and exchanging goods. Although I could find no evidence of this trading capability in the literature, for more than half of this study’s participants, English was instrumental in fostering this human freedom. The following excerpts provide examples of this:

English has really helped me buy things online for those pages which are in English...there is a page from the US called Walmart..., and there I once bought a television and my sister-in-law brought it from Miami and obviously the whole page was in English [Mariluz].

I've bought products in English, and in the past Amazon wasn't translated into Spanish...nowadays you get the dollar rate [Samuel].

As the extracts show, these transactions were only possible because of US-based virtual platforms (Amazon was the platform most commonly used), which in all cases enabled participants to purchase consumer goods from the US. This illustrates the value of online portals for activating the trading capability on the one hand, and Colombians' preference for products from this country on the other. According to Martinez (2015: 616) this preference can be explained by the fact that US goods are considered "better than the Colombian ones, especially technology, shoes, clothing, beauty products, medicines, music, and even education", but it also reflects the economic dominance of the US, which is Colombia's biggest trading partner (export.gov, 2013). This dominance is buttressed by English which, in addition to virtual platforms, enabled the purchase of these US products. This provides an example of how global English "serves the interests of the corporate world and the governments that it influences so as to consolidate state and empire worldwide" (Phillipson, 2008: 33). This does not mean, though, that the effects of English in Colombia are entirely negative since participants clearly valued and derived pleasure from being able to buy these consumer goods.

Notably, the only instances when English was *not* used for shopping was in face-to-face encounters in Colombia:

I remember I was at home alone and somebody arrived and asked for popsicles in English. I told him to wait a minute because I was going to get them. He waited, gave me the money, and I said 'you're welcome' [Katherine].

Researcher: English has ever helped you to do business?

David: Once.

Researcher: Can you tell me more?

David: It was for a fishing reel.

Researcher: Where?

David: At the beach. With an American. I changed the reel for a rod. I was 19, nearly 20.

These extracts are noteworthy as they provide evidence of opportunities for Colombians to convert their English skills into valued functionings in their local contexts. These findings therefore challenge Herazo and colleagues' (2012: 209-210) conclusion that "the mobility of Colombians and their chances of interlingual contact with English speakers may be too few and far between to provide opportunity and incentive for learning English".

6.2.3 Sociocultural capabilities

This set of capabilities were labelled as sociocultural since they comprise both cultural and social freedoms. In terms of cultural capabilities, Sen (2004: 56) argues that these “are among the major components of substantial freedoms” and can therefore play a pivotal role in human development. The linkage between cultural capabilities and English is alluded to in Crosbie’s (2013, 2014a, 2014b) work, and particularly in her conceptualisation of the capability of cosmopolitan citizenship, which she defines as “the cooperation and co-mingling of cultural others” (Crosbie, 2014b: 102). However, whereas Crosbie focuses on how English can be used to foster this capability in a language classroom, in the current study, cultural capabilities emerged as valued freedoms that English can promote in Colombian society at large. As for social capabilities, according to Cin (2017: 41), these include “engaging in different social activities and (mixed gender) interactions, networking with other people, freedom of communication and associations”. Keeping these ideas in mind, I broadly summarise the sociocultural capabilities which I focus on below as those which foster social participation and engagement with different cultures on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

6.2.3.1 Appreciating artistic and cultural expression

The first sociocultural freedom that will be discussed here is the capability to appreciate artistic and cultural expression, which Mendoza and Flores-Crespo (2012) identified as a valued freedom for Mexican high school students. The importance of this capability is alluded to by Sen (2004: 39), who asserts that, “the furtherance of well-being and freedoms that we seek in development cannot but include the enrichment of human lives through literature, music, fine arts, and other forms of cultural expression and practice, which we have reason to value”. In the current study, the following extracts provide examples of this capability:

I watch films in English. At the moment I’m watching a North American series called American Horror Story, and all that English culture, all that North American culture seems so exciting, so innovative, so first-world, which I’ve never experienced [Jeremy].

I like to watch series on Netflix with subtitles because I learn the meaning and pronunciation, and I know that’s what they’re saying [Jose].

As a matter of fact, almost all participants mentioned that English had increased their appreciation of English-medium cultural products such as movies, documentaries, TV series, music, video games and literature, and most mentioned video streaming services such as Amazon Prime, YouTube and Netflix as useful in this regard. This not only illustrates the importance of the internet for fostering this capability, but also underscores the dominance of US-based companies in promoting the consumption of these cultural products. Given the global power of the American mass culture industry, it is hardly surprising that the lion’s share of the content that participants consumed came from the US. However, this consumption facilitates the asymmetrical movement of capital to the global North while also eroding cultural practices and traditions in the global South (Banya, 2010; Marginson, 2006; Phillipson, 1992; Sen, 2004). As such, far from being “natural, neutral and beneficial” (Pennycook, 2017: 6), English appears to be complicit in this injustice, which reinforces unequal South-North power relations, and shows how different forms of imperialism - in this case, cultural and linguistic - are interconnected (Phillipson, 1992). However, as the quotation from Jose suggests, appreciating English-medium art

and culture also played an instrumental role in helping participants to improve their English. Thus, even though participants' conversion of their English skills into the capability to appreciate cultural and artistic commodities benefits interests in BANA countries, it does not follow that *only* these interests benefit.

6.2.3.2 Communicating with people from different cultures

A second sociocultural capability which English can be used to promote is communication with people from different cultures. Evidence for this capability, which is similar to the functionings communicating with others (Pettit, 2001) and being able to communicate (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007), is offered in the following extracts:

The last time I used English was yesterday because I'm trying to learn a little Korean, but it's really complicated, so the classes are in Korean with an English translation [Katrina].

I have the chance to get in touch with people from different countries on Facebook. I'm part of a group of people from different places, from the UK, from the US, Canada, Australia, Europe, Africa, so I have made good friends there [Rebecca].

These excerpts show how the capability to communicate with people from different cultures can expand other valued opportunities such as access to knowledge, in the case of Katrina, and sociality and participation (Terzi, 2007), in the case of Rebecca. The following quotations provide additional examples of this capability:

I was approached by someone from the US, and I talked a lot with him, but not about business or academia [Yorgelis].

The university had Erasmus so there were many people from Germany and France...there were people from everywhere, so they knew neither Portuguese nor Spanish, but they knew English. So that was the way we communicated, and at the beginning when I arrived at the university my classmates talked to me in English [Theo].

We're giving Korean classes here in the university. The vast majority of them...don't speak Spanish, so we have to use English because we also don't know Korean [Luna].

These excerpts are interesting as they provide further evidence to challenge Herazo et al's (2012) assertion that opportunities to speak English in Colombia are "few and far between". Notably, though, all of these encounters took place within the same context: the university. Bearing in mind that four out of the five jobs that enabled participants to use their English skills were also in the field of education, it seems that there may be more opportunities for individuals to convert English into valued beings and doings in this sector.

6.2.3.3 Sociality and participation

As Rebecca's experiences show, communicating with people from different cultures can foster sociality and participation (Terzi, 2007). This capability, which has also been identified in the literature as social relations and social networks

(Walker, 2006b; Wilson-Strydom, 2016), and the capability for friendship (Walker, 2006a), is described by Terzi (2007: 37) as “being able to establish positive relationships with others and to participate in social activities without shame”. Evidence of this capability is presented below:

I’ve got friends, but we don’t speak English frequently. More than anything we chat online, or when there are people interested in learning Spanish we do like a language exchange [Katrina].

I have two Jamaican friends that I met at the school where I work. They work there too, so they became my friends. From the US I have some friends that I made through Facebook. I have like five friends, like good friends. I speak with them regularly. I’m part of some group chats where we can speak, and we talk, but occasionally, like, not all the time, and I’m in a group where I interact with people from different countries in English [Rebecca]

Interestingly, converting English into its corresponding functioning was a central motivating factor for Katrina and Rebecca to socialise in English. This highlights how the capability to communicate in English is “inter-subjective” (Ballet et al., 2011: 34) and cannot be developed unless it has been practised (Nussbaum, 2000). Not only does this underscore the relational dimension of language capabilities (Smith & Seward, 2009), but it also shows how some functionings, rather than being ends in themselves, are instrumental to the achievement of other ends (Robeyns, 2018). Moreover, the fact that English enabled participants to form bonds with people from different cultural backgrounds highlights how this language has become the *de facto lingua franca* in many situations. Interestingly, some of these friendships were struck with other individuals in the global South such as Jamaicans, in the case of Rebecca, and an Indian, in the case of Samuel. Thus, while the hegemony of English benefits vested interests in BANA countries, its appropriation as a link language can also benefit individuals and groups in LMICs (Phillipson, 1998).

6.2.3.4 Respect, dignity, and recognition

Also related to the capability for sociality and participation is the capability for respect, dignity and recognition. Wilson-Strydom (2016: 151) describes this capability as:

Being able to have respect for oneself and for and from others, being treated with dignity, not being diminished or devalued because of one’s gender, social class, religion or race. Valuing other languages, other religions and spiritual practices and human diversity. Being able to show empathy, compassion, fairness and generosity, listening to and considering other person’s [sic] points of view in dialogue and debate. Having a voice to participate effectively in learning.

This capability is also related to the capability to live together with people from different cultures and countries (Mendoza & Flores-Crespo, 2012) and overlaps with sociality and participation since, according to Walker (2006a: 170), “respect for self, for others, for other cultures, being treated with dignity” constitutes a “form of social relations”. Below are two examples of how English has helped foster this capability:

Even though I love this language that is not mine, I love it and I love the cultures that speak it. I have to recognise that what is mine is what identifies me and makes me who I am, and I can use this language as a tool to help others to see where I come from, who I am, what is my history, what is my heritage, which sometimes is not very well known because there are many people who have prejudices about Latinos or Colombians, and so that has helped to love who I am, to show people who we truly are, and embrace what I am as a person, as a Colombian, as a Latina [Rebecca].

The person we had here in the university from the States was originally from India. So something we had in common was that he spoke to us in English, and he taught us certain expressions from the US, but through this interaction...we could learn about the culture not only of the States but also of India. So it's not only that the person speaks English but rather what's behind this person. It's a person who has a different personality, a different culture, and some are colder and others more open [Yorgelis].

These quotations illustrate how English can act as a capability multiplier, and how different capabilities are interrelated (Ballet et al., 2011). In the first extract Rebecca explains how English has changed her understanding of herself; has boosted her self-esteem, and is helping her to communicate this to others; while in the second extract, Yorgelis elaborates on her previously mentioned interaction with someone from another culture at the university where she works as an administrative assistant. This experience appears to have taught her that a person is more than the language they speak or the country they come from. In this regard, the experiences of Theo, the only participant in the study who had visited an Anglophone country, are instructive:

When I went to the US I saw how people thought about Colombia....my experience at the beginning was people asking me if we live in trees, if there was electricity here... there were people asking me...that, so when I saw their point I understood what they think of Colombia...maybe they think there is a jungle here and there is nothing to do... so I didn't get offended, but I got like thoughtful about it and swapped places with them.

The opportunity to work in the US, which was afforded due to an internship organised by his university, enabled Theo to convert his English skills into the capability to improve life opportunities through mobility, which, in turn, fostered the capability of respect, dignity and recognition. This finding is in accordance with previous studies (e.g. Adamson, 2020a; Erling, 2017; Tamim, 2014) which report that English is associated with greater respect and enhanced social standing. However, this quote also reveals how Theo was "othered" during his time in the US by societal prejudices towards Colombians, thus denying him parity of social status (Dejaeghere, 2019: 8). Disturbingly, despite not having travelled abroad, other participants were also aware of negative views of "people like them" as the excerpt above from Rebecca demonstrates. Not only do prejudicial attitudes towards Colombians reflect asymmetrical North-South power relations which can be located in historically, politically, ideologically and economically constituted processes of domination and

subordination (Banya, 2010; Phillipson, 1992); they also corroborate Dejaeghere's (2019: 8) conceptualisation of recognition as a relational capability which is "constituted by and enacted through social relations". In other words, whether people can draw on the capability of respect, dignity and recognition is partly contingent upon how others view them. Thus, if an individual cannot enjoy respect "for and from others" (Wilson-Strydom, 2016: 151) because of perceived prejudices, then they cannot fully claim this capability. Viewed as a relational capability, then, it is unclear to what extent individuals can use their agency to access this opportunity freedom or how such status injuries can be interrupted (Dejaeghere, 2019). At the same time, the awareness of unfavourable perceptions of Colombians was not wholly negative as it appears to have empowered Rebecca by giving her pride in her identity. Indeed, Rebecca's use of English as a "tool" to inform and dispel negative attitudes towards Latinos shows how "speakers of languages that are subject to linguistic imperialism are not helpless victims" (Phillipson, 2010: 78). Similarly, Theo's experiences of prejudices in the US, while no doubt hurtful, also led him to "swap places" with those holding prejudicial views of Colombians. These examples therefore show how marginalisation can bring about positive transformation in the victims of such injustices, and how English can be instrumental in this process.

6.2.3.5 Having international mobility aspirations

While Theo was the only participant to travel to an English-speaking country, most participants aspired to do so. This section therefore looks at the final sociocultural capability in this study: having international mobility aspirations. Evidence for this valued freedom, which is constitutive of the capability to be mobile (Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 1993) and the capability to aspire (Hart, 2016), is provided in the following excerpts:

The British Council and ICETEX...are offering a job as a Spanish assistant in a school in England, so one of the requirements is one year of experience as a teacher in a public school teaching English, so I want to apply. So they open the application process in November, but I have to save money to buy the tickets, clothes, if I get the chance to work there...but hopefully I will be there because that's what I want to do to work abroad as a Spanish teacher or assistant at a university or a school to have that experience of immersion in the language [Rebecca].

The fact or desire to travel to London is what has motivated me a little more to study [English] because I feel that I want to get to know this culture, to know what it's like to be and live there, which would be a quite a significant change for me. That's why I'm trying to study using my own means [Alirio].

As Hart (2016: 327) explains "where an individual is able to identify one or more aspirations that they hold, revealed or concealed, this offers evidence of the capability to aspire". These instances thus offer evidence of the capability to aspire, but a closer look reveals that what matters for these participants is not the capability to aspire *per se*, but rather the aspiration for international mobility. Specifically, Rebecca aspires to work in England so that she can practise her English while Alirio aspires to travel to and study in London, which will obviously require English.

The finding that English is important for the fulfillment of several participants' aspirations to improve their life opportunities through mobility corroborates research by the British Council (2015b), which found that foreign travel is a key reason for Colombians to learn English, but also work by Adamson (2020a) which links English to mobility aspirations. Importantly, though, most participants' mobility aspirations involved visiting, studying and/or working in BANA countries, where visas are required by Colombians and the costs of migration and living are higher, as opposed to geographically closer English-speaking countries such as Jamaica and Belize where immigration laws are less stringent and the costs of migration and living are lower. One explanation for this is the quality of life and education in BANA countries (Altbach et al., 2009; OECD, n.d.), and in this regard the fact that almost all participants regularly consume English-medium art and culture may play a role. Put differently, as individuals' aspirations are "likely to be influenced by what they see and what they hear in their daily lives" (Mkwananzi, 2019: 81), appreciation of artistic and cultural products produced in the wealthiest Anglophone countries may have shaped participants' mobility aspirations. This is reflected in Jeremy's aforementioned comment that "all that English culture, all that North American culture seems so exciting, so innovative, so first-world". Yet it is also important to bear in mind that the strong association between English and the most developed English-speaking countries is actively encouraged by interests in these countries for their own material and political ends (de Haas & Rodríguez, 2010; Phillipson, 1992). One such end is to generate profits for the lucrative multimillion-dollar market for international students in these countries (Phillipson, 2010; Shin, 2016). Another is to attract young skilled migrants, whose labour can contribute to the growth of BANA economies, while discouraging older unskilled migrants, who are seen as less productive and more of a burden (Canagarajah, 2017; de Haas, 2014). English, by fulfilling a gatekeeping function for entry into BANA countries, is implicated in this predominantly unidirectional flow of talent and finances, which further consolidates the ownership of economic and knowledge resources in the developed world (Altbach et al., 2009; Banya, 2010). To make matters worse, this structural injustice serves to reinforce English linguistic imperialism by strengthening the perception of English as the language of opportunity (Mohanty, 2017; Phillipson, 1992). The widely held view among participants that English can "open doors" is a reflection of this. This optimistic view, which is also reported in other postcolonial contexts (e.g. Erling et al., 2014; Vavrus, 2002), highlights how English is often seen as a way out of poverty. Indeed, in a country where opportunities are shaped by social connections and economic status, the belief that English promotes social mobility may be particularly appealing to financially vulnerable graduates. Thus, in the same way that education can enhance an individual's understanding of the freedoms available to them and increase their self-confidence in attaining such opportunities, so too can English expand people's horizons (de Haas, 2014; Mkwananzi, 2019).

6.2.4 The epistemic access capability

A final capability which was commonly referred to in the interviews is the capability to access knowledge. Unlike the epistemic capability more generally, which involves both giving and receiving knowledge contributions (Walker, 2019), I would argue that accessing knowledge, regardless of what one does with that knowledge, is also a valued capability in its own right. The importance of this capability is highlighted by Walker (2015: 291), who argues that HE should develop "critical capacities" such as "access to and acquisition of higher knowledge", and also by Walker and Mkwananzi (2015b: 17), who identify the functioning of accessing knowledge as "crucial for young people to be able to realise their aspirations". This knowledge takes diverse forms as exemplified by the following extracts:

Interviewer: Has English improved your access to knowledge?

Rebecca: Yes, I had more access to information. I read books about theology, and there are better and more books about theology in English. There's more material, so that's really a huge help, and my favourite preachers are people who speak only in English, so I've learned a lot, and it's been a blessing for my church as well because the books my friend sent me are for my church, so I use those materials they gave me, and I translated for the church, and we work there together, so really helpful.

I'm principally interested in what's happening at the global level...so there's a webpage called "Bloomberg" and this page isn't translated into Spanish, well when I find an article that interests me using the little English that I have, I translate the whole thing into Spanish [Alirio].

I've had to read and get hold of books for my studies that I can't get here in Spanish. Actually, my bachelor's thesis is about an American and all the documents and books are in English.

There's not a single book in Spanish. So I've had to buy these books on the internet [Jose].

For Rebecca, a committed Christian, English enables access to theological texts, which, in turn, foster her spiritual growth and also benefit her church; for Alirio, who trades on the stock market as a hobby, English makes it easier for him to pursue this pastime, which, in turn, can also generate an income and help him to realise his aspiration of studying trading in London; and for Jose, a Philosophy undergraduate who attended English classes during his first course of study in HE, English was vital for his bachelor's thesis, which, in turn, enabled him to get the most out of his academic studies, and thus is helping him to fulfil his aspiration of becoming a researcher. Not only do these examples concur with earlier studies which report that English fosters epistemological access (Erling, 2017; Tamim, 2014), but they also illustrate how "different capabilities are interconnected" (Ballet et al., 2011: 36).

6.2.5 Conclusion

This section has identified capabilities which low-income Colombian HE graduates have used their English skills to promote in their broader social environment. While not all graduates were able to exercise these capabilities due to the presence of constraining factors, an analysis of the interview data suggests that most of the capabilities documented here were valued to a greater or lesser degree. As we have seen, these opportunity freedoms are interlinked, and the absence or presence of one capability can impact on the availability of others. This substantiates Mkwanzani's (2019: 233) assertion that "a particular capability may infringe on many other capabilities and opportunities". Drawing on Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism, we have also seen how English in Colombia is implicated in injustices which reproduce unequal North-South power relations and serve interests in BANA countries. However, as shown above, the spread of English in the country also promotes human flourishing by advancing a range of valued human freedoms. In other words, while the penetration of English into educational systems in LMICs is bound up with social injustices, it can also contribute to the human well-being of individuals in these societies, which shows how the role of English in developing contexts embodies a paradox or contradiction (Lysandrou & Lysandrou, 2003; Phillipson, 2001). Having examined the most

relevant capabilities which English can either support or undermine in the lives of the low-income Colombian HE graduates in this study, I now turn to a discussion of related conversion factors.

6.3 Factors Shaping the Conversion of English into Valued Beings and Doings in Colombian Society

As shown in chapter 3, a range of contextual factors can shape participants' opportunities to convert their English skills into valued functionings. Similarly, an analysis of the interview data in this study revealed the presence of a variety of factors which can either support or stifle the potential of English to improve the lives of low-income Colombian HE graduates. By showing how agentic individuals operate within particular social environments, these factors challenge the reductive neoliberal perception of English as the language of opportunity and help us to better understand the obstacles facing economically vulnerable Colombian HE graduates when seeking to turn their English language abilities to their advantage (Warriner, 2016, Wilson-Strydom, 2015b). As "each individual has a unique profile of conversion factors" (Robeyns, 2018, para. 27), not all the factors pertaining to each respective participant can be reported here (Wilson-Strydom, 2017). Accordingly, this section focuses on those factors which emerged as particularly salient for participants seeking to use their English skills to better their lives. While conversion factors have been grouped in the literature in a variety of ways (see, for example, Ballet et al., 2011; Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 1997), the factors presented below have not been artificially separated into discrete categories since I felt that this would fail to capture the often complex ways in which they intersect and overlap (Mkwananzi, 2019; Terzi, 2010). This is perhaps stated most succinctly by Terzi (2010: 150) who writes that "the nature of capability limitation is neither individually nor socially determined, but it is seen as a result of such interrelation of factors". For example, presenting competence in English as a personal conversion factor would neglect the role of social, environmental and institutional factors in shaping English linguistic skills and might suggest that responsibility for achieving the corresponding functioning lies with the individual, which, as the findings presented above demonstrate, would be misleading. Similarly, in some cases the same factor can be either constraining or enabling, depending on its presence or absence. As such, the conversion factors discussed below are organised according to those most relevant to the corresponding sets of capabilities identified in the previous section. Where appropriate, these are identified as constraining or enabling.

6.3.1 Factors shaping the conversion of English into economic capabilities

6.3.1.1 English level

We saw in chapter 3 how level of proficiency can shape the employment opportunities available to English speakers, and earlier in this chapter we saw how poor command of English can stifle the capabilities of economically disadvantaged Colombians during their HE studies. It should therefore come as no surprise that limited competence in English also restricted participants' opportunity freedoms after graduation. Although low levels of English had a constraining effect on many of the capabilities identified in this chapter, its influence on the employment capability was most evident. Indeed, all the participants who were able to benefit from their English skills in the world of work needed to have at least an upper-intermediate (B2) level of English, and across the interviews this level was cited as the minimum requirement for job opportunities requiring English in Colombia. Alirio's experience offers an example of this:

While I was working as an analyst, I applied for a junior accounting position...and I was successful up until the English component. They were looking for someone with my profile,

someone who knows about various sectors of the economy, who is a licensed professional, recently graduated and so on. I fit the profile, but when I got to the English part, which was the last part, that's when the whole process broke down...they were looking for someone with a B2 level.

The importance of a certain level of English for improving labour opportunities in Colombia is further illustrated by the fact that a quarter of the study's participants reported missing out on such opportunities because of their poor English competence. For example, Ariadne, who had worked in several accounting jobs after graduating with a degree in Public Accounting, explained that a higher level of English would have helped her chances of promotion and would have yielded other benefits. However, since her self-reported level of English was A1 - beginner level - this opportunity was denied to her. Her poor foreign language skills also excluded her from participation in workplace conversations and meetings:

There are people who can speak English, but they don't speak English in the office, only with the client. For example, my manager holds meetings with a partner in English, but if you don't speak English, why would they invite you? You won't understand.

Thus, if the English linguistic capability is insufficiently developed, it can constrain Colombian graduates' work-related freedoms, which underlines how linguistic disadvantage can lead to other forms of disadvantage. However, not all participants felt that their lack of English skills had constrained their job prospects. In fact, several participants felt that English was not needed in the Colombian workplace as the following examples show:

When I look back it [the English I learned] wasn't necessary. In fact, when you start working for a public body, they don't require you to be bilingual because it's not necessary, at least not in my case [Jose].

In my first job [after graduating from HE] it [English] wasn't necessary and in the second job it would have been ideal, but it was not something essential. Actually, it wasn't an impediment to entering the university as an administrative assistant of a department of languages [Yorgelis].

These quotes reflect the lack of consensus across the interviews regarding the usefulness of English in Colombian working life, and level of competence in this language might account for this ambiguity. Stated differently, if Yorgelis's and Jose's capability to communicate in English were more developed, it may have been more useful to them in the world of work.

The importance of a threshold level of English for workplace opportunities echoes research by Euromonitor (2010) which found that 31 out of 42 companies in their survey required employees to have at least an intermediate (B1) level of competence in this language. At the same time, the finding that opportunities to use the English linguistic capability would be available to participants, but only if this capability is sufficiently developed, challenges research which claims that few positions in Colombia require English-proficient employees (British Council, 2015b; Herazo et al., 2012). Since these

studies were conducted several years ago, one explanation for this discrepancy could be that English is becoming progressively more valuable in the Colombian labour market as the effects of globalisation in the country intensify (Martinez, 2015).

6.3.1.2 Geographical location

In chapter 3 geographical location was identified as a factor which can diminish or increase people's potential to turn their English language abilities to their economic advantage because opportunities to use English and the benefits of doing so are country- and region-dependent (e.g. Euromonitor, 2010; Lee, 2012). The importance of this conversion factor has also been noted in the context of South African students' transition to university by Wilson-Strydom (2015b) who reports that a learner's proximity to her high school or university campus can either constrain or expand valued educational opportunities. Similarly, in the current study we have seen how Theo's distance from campus could have compounded the disadvantages he experienced as an undergraduate had he not had a bicycle. But geographical location also had a bearing on the employment opportunities that English could help this study's participants take advantage of after graduation. For example, moving to another region of Colombia enabled Diana to do an internship where she could use her English skills, and this led to her subsequent employment as a marketing analyst with the same company, while geography was one of several factors which converged to shape Theo's opportunity to work as an English teacher in rural public schools:

I was lucky because I arrived to [name of town] and the person who was doing the job had just quit because it was in rural areas. So you need a motorcycle or a jeep... to move, and the guy says it's too hard for him to get another car because he had an automobile...So they needed a person with a good level of English...and I sent my CV, and two hours later they called me [and] they did an interview...and the guy liked my English. He asked me about methodologies and things like that. He liked it, and he said, 'man if you want to work with us you are welcome'.

Geographical location could have been a serious obstacle, as it was for his predecessor, but Theo was able to navigate this constraining factor because he had a motorbike. However, as this extract shows, for Theo geography was not the only factor, but rather geography in combination with other enabling factors including his level of competence in English, his performance at the interview, and his CV. This highlights how different conversion factors can intersect to create conditions conducive to human flourishing (Mkwananzi, 2019).

Further evidence of the importance of geography for converting English into better job opportunities is provided by Yorgelis and Luna, who, coincidentally, reside in the same city:

Here the issue of unemployment is something very complex, especially in [name of city] because it's a city that lacks inclusive economic entities and businesses that require qualified staff such as graduate professionals [Yorgelis].

[Name of city] has the second highest unemployment rate in Colombia. Currently with the pandemic, it may have the highest because, in contrast to many companies, the local businesses here have had to close. So the majority of people who really want to get ahead have to go to [name of a larger city]...for example, I tell my students about an article I read which said that this city is not attractive for call centre companies because the population doesn't speak English. [Luna].

In this small provincial city high unemployment means that few opportunities are available to English speakers, which leads to internal migration in search of better job prospects. Not only does this finding chime with those reported by Euromonitor (2010), which found that opportunities to use English in the workplace were more readily available in urban areas, but it also helps account for a lack of commitment to learn English in this city as Luna, an English lecturer and co-ordinator in the city's public university, explains:

We are faced with students who have no interest whatsoever in English. I give class to first semester students and it's really difficult to foster any commitment to learning English. [Name of city] is a very provincial, rural city with lots of farms and lots of things where people maybe don't believe that they will one day leave and need English.

Thus, while English may be relevant for many Colombians in different geographical regions, given Colombia's geographical diversity and the disparities between rural and urban areas, it does not follow that all Colombians will find English beneficial. Indeed, as Luna's comment makes clear, in regions where there are few opportunities to use English, motivation to learn the language may be lower. This underscores how geographical location can constrain the development of the English linguistic capability and once again raises questions regarding the policy of ELE for all HE graduates.

In terms of the conversion of English into the capability to buy, sell, and exchange goods, geographical location also emerged as a key enabling factor since David and Katherine - the only two participants who were able to use their English to trade goods in non-virtual settings - both live in cities which are popular foreign tourist destinations. By contrast, participants living in areas where foreign tourists are uncommon had fewer opportunities to activate the trading capability using their English. At the same time, most participants who used English to buy, sell and exchange goods did so using the internet, so for those with access to the World Wide Web, geographical location need not constrain the conversion of English skills into the trading capability. At any rate, these face-to-face encounters with English-speaking foreigners are interesting as they provide further evidence of opportunities for Colombians to convert their English skills into valued functionings in their local contexts.

6.3.1.3 Amiguismo

A final factor which emerged from the data as significant for shaping participants' opportunities to convert English into economic functionings is *amiguismo* or social connections. The following extracts shed light on the meaning of this conversion factor and its value in the Colombian context:

You get work faster if you have friends and acquaintances in the company where you're applying...lots of companies don't look at applicants' capacities but rather whether this person is a friend of such and such a person [Mariluz].

Researcher: If you don't have connections, can English still open doors?

Jeremy: [That's] what they call *palancazo*¹³ in Colombia. The thing is that we are in a society which has a lot of cronyism. So the person who is a friend of the mayor has a job, and the person who isn't friends with the mayor doesn't: he/she is screwed. So if you're really good at what you do, and you don't have a contact, a patron, unfortunately it's possible that you won't get a good job.

You remind me of a doctoral student from Canada...and for this study that she was conducting, she interviewed the new director of...the language center. And she was really shocked to see that he didn't speak English, that he was the director, and it was because he had good friends among the administrative staff of the university, and I told her it's very normal that we see in Colombia lots of I'm sorry to say incompetent people in positions of power because they know they don't need to be competent. They just need to be friends with someone [Celia].

As the extracts above make clear, social connections, or *amiguismo*¹⁴ is specific to the Colombian context, although Sayer (2012: 29) has also reported on how *palanca*, which he defines as "good social connections", shaped the academic and professional opportunities of three novice Mexican teachers of English in his ethnographic study.

The importance of *amiguismo* is not surprising given that corruption is systemic in Colombia (OHCHR, 2018), but interestingly, this factor benefited some participants and disadvantaged others. For example, Luna's aspiration of working as a university lecturer was initially curtailed by this connection factor:

I think the reason I wasn't initially selected to work in the university [where I currently work] is because the first time it was an open call for applications and I was the only applicant. But even so my CV was suitable for teaching International Politics, and I couldn't understand their reasons for rejecting me, but later on they made another call for applications in the selection process, and this was more transparent, and I got in.

The fact that Luna "got in" at the second attempt shows that this factor, while initially thwarting her opportunity to improve her employment circumstances, can be negotiated, but this requires perseverance or "resilience" (Wilson-Strydom, 2017: 386). For those with friends in the right places, however, social connections can be an enabling factor:

The first job I got my friend recommended me, and that helped... I had the abilities, but that was a factor that influenced, and the second job it was totally the social contact. A friend

¹³ Leveraging/using influence (Real Academia Española, n.d.)

¹⁴ No exact translation of *amiguismo* exists, but synonyms would include cronyism, "leverage" [Celia] or "pulling strings" [Lis].

helped me to get a job because in Colombia sadly things are like that...here social contacts are very very very important, especially political [Rebecca].

For Rebecca, then, social contacts were instrumental in obtaining both of her jobs since graduation. Similarly, Alpha's job as a teaching assistant in an English-medium school was only possible because of a connection:

Researcher: Did you apply for the job or did you know someone?

Alpha: An acquaintance referred me, but I did the work.

Researcher: Is that how the labour market works in Colombia - you need to know the right people?

Alpha: Yes, inevitably...but at a certain moment we met during our studies - he studied Psychology - and I talked about myself, and he mentioned the position and intervened on my behalf.

Interestingly, Alpha made this contact during her university studies, which again highlights how different conversion factors converge to shape individuals' opportunities (Mkwanaenzi, 2019). Without university, Alpha would not have made the contact, and without the contact, her English skills would not have helped her get the job. Even though Alpha also had the English level required for the position, as she explained, for those with the right contacts, even this obstacle can be overcome:

I've seen people who've been contracted for positions where the level of English should be specific, let's say B2 or C1, and these people don't have the level, but they know someone who can help them enter the company, and they do it.

Taken together, these examples show how even those from modest backgrounds can use their agency to navigate this structural constraint (Calitz, 2019). Thus, on the one hand, for those with friends in the right places, *amiguismo* can be an enabling factor, and can even help those with poor proficiency in English improve their job opportunities. But on the other hand, for those without the right contacts, *amiguismo* can be a constraining factor. However, enabling factors such as resilience can help navigate this structural barrier, as the case of Luna illustrates.

6.3.2 Factors shaping the conversion of English into sociocultural capabilities

6.3.2.1 English level

As with economic capabilities, level of linguistic competence emerged as a factor shaping the conversion of English into valued sociocultural capabilities. Specifically, this conversion factor impinged upon the capability of having international mobility aspirations, as the following quotations show:

Researcher: You told me you would like to travel abroad: where would you like to go?

Kylie: Well, at the moment my options are limited to Argentina because of the language and my economic situation. In order to do a specialisation there, it would be very cheap. So I would be able to fund my studies myself, and study in either a private or public university there.

Researcher: But English won't help you in Argentina?

Kylie: No. That would be my option because of the language, but if I manage to get another language, I can expand [my choices] to other countries.

Ariadne: I want to travel. Actually, I couldn't travel because of my English level because I was going to go as an au-pair, but in the agency where I registered they didn't approve me because of my age, and I couldn't apply to the States, but rather to Europe.

Researcher: Okay, so they didn't accept you for the States because of your English level?

Ariadne: In the agency no. They wanted someone more fluent. But you go with the basics, and then you improve your skills while you're there, no? But I went to two different agencies, and I have to keep studying until I have a good level.

For Kylie, a lack of English has led her to adapt her aspirations downwards (Hart, 2016; Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015a). In other words, since the amount of the English linguistic capability she can draw on is low, her aspiration is to study in a Spanish-speaking country instead of an English-speaking one. Similarly, English level thwarted Ariadne's aspiration to work in the US. However, these examples also show how English level intersects with other conversion factors such as financial situation (which shaped Kylie's aspiration to study in Argentina) and age (which limited Ariadne's international mobility aspirations to Europe). Thus, while English may foster the capability to aspire, this is also contingent upon a range of person-specific conversion factors.

6.3.2.2 Visa requirements

As the quote above suggests, age and English level inhibited the realisation of Ariadne's international mobility aspirations, but this was because they made her ineligible for the U.S. visa. Hence, the personal conversion factors of age and English level only frustrated Ariadne's aspirations as they made it impossible for her to meet the US entry requirements. This structural barrier may therefore operate as a corrosive conversion factor, and one which no amount of resilience or agency can enable participants to navigate since, while an individual can improve their fluency in English, they cannot change their date of birth. Another example of how the visa requirement can be an insurmountable obstacle is offered below:

My aspiration was to go in the holidays, and, in fact, it was a present from my parents, the trip, with everything they had saved. But I had just finished my contract, so I think they [US immigration] thought that I would stay in the US because I had stopped working, I'm not married, and I speak English. But what I had wanted was to practise my English in the American context [Luna].

This quote highlights how lack of employment and marital status constrained the realisation of Luna's mobility aspirations, but only because these denied her the visitor visa. As Luna went on to explain, there were considerable financial consequences to being refused the US visa since the non-refundable application fee was equivalent to a little less than the Colombian monthly minimum salary, not including the cost of the trip to Bogotá for the interview:

It's a lot of money, so the fact that they denied me the visa left an economic gap that I hadn't expected. So the simple fact of trying to get the travel visa, well, you need to have status. You need to have a social standing to have the money that they ask for at the embassy because they also ask how much money you have while you're there.

The relationship between visa restrictions and socioeconomic status illustrated in this example is in line with research into migration which shows how such restrictions make migration less likely for the poor (Bonfati, 2014; Preibisch et al., 2014). However, despite resisting a deficit approach to this study's participants (Calitz, 2019; Calitz et al., 2016), as Luna's experience shows, it may not be possible to navigate such restrictions. Hence, as with the participants in Walker and Mkwanzan's (2015a: 44) research, participants in the current study may be investing "emotional energy...in ideal dreams and ambitions that might not be viable under their present conditions", which, in turn, may be profoundly damaging.

6.3.2.3 Internet access

A final factor which emerged as significant in the conversion of English into sociocultural capabilities was internet access. In particular, the internet was instrumental in enabling the capabilities of respect, dignity and recognition, which was fostered in Jeremy's case by reading the news online in English, and appreciating artistic and cultural expression, which was facilitated in most cases by video streaming services such as Netflix and YouTube. Additionally, by enabling participants to enjoy English-medium artistic and cultural products, the internet also shaped perceptions of life in English-speaking countries, which, in turn, may have influenced participants' aspirations to travel to such countries for work or study. This interpretation is supported by Mkwanzan (2019: 52), who reminds us that, "movies, dramas and commercial advertisements may have an unintended consequence of fuelling perceptions that one place may be better than another". While access to the World Wide Web may therefore constitute a particularly fertile factor for converting English into valued sociocultural freedoms, as shown in the previous section, some participants also had opportunities to claim sociocultural capabilities in their respective workplaces. Indeed, in the absence of internet access, an individual's working environment may also provide opportunities for participants to practise their English and exercise genuine sociocultural opportunities. As we have seen, such opportunities may be more likely to present themselves in the fields of education, business and tourism.

6.3.3 Factors shaping the conversion of English into the epistemic access capability

As shown earlier, English was valuable for promoting epistemic access, and this, in turn, enlarged other freedoms such as growing spiritually, pursuing valued pastimes, graduating from HE, and fulfilling aspirations. In view of the fact that, according to one estimate, 80% of virtual content is in English (Steger, 2017), it is unsurprising that the internet emerged from the data as instrumental in promoting this access. This finding resonates with other studies (e.g. Oliveira, 2019; Erling, 2017) which show a relationship between the internet, technology and English. Unsurprisingly, the capability to access knowledge using English was also partly contingent upon English level, which is perhaps best exemplified by Alirio, whose English skills enabled him to locate information in English, but not to meaningfully engage with it. As he explained, "when I find an article that interests me using the little English that I have, I translate the whole thing into Spanish". This example substantiates Tamim's (2014) findings which report how a limited command of English can restrict epistemological access, but also shows how the internet can be instrumental in enabling agentic individuals to overcome this linguistic barrier. Importantly, though, the fact that an unfavourable economic situation correlates negatively with

proficiency in English (thus limiting access to knowledge) supports Walker's (2020: 275) claim that "material conditions" can aggravate epistemic injustices.

6.3.4 Conclusion

In sum, this section has identified conversion factors which may be particularly salient for Colombian graduates from low-income backgrounds who are seeking to make the most of their English language skills. We have seen how these factors intersect to constrain or foster the potential of English to improve participants' lives subsequent to graduation. This highlights how responsibility for using English to get ahead does not rest solely with the individual, which problematises the neoliberal framing of English as the language of opportunity. On the contrary, this section has shown how some conversion factors, namely visa requirements, cannot be navigated by agentic individuals, at least not legally. However, in line with Calitz's (2018: 59) rejection of a deficit narrative, section 6.1 showed that individuals, given the right enabling conditions, can use their agency to ensure that constraining factors do not lead to "accumulative disadvantage". In this regard, for some participants more than others the capability for educational resilience (Wilson-Strydom, 2017) emerged as a key conversion factor.

Given the range of conversion factors identified above, which are of particular relevance for policymakers and practitioners seeking to ensure that ELE in Colombian HE does not lead to capability inequality? In other words, which of these factors can be considered especially corrosive or fertile for poor Colombian youth (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007)? Evidence from the interviews suggests that the most important factors for enabling this study's economically vulnerable participants to put their English skills to work are level of English and internet access. However, as we saw in section 6.1, participants' English level was partly contingent upon the quality of ELE available to participants, which was, in turn, to a significant degree shaped by participants' financial situation. Similarly, internet connectivity can be constrained by a lack of financial resources with one recent study reporting that 25% of the poorest Colombians have very limited access to the World Wide Web (IDB, 2020). This suggests that for this study's participants, as with the disadvantaged migrant youth in Mkwanzizi's (2019: 174) study, "the underlying influence is often financial availability". Thus, on the one hand, a good English level, high quality ELE, reliable internet access, and a strong financial situation are particularly fertile conversion factors, while on the other, poor English language skills, low quality ELE, limited or no access to the internet, and economic insecurity can be particularly corrosive for Colombian graduates from low-income backgrounds seeking to convert their English skills into valued functionings.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of Main Research Findings

Returning once more to our research questions, this paper has identified capabilities which ELE in Colombian HE has promoted or constrained in the lives of low-income HE graduates, and it has also identified factors which are influential in this process. In terms of the former research question, ELE in Colombian HE can promote or undermine a range of opportunity freedoms, and these are interrelated, which means that the absence or presence of one capability can impact on the availability of others (Mkwanzani, 2019). In terms of the latter, contextually relevant conversion factors overlap and intersect to shape socioeconomically deprived Colombian graduates' capabilities sets in complex, person-specific ways. What this means in broad terms is that English can play a role in human development in Colombia, but seen through the lens of linguistic imperialism, this role is not always positive and, by helping to advance the economic, political, and cultural agendas of interests in BANA countries, English is also implicated in the reproduction of asymmetrical North-South power relations.

7.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes a substantial empirical contribution to knowledge since it may well be the first in the region to use the CA to investigate the relationship between English and development and furthers our understanding of this relationship in several ways. First, by conceptualising development as the expansion of human freedoms - or capabilities - the CA has allowed us to consider the value of English in terms of the diversity of ways in which it contributes to well-being at the micro level rather than purely in terms of the economic benefits it brings at the macro level. This information can indicate to policymakers and practitioners domains where English skills are more or less useful, which, as I highlight below, can help in the development of contextually appropriate language policies and English language curricula. Second, the construct of conversion factors has deepened our understanding of the barriers - structural and otherwise - that financially insecure Colombian graduates can face when developing competence in English and when using this language to expand their freedoms. This construct therefore helps us to better account for the often complex reasons for individual variations in the conversion of English skills into valued opportunities (Mkwanzani, 2019). The most salient capabilities and conversion factors identified in the present study are broadly summarised in Figure 7.1 below, which, by nature, is somewhat reductive. As these capabilities and conversion factors emerged empirically from a particular research setting, this study makes no claims about their relevance elsewhere. Notwithstanding, subject to public debate by the relevant parties and additional validation (Robeyns, 2005), Figure 7.1 could be used to guide the development of a more comprehensive list of capabilities which can be thwarted or promoted by English (Tao, 2010). In addition, the conversion factors listed in Figure 7.1 can better direct policymakers' and educators' efforts to ensure that English promotes equitable development (Wilson-Strydom, 2015a). However, given the array of interlocking conversion factors at play in any given context, I have argued that the concepts of corrosive and fertile conversion factors are useful as these can help identify which development areas or interventions should be prioritised (Wilson-Strydom & Okkolin, 2016). Thus Figure 7.1 includes only those conversion factors which emerged as particularly fertile or corrosive in the context of the present study.

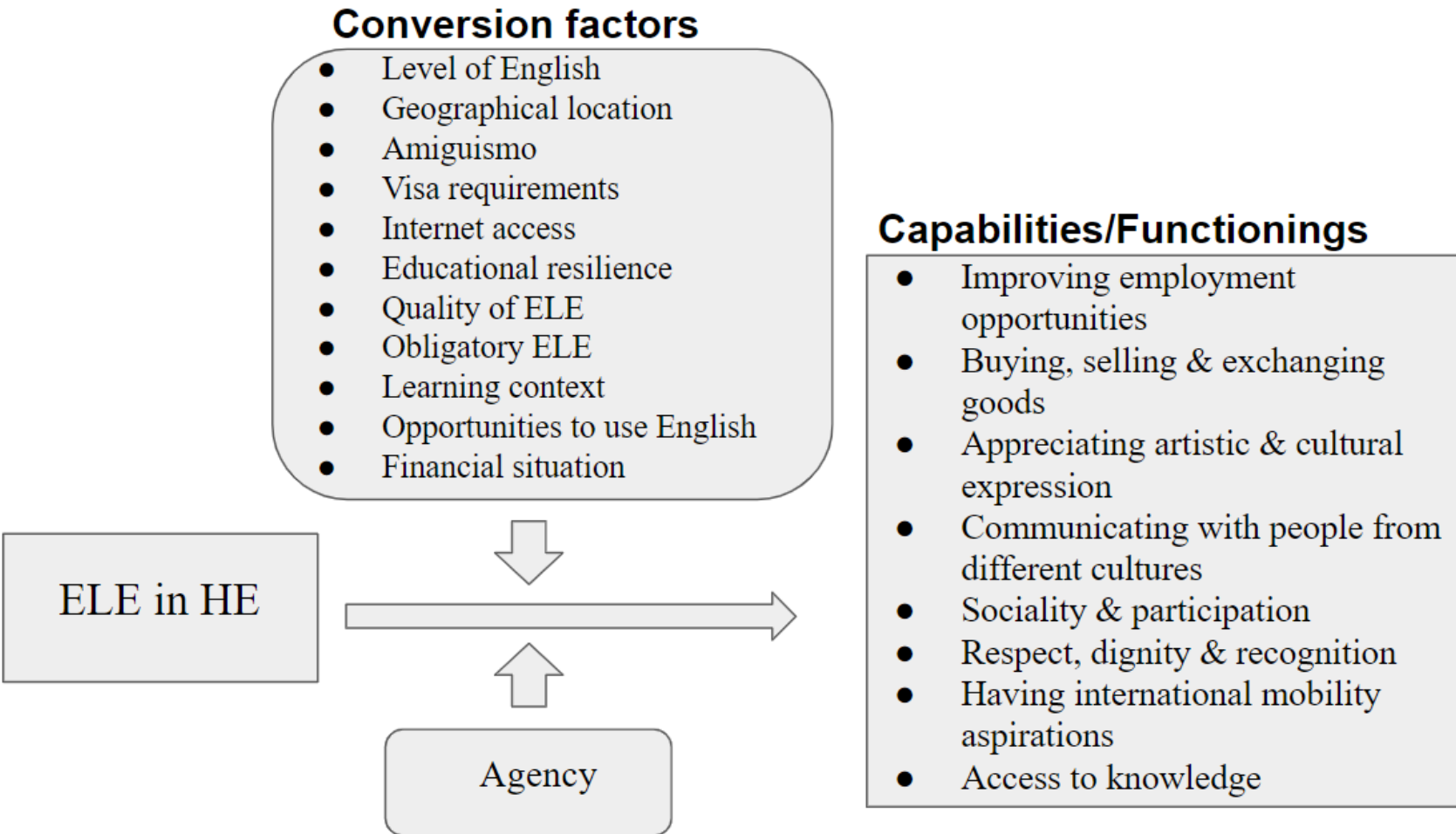


Figure 7.1 Summary of key research findings

A third way in which employing the CA in the present study advances our understanding of the relationship between English and development is by acknowledging the critical importance of human agency. In doing so the CA helps us to view this study’s participants not in deficit terms (Calitz, 2019), but rather as active agents in “their own destiny” (Sen, 1999: 53). Thus, as we have seen, individuals can, given the right enabling conditions, mobilise their agency to navigate barriers to the development of the English language capability as well as barriers to the expansion of other freedoms, if not now, then perhaps at some future point. However, this should not be taken to mean that the marginalised can negotiate all barriers to human flourishing since some barriers - such as visa requirements - are impossible to navigate using legal methods. Rather, it means that, in the words of Sen (1999: xi–xii), “the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us”. In certain instances, these constraining factors can lead individuals to adapt their preferences to their current circumstances, which highlights a final way in which the CA contributes to our thinking regarding the interconnections between English and development. Specifically, the concept of adaptive preferences allows us to better account for instances when individuals may fail to navigate constraining factors and can also help identify instances of capability deprivation which, in turn, can galvanise the efforts of policymakers and English language practitioners (Gore & Walker, 2020).

In sum, using the CA has allowed us to gain in-depth, nuanced and person-centered insights into the role of English in development. These insights build on a handful of studies which have shown how English can either promote or constrain human flourishing in a variety of ways, but that this can depend upon a range of factors (e.g. Erling, 2017; Ferguson, 2013; Mohanty, 2017). Collectively this emerging body of work supports claims that the contribution of English to human flourishing may have been overstated in some policy circles (e.g. Ferguson, 2013; Phillipson, 2010; Williams, 2011) and challenges the neoliberal narrative that English in itself unproblematically “opens doors” for any individual willing to make the effort (e.g. Kubota, 2011; Warriner, 2016). In this regard, employing the lens of linguistic imperialism has proven valuable since it better illuminates the ways in which English, while promoting the valued freedoms of economically

vulnerable Colombian HE graduates in certain instances, also benefits interests in the global North. This critical perspective is necessary given the ways in which the global diffusion of English is implicated in historic, social, economic and cultural injustices. While an equitable approach to English and development would seek to ensure that such injustices are not perpetuated, given the role of external and internal influences on individual agency and well-being, it is inevitable that in some contexts English, like education, will have disempowering and harmful effects for some and empowering and beneficial effects for others (Mohanty, 2017; Unterhalter, 2003). Nevertheless, a better understanding of the negative effects of English in developing countries, which often benefit BANA countries, is critical to ensure subsequent language policies in Colombia do not entrench existing injustices.

Besides building on and extending the literature in the nascent field of English and development, the current study also makes some theoretical contributions to existing knowledge. In particular, conceptualising linguistic capabilities as capabilities-in-development rather than as “freedoms instantaneously transferred to individuals” (Comim, 2012: 28) is useful for flagging injustices that have led individuals to claim different levels of the English language capability. This conceptualisation of linguistic capabilities as dynamic rather than static is applicable to other contexts where language plays a role - positive or otherwise - in development and can inform the design of interventions to address this injustice in a range of settings. A second related contribution to theory is that the amount of linguistic capabilities which individuals can claim is partly contingent upon the opportunities that they have to convert them into functionings. In other words, a lack of exposure and practice can lead to a deterioration of foreign language capabilities. An understanding of this dimension of linguistic capabilities can be particularly useful for ensuring that language policies are socially just. For example, while public school students in Colombia only have three hours of ELE, private school students have considerably more opportunities to use their foreign language skills, which, as we have seen, can result in unjust educational outcomes. The fact that language capabilities are not typically practised in isolation points to a third implication for theory: the relational component of such capabilities (Smith & Seward, 2009). Aside from foregrounding the significance of exposure and practice in order to develop the capability to communicate in English, this relational aspect highlights how the value and utility of linguistic freedoms varies across contexts. As such, while in some societies, a B1 level of English may meaningfully foster human flourishing (Euromonitor, 2010), in Colombia it seems more likely that a B2 level of English is needed in some domains. This information can be valuable for policymakers and practitioners when drawing up language learning objectives, and also helps us to understand why English may not promote development in some settings. The final theoretical contribution of this paper is to demonstrate the value of complementing the CA with Phillipson’s theory of linguistic imperialism when exploring issues related to English and development. This has been useful for addressing concerns that the CA pays insufficient attention to the ways in which unequal relations of power can give rise to oppression and domination (e.g. Crocker, 2009; Tikly, 2016).

7.3 Recommendations

Based on this study’s findings, several policy recommendations can be proposed. Importantly, though, since many participants’ freedoms have been expanded by English in manifold ways, removing English from educational curricula in Colombia is not one of them. Instead, the issue is rather to help ensure that English in Colombian HE neither gives rise to injustices nor perpetuates existing injustices. As such, the first recommendation would be to make ELE in Colombian HE optional. As English classes are not always free, and may require an additional financial outlay, this would reduce the cost

of graduation for some students. Further, this policy would shift student perceptions of the subject as of value purely for instrumental reasons and foster greater personal autonomy, a valued educational capability (Walker 2006a). Finally, offering English as an elective would reduce the number of dropouts and improve academic performance.

Second, the policy of mandatory ELE in HE would have had fewer negative consequences had participants' level of English not been so low when entering HE. One policy recommendation for HEIs in this regard would be to offer more support to students with poor English proficiency by providing them with additional resources such as extra tuition and teaching materials. Since few participants achieved the mandated B1 exit level of competence in English upon graduation, another option would be to stipulate that all HE students improve their English level by at least one band on the CEFR. This would mean that students who enter HE with a B1 level would have to achieve a B2 level while those who enter with an A1 level would aim to achieve an A2 level of competence. This policy would be much fairer than mandating that all HE students attain a B1 level English irrespective of their economic status, English level, or schooling background.

Third, this study has shown how participants' poor English skills compared to their wealthier counterparts can be partly attributed to the gap in quality between foreign language education in the public and private sectors, which foregrounds the critical importance of financial situation for developing the English linguistic capability in Colombia. Given that the development of linguistic capabilities requires practise and exposure, increasing the number of hours of English instruction in public schools would go some way to addressing this divide, but only if this were accompanied by an improvement in teacher capacity. This could be done by offering substantial financial incentives for public sector English teachers who improve their English level and/or participate in professional development programmes. Another way to improve teacher capacity would be to attract more qualified English teachers to the public sector with higher salaries and better resources. Short of increasing teacher capacity, and in view of the value of the internet for providing opportunities to practise and be exposed to English, another option would be to provide low-income ELE students with a reliable internet connection, which might go some way to ensuring that English fosters rather than constrains their wellbeing, and would also promote development in a variety of non-linguistic ways.

Finally, it also emerged from the findings that participants appear much more likely to convert their English skills into valued functionings if they have at least a B2 level of competence. A potential policy recommendation in this regard would be to focus on improving the quality of ELE so that more Colombian graduates can attain the threshold level of English competence required by employers. This recommendation, however, comes with a caveat, since "as more speakers acquire a workable command of the language, reduced scarcity may drive down the current premium afforded by possession of that skill" (Bruthiaux, 2002: 291). In other words, because English is a positional good (Grin, 2001), the benefits which accrue to competent speakers of this language may decrease as the number of speakers increases. One implication of this is that individuals will have to keep upgrading their English skills to remain employable in what may be an unending process of self-improvement (Park, 2011). Given the financial costs involved in accessing quality ELE in Colombia (Correa & González, 2016; Sánchez, 2013), this would leave financially insecure Colombians at a disadvantage compared to their more well-off counterparts. With this in mind, a more sensible policy recommendation would be to develop ELE curricula which reflect the uses that English can be put to in Colombian society. Since more opportunities to

communicate in English appear to present themselves in the fields of education, tourism, and business, instructional content could equip HE graduates with the relevant English language skills required by these fields.

7.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As this study is small-scale and qualitative, it makes no generalisation claims, and further research would be needed to firm up the conclusions presented here (Suter, 2012; Willis, 2007). Indeed, the sample size is not representative and includes a greater number of participants from the coastal area of Colombia where I live and work. At the same time, the sample is very heterogeneous and contains participants from different HEIs, programmes, geographical regions, and social strata in order to obtain richer insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Another limitation is the means I used to determine the economic status of the study's participants. Specifically, identifying low-income graduates on the basis of their social strata led to the inclusion of several graduates who had attended private schools for part of their compulsory education. However, even these participants suffered disadvantages due to their limited economic means, and their experiences of both private and public sector schooling yielded valuable insights into the quality of ELE in each sector. A third limitation relates my status as a white, blue-eyed researcher and an English "native-speaker", which may have influenced participants' responses, although giving participants the freedom to choose the language of the interview may have helped to address this limitation. This brings us to the final limitation: language. This has had an effect on the presentation of this study's data since, in most cases, extracts from the interviews had to be translated into English for the benefit of non-Spanish-speaking readers. However, until writing PhD theses in more than one language becomes acceptable practice, such translation is unavoidable.

The current study has demonstrated the potential of drawing on elements of the CA to examine the relationship between English in development, and more research using the CA to explore this relationship in a variety of development contexts is called for. Such research would help build a more comprehensive picture of the contribution that English can make to development in different settings at the micro level, and would complement research which has investigated the interface between English and development in LMICs at the macro level. In view of the recent policy initiatives promoting English in education systems in the region, more studies from Latin America would be particularly welcome. This study has also illustrated the value of conceptualising linguistic capabilities as evolving rather than static. As such, further capability studies could explore this dimension of language capabilities and its social justice implications for migration, employment, education, and a range of other domains.

7.5 Final Reflections

I started out with a highly critical view of the role that English can play in development, in large part due to the negative effects of the spread of English in the developing contexts where I have worked, and most recently in Colombia. However, judging by the experiences of this study's participants, banishing English from Colombian HE would deny low-income graduates valued opportunities to improve their well-being and transform their circumstances. This had made me guardedly optimistic about the potential of English in Colombia. At the same time, I have become keenly aware of the ways in which English can perpetuate disadvantage or reproduce inequality, and in the future I hope to draw attention to this issue to temper the fervour of many in the ELT profession regarding the advantages English can confer on individuals in the global South.

8. Bibliography

- Acosta, P., Muller, N., and Sarzosa, M. (2015). *Beyond Qualifications: Returns to Cognitive and Socio-Emotional Skills in Colombia*. The Institute for the Study of Labour. [PDF File]. Retrieved from: <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/9403/beyond-qualifications-returns-to-cognitive-and-socio-emotional-skills-in-colombia>
- Adamson, L. (2020a). *Negotiating Language and Learning: An ethnographic study of students' experiences in two Tanzanian secondary schools*, PhD thesis, London: University College London.
- Adamson, L. (2020b). Language of instruction: a question of disconnected capabilities, *Comparative Education*, DOI: [10.1080/03050068.2020.1812236](https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2020.1812236)
- Ahern, E. J. G. (1991). *El desarrollo de la educación en Colombia 1820-1850* [PDF File]. Bogotá: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Retrieved from http://www.pedagogica.edu.co/storage/rce/articulos/rce22-23_04arti.pdf
- Alcoff, L. (1991). The Problem of Speaking for Others. *Cultural Critique*, 20, pp. 5-32.
- Alkire, S. (2005) Why the Capability Approach? *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), pp. 115-135.
- Altbach, P. G. (2013). *The International Imperative in Higher Education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L., and Rumbley, L. E. (2009). *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution A Report Prepared for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education* [PDF File]. UNESCO. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000183168>
- Alvarez, J. A. A., Cárdenas, B. M. L., and Gonzalez, M. A. (2011). Cobertura vs continuidad: dos retos para el desarrollo profesional para los docentes de inglés en el marco de Colombia Bilingüe. In J. A. Bastidas, and I. J. Muñoz (Eds.) *Fundamentos para el desarrollo profesional de los docentes de inglés* (pp. 119-154). Nariño, Pasto: Calidad Educativa.
- Anand, S., and Sen, A. K. (2000). The Income Component of the Human Development Index, *Journal of Human Development*, 1(1), pp. 83-106.
- Angulo, G. M. (2016). Cooperación internacional y emigración calificada: diáspora científica colombiana. *Revista internacional de cooperación y desarrollo*, 3(1), pp. 99-114.
- Appleby, R. (2010). *ELT, Gender and International Development. Myths of Progress in a Neocolonial World*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Arango, L. E., and Bonilla, G. (2015). Human capital agglomeration and social returns to education in Colombia, *Borradores de Economía 883, Banco de la República de Colombia* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://ideas.repec.org/p/col/000094/012788.html>
- Arcand, J. L., and Grin, F. (2013). Language in economic development: Is English special and is linguistic fragmentation bad? In E. J. Erling, and P. Seargeant (Eds.), *English and development: Policy, pedagogy and globalization* (pp. 243-266). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Aronowitz, S., and Giroux, H. A. (2003). *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate Over Schooling*. London: Routledge.
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), pp. 385-405.
- Azam, M., Chin, A., and Prakash, N. (2013). The Returns to English-Language Skills in India. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 61(2), pp. 335-367.

- Baird, A. (2009). Methodological Dilemmas: Researching Violent Young Men in Medellín, Colombia. *IDS Bulletin*, 40(3), pp. 72-77.
- Ballet, J., Biggeri, M., and Comim, F. (2011). Children's Agency and the Capability Approach: A Conceptual Framework. In M. Biggeri, and J. Ballet (Eds.), *Children and the Capability Approach* (pp. 22-45). UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bamgbose, A. (1999). African language development and language planning. *Social Dynamics*, 25(1), pp. 13-30.
- Banya, K. (2010). Globalization, Social Justice, and Education in Africa: Neoliberalism, Knowledge Capitalism in Sub-Saharan Africa. In J. I. Zajda (Ed.) *Globalization, Education and Social Justice* (pp. 15-31). Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.
- Benavides, J. E. (2021). Level of English in Colombian Higher Education: A Decade of Stagnation. *PROFILE: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(1), pp. 57-73.
- Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (4th edition)*. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bleakley, H., and Chin, A. (2004). Language skills and earnings: Evidence from childhood immigrants. *Review of Economics and Statistics* 84(2), pp. 481-496.
- Bonfati, S. (2014). Towards a migrant-centred perspective on international migration: The contribution of Amartya Sen's capability approach. *Social Work and Society International Online Journal* 12(2), pp. 1-13.
- Bonilla, C. A. C., and Tejada-Sánchez, I. (2016). Unanswered questions in Colombia's language education policy. *PROFILE: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 18(1), pp. 185-201.
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77-101
- British Council (2015a). *English in Peru an examination of policy, perceptions and influencing factors* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.britishcouncil.pe/sites/default/files/english_in_peru_may_2015.pdf
- British Council (2015b). *English in Colombia: a survey of the policies, perception and influencing factors* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/English%20in%20Colombia.pdf>
- British Council (2019). *Annual Report and Accounts 2018-2019* [PDF File]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/corporate-reports/annual-report-2018-19>
- British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018). *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, fourth edition* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethicalguidelines-for-educational-research-2018>
- Bruthiaux, P. (2002). Hold Your Courses: Language Education, Language Choice, and Economic Development. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(3), pp. 275-296.
- Calitz, T., Walker, M., and Wilson-Strydom, M. (2016). Theorising a capability approach to equal participation for undergraduate students at a South African university. *Perspectives in Education*, 34(2), pp. 57-69.
- Calitz, T. (2018). A capability approach to participatory research platforms for young black women in South African higher education. In A. Lopez-Fogues, and F. M. Cin (Eds.), *Youth, gender and the capabilities approach to human development. Rethinking opportunities and agency from a human development perspective*. (pp. 55-72). New York: Routledge.
- Calitz, T. (2019). *Enhancing the Freedom to Flourish in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.

- Camacho, A., Messina, J., and Uribe, J. (2016). *The Expansion of Higher Education in Colombia: Bad Students or Bad Programs?* [PDF File]. Manuscript, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://economia.uniandes.edu.co/components/com_booklibrary/ebooks/dcede2017-13.pdf
- Canagarajah, S. A. (2017). Introduction. The nexus of migration and language. The emergence of a disciplinary space. In S. Canagarajah (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Migration and Language* (pp. 1-28). London: Routledge.
- Cárdenas, R., and Miranda, N. (2014). Implementación del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo: un balance intermedio. *Educación y Educadores*, 17(1), pp. 51-67.
- Castillo, L. C. (2013). *Estado de la Educación Superior en Iberoamérica y en Colombia*. Cali: Universidad del Valle.
- Centro Colombo Americano (2020). 10 Razones para elegirnos [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.colombobogota.edu.co/10-razones-para-elegir-el-colombo>
- Chan, K. L. (2016). *Power Language Index. Which are the World's Most Influential Languages?* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.kailchan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/KC_Power-Language-Index_May-2016.pdf
- Chimbutane, F. (2017). Language policies and the role of development agencies in postcolonial Mozambique, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 18(4), pp. 356-370.
- Chiswick, B. R., and Miller, P. W. (2002). Immigrant earnings: Language skills, linguistic concentrations and the business cycle. *Journal of Population Economics* 15(1), pp. 31-57.
- CIA World Factbook (2021). *Colombia* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/colombia>
- Cin, F. M. (2017). *Gender Justice, Education and Equality: Creating Capabilities for Girls' and Women's Development*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. (2005). *Research methods in education (5th edition)*. London and New York: Routledge Farmer.
- Coleman, H. (2010). *English in Development*. London: British Council [PDF File]. Retrieved from www.teachingenglish.org.uk/transform/books/english-language-development
- Comim, F. (2003). *Capability Dynamics: the importance of time to capability assessments* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <http://www.albacharia.ma/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/31892/capability%20change.pdf?sequence=1>
- Comim, F. (2012). New Perspectives on Human Development. In G. Tonon, and S. Aragón, (Eds.) *Desarrollo Humano, Educación y Empleo en el Siglo XXI* (pp. 22-26). Facultad de Ciencias Sociales. Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora.
- Conradie, I., and Robeyns, I. (2013). Aspirations and Human Development Interventions, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 14(4), pp. 559-580.
- Corbett, C. (2014, September 16). Colombia's bilingual program failing, scoring very low in world ranking *Colombia Reports* [online]. Retrieved from <https://colombiareports.com/national-bilingual-program-failing-level-english-colombia-low-world-ranking/>
- Correa, D., and González, A. (2016). English in public primary schools in Colombia: Achievements and challenges brought about by national language education policies. *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 24(83), pp. 1-30.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* [PDF File]. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1bf>
- Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Educational Research: Pearson New International Edition*, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

- Crocker, D. (2009). *Ethics of Global Development: Agency, Capability, and Deliberative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cronquist, K., and Fiszbein, A. (2017). *English Language Learning in Latin America*. [PDF file]. The Dialogue. Retrieved from <https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/English-Language-Learning-in-Latin-America-Final-1.pdf>
- Crosbie, V. (2013). Capabilities and a pedagogy for global identities. In A. Boni, and M. Walker (Eds.), *Human development and capabilities: Re-imagining the university of the twenty-first century* (pp. 178-191). Oxon: Routledge.
- Crosbie, V. (2014a). Cosmopolitan Capabilities in the HE Language Classroom. *Journal of Social Science Education*, 13(2), pp. 24-38.
- Crosbie, V. (2014b). Capabilities for intercultural dialogue, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 14(1), pp. 91-107.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language (2nd ed)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cunningham, W., Acosta, P., and Muller, N. (2016). *Minds and Behaviors at Work: Boosting Socioemotional Skills for Latin America's Workforce* [PDF File]. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/978-1-4648-0884-5>
- Dejaeghere, J. G. (2019). Reconceptualizing Educational Capabilities: A Relational Capability Theory for Redressing Inequalities, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 21(1), pp. 17-35.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects (3rd ed)*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.
- DANE (2018). *Boletín del Sistema Nacional de Información de Demanda Laboral* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://sitios.dane.gov.co/sinidel/#/>
- DANE (2021). *Empleo informal y seguridad social* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/mercado-laboral/empleo-informal-y-seguridad-social>
- de Haas, H., and Rodríguez, F. (2010). Mobility and Human Development: Introduction, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11(2), pp. 177-184.
- de Haas, H. (2014). Migration theory Quo Vadis? *International Migration Institute Working Paper 100* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://heindehaas.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/de-haas-2014-imi-wp100-migration-theory-quo-vadis.pdf>
- DNP (2015). *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2014-2018. Todos por un Nuevo País. Tomo 1* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/PND/PND%202014-2018%20Tomo%201%20internet.pdf>
- Domingue, B. W., Lang, D., Cuevas, M., Castellanos, M., Lopera, C., Mariño, J. P., Molina, A., and Shavelson, R. J. (2017). Measuring Student Learning in Technical Programs: A Case Study From Colombia. *AERA Open*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858417692997>
- Drèze, J., and A. K. Sen, A. K. (2013). *An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Duarte, J., Soledad, M. S., and Moreno, M. (2012). *Quality, Equality and Equity in Colombian Education (Analysis of the SABER 2009 Test)* [PDF file]. Inter-American Development Bank. Retrieved from <https://publications.iadb.org/en/quality-equality-and-equity-colombian-education-analysis-saber-2009-test>
- Dustmann, C., and Fabbri, F. (2003). Language proficiency and labour market performance of immigrants in the UK. *Economic Journal*, 113, pp. 695-717.

- Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., and Fennig, C. D. (Eds.) (2020). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World (23rd ed)*. [online]. Texas: SIL International. Retrieved from <http://www.ethnologue.com>
- Echeverri, M. M. B. (2017). “Somos muchos, somos diversos y aquí estamos cruzando fronteras”: Reflexiones sobre la comprensión de los procesos migratorios juveniles. *Desidades*, 16(5), pp. 9-18.
- Epigeum (2012). Research Integrity: Arts and Humanities [online]. Retrieved from https://www.epigeum.com/downloads/ri_accessible/uk/05_arts/html/course_files/ar_3_60.html
- Erling, E. J. (2017). Language planning, English language education and development aid in Bangladesh, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 18(4), pp. 388-406.
- Erling, E. J., and Power, T. (2017). *Synthesis Report: Evidence of the Relationship Between English and Economic Gain in Bangladesh* [PDF file]. English in Action: Dhaka, Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/synthesis-report-evidence-of-the-relationship-between-english-and-economic-gain-in-bangladesh>
- Erling, E. J., Seargeant, P., and Solly, M. (2014). English in rural Bangladesh: How is language education perceived as a resource for development in rural communities? *English Today*, 30(4), pp. 15-21.
- Erling, E., Chowdhury, Q. H., Solly, M., and Seargeant, P. (2019). “Successful” migration, (English) language skills and global inequality: The case of Bangladeshi migrants to the Middle East, *Multilingua*, 38(3), pp. 253-281.
- Euromonitor (2010). *The Benefits of the English Language for Individuals and Societies: Quantitative Indicators from Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Pakistan*. [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Euromonitor%20Report%20A4.pdf>
- Export.gov (2013, July 16). *Doing Business in Colombia* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://2016.export.gov/colombia/doingbusinessincolombia/marketoverview/index.asp>
- Fandiño-Parra, Y. J., Bermúdez-Jiménez, J. R., and Lugo-Vásquez, V. E. (2012). Retos del Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo. Colombia Bilingüe. *Educación y Educadores*, (15)3, pp. 363-381.
- Fanton, N., and Serajuddin, U. (2016). The World Bank’s Classification of Countries by Income. *Policy Research Working Paper 7528*. The World Bank Group [PDF File]. Retrieved from <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/408581467988942234/pdf/WPS7528.pdf>
- Feldman, S., and Gellert, P. (2006). The seductive quality of central human capabilities: sociological insights into Nussbaum and Sen’s disagreement, *Economy and Society*, 35(3), pp. 423-452.
- Ferguson, G. (2013). English, Development and Education: Charting the Tensions. In. E. J. Erling, and P. Seargeant (Eds.), *English and Development. Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization* (pp. 21-44), Bristol: Multilingual Matters
- Ferreira, M. M., Avitabile, C. Botero Álvarez, J., Haimovich Paz, F., and Urzúa. S. (2017). *At a Crossroads. Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington D.C. The World Bank.
- Flores-Crespo, P. (2007). Education, employment and human development: Illustrations from Mexico. *Journal of Education and Work*, 20(1), pp. 45-66.
- Focho, G. N. (2011). Student perceptions of English as a developmental tool in Cameroon. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language* (pp. 137-160). London: British Council.
- Gacel-Ávila, J., and Rodríguez-Rodríguez, S. (2019). *The internationalization of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. An Assessment*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara.

- Galindo, C., Gomez, J., and Rodriguez, M. (2015). Repercusión del proyecto neoliberal en la educación superior en Colombia. *El Ágora USB*, 2015(1), pp. 73-94
- García León, L. J., and García León, L. D (2012). Políticas lingüísticas en Colombia: tensiones entre políticas para lenguas mayoritarias y lenguas minoritarias. *Boletín de Filología* [online], 47(2), pp. 47-70. Retrieved from https://scielo.conicyt.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0718-93032012000200002
- Gibbs, G. R. (2013). Using Software in Qualitative Analysis. In U. Frick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 277-294). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Giroux, H. A. (2002). Neoliberalism, Corporate Culture, and the Promise of Higher Education: The University as a Democratic Public Sphere. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(4), pp. 425-463.
- Giroux, H. A. (2010). Public Values, Higher Education and the Scourge of Neoliberalism: Politics at the Limits of the Social [PDF File]. Retrieved from <http://svr91.edns1.com/~culturem/index.php/cm/article/viewFile/426/444>
- Giroux, H. A. (2011). Once More, with Conviction: Defending Higher Education as a Public Good. *Qui Parle*, 20(1), pp. 117-135.
- Giroux, H. A. (2015a). Henry Giroux on the Rise of Neoliberalism. *Humanity & Society*, 39(4), pp. 449-455.
- Giroux, H. A. (2015b). Democracy in Crisis, the Specter of Authoritarianism, and the Future of Higher Education, *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*, 1(1), pp. 101-113.
- Givon, S., and Court, D. (2010) Coping strategies of high school students with learning disabilities: a longitudinal qualitative study and grounded theory, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(3), pp. 283-303.
- Gómez Martínez, G. (2021, March 12). ¿Cuánto cuesta estudiar en las universidades más caras de Colombia? *RCN Radio* [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.rcnradio.com/economia/cuanto-cuesta-estudiar-en-las-universidades-mas-caras-de-colombia>
- González A. (2010). English and English teaching in Colombia Tensions and possibilities in the expanding circle. In A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 332-352). Florence: Taylor and Francis.
- González-Velosa, C., Rucci, G., Sarzosa, M., and Urzúa, S. (2015). *Returns to higher education in Chile and Colombia [IDB Working Paper Series No. IDB-WP-587]*. InterAmerican Development Bank.
- Gore, O. T., and Walker, M. (2020). Conceptualising (dis)advantage in South African higher education: A capability approach perspective. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 8(2), pp. 55-73.
- Grin, F. (2001). English as economic value: facts and fallacies. *World Englishes*, 20, pp. 65-78.
- Grin, F. (2003). Language Planning and Economics, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 4(1), pp. 1-66.
- Grin, F. (2016). The Economics of Language Education. In T. McCarty, and S. May (Eds.), *Language Policy and Political Issues in Education. Encyclopedia of Language and Education (3rd ed.)* (pp. 1-12). Cham: Springer.
- Grix, J. (2010). *The foundations of research (2nd ed.)*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gröll, I. (2009). Las lenguas amerindias y criollas en Colombia. Desarrollos políticos lingüísticos en el marco de la Constitución Política de 1991. In Daniel Aguirre (Ed.). *Las lenguas autóctonas en Colombia. Consideraciones alrededor de su legitimación en la Constitución de 1991* (pp. 13-116). Bogotá: Universidad de Los Andes.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries, *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29, pp. 75-91.

- Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guerrero, C. H. (2009). Language Policies in Colombia: The Inherited Disdain for our Native Languages. *HOW Journal*, 16(1), pp. 11-24. Retrieved from <https://howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/74>
- Guerrero, C. H. (2010). Is English the key to access the wonders of the modern world? A critical discourse analysis. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 57, pp. 294-313.
- Guzman-Valenzuela, C. (2016). Global trends and their impact on Latin America: the role of the state and the private sector in the provision of higher education, Working paper no. 4, June 2016 [PDF File], *Centre for Global Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchcghe.org/perch/resources/publications/wp4.pdf>
- Hanushek, E. A., and Woessmann, L. (2008). The Role of Cognitive Skills in Economic Development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 46(3), pp. 607-68.
- Hart, C. S. (2016). How Do Aspirations Matter?, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17(3), pp. 324-341
- Herazo, J., Jerez, S., and Lorduy, D. (2012). Opportunity and incentive for becoming bilingual in Colombia: Implications for Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo. *Íkala, revista de lenguaje y cultura*, 17(2), pp. 199-213.
- Hernández, G. (2010). ¿Cuán rentable es la educación superior en Colombia? *Lecturas de Economía* 73, pp. 181-214.
- Holliday, A. (1994). The house of TESEP and the communicative approach: The special needs of state English language education. *ELT Journal*, 48(1), pp. 3-11.
- Hurie, A. H. (2018). ¿Inglés para la paz? Colonialidad, ideología neoliberal y expansión discursiva en Colombia Bilingüe. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 23(2), pp. 333-354.
- Human Rights Watch (2019). Colombia. Events of 2018. [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/colombia>
- ICETEX (2016). *Plan Estratégico 2016-2020* [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://portal.icetex.gov.co/Portal/docs/default-source/documentos-el-icetex/plan-estrategico/plan_estrategico_2016-2020.pdf
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (2020). *Covid-19: Are we prepared for online learning?* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/CIMA-Brief-20-COVID-19-Are-We-Prepared-for-Online-Learning.pdf>
- Isaza-Restrepo A., Enríquez-Guerrero C., and Pérez-Olmos, I. (2016). Deserción y rezago académico en el programa de medicina de la Universidad del Rosario, Bogotá, Colombia. *Revista Ciencias de Salud*, 14(2), pp. 231-45.
- Jaramillo, A. (2010). Financing Higher Education in Colombia: Challenges and Tensions [online]. *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.unal.edu.co/handle/unal/10269>
- Jaramillo, F. M., Alfaro, M. G. E., García, A. R. A., Lozano, F. J., Orozco, A. F. H. (2012). *Desfinanciamiento de la Educación Superior en Colombia. La realidad de la crisis en el sistema de financiación de las Universidades*. [PDF File]. Pereira, Estatales Sistema Universitario Estatal. Retrieved from <http://repositorio.utp.edu.co/dspace/handle/11059/3213>
- Jensen, E., and Laurie, C. (2017). *An introduction to qualitative data analysis*. London: Sage.

- Jessel, E. (2017, November 9). 'If I'm stratum 3, that's who I am': inside Bogotá's social stratification system [online]. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/nov/09/bogota-colombia-social-stratification-system>
- Khan, C. (2019) Cultural awareness through linguisticism? Questioning the roles of native English speakers in Bogota, Colombia, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 19(2), pp. 123-136.
- Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P., Steinberg, S. R., and Monzó, L. (2017). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research: Advancing the bricolage. In N. K. Denzin, and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.) (pp. 235-260). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ku, H., and Zussman, A. (2010). Lingua Franca: The Role of English in International Trade. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 75(2), pp. 250-260.
- Kubota, R. (2011). Questioning linguistic instrumentalism: English, neoliberalism, and language tests in Japan. *Linguistics and Education*, 22, pp. 248-260.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2016). Dangerous liaison: Globalization, empire and TESOL. In J. Edge (Ed.), *(Re)locating TESOL in an age of empire* (pp. 1-26). NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kvale, S. (1994). Ten standard Objections to Qualitative Research Interviews, *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 25(2), pp. 147-173.
- Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(3), pp. 480-500.
- Lai, M. L. (2019). English linguistic neo-imperialism – a case of Hong Kong, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, pp. 1-15. DOI: 10.1080/01434632.2019.1702667
- Lee, C. G. (2012). English language and economic growth: Cross-country empirical evidence. *Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 2(1), pp. 5-20.
- Leech, N. L., and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2007). An array of qualitative data analysis tools: A call for data analysis triangulation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 22(4), pp. 557-584.
- Levinsohn, J. (2004). *Globalization and the Returns to Speaking English in South Africa*. NBER Working Paper No. 10985 [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w10985>
- Levy, D. (1986). *Higher education and the state in Latin America: Private challenges to public dominance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Levy, D. C. (2010). The Decline of Private Higher Education [PDF File]. *WP No. 16 January 2011 PROPHE Working Paper Series*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED522022.pdf>
- Lewis, H. (2017). Realising linguistic justice: resources versus capabilities, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, (38)7, pp. 595-606.
- Li, D. C. S. (2012). Linguistic Hegemony or Linguistic Capital? Internationalization and English-Medium Instruction at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In A. Doiz, D. Lasagabaster, and J. M. Sierra (Eds.), *English-Medium Instruction at Universities* (pp. 65-83). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Lightbown, P. M., and Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford: OUP.
- Lillis, T., and Curry, M. J. (2013). English, Scientific Publishing and Participation in the Global Knowledge Economy. In E. J. Erling, and P. Seargeant (Eds.), *English and development: Policy, pedagogy and globalization* (pp. 220-242). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Lincoln, Y. S., and Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic observation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

- Lopez-Fogues, A., and Cin, F. M. (2018). *Youth, Gender and the Capabilities Approach to Development (Routledge Explorations in Development Studies)*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Louidor, W. (2018). Reseña del libro Migración internacional: patrones y determinantes. *Estudios comparados Colombia-América Latina-Proyecto LAMP Universitas Humanística*, 85, pp. 415-425.
- Lozano, J., Boni, A., Peris, J., and Hueso, A. (2012). Competencies in higher education: A critical analysis from the capabilities approach. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 46(1), pp. 132-147.
- Lunt, R., and Hamlyn, A. (2007). Lessons from a training project in war-affected areas of Sri Lanka. In H. Coleman (Ed.) *Language and Development: Africa and Beyond* (pp. 107-117). Addis Ababa: British Council.
- Lysandrou, P., and Lysandrou, Y. (2003). Global English and progression: Understanding English language spread in the contemporary era. *Economy and Society*, 32(2), pp. 207-233.
- Mack, L. (2010). The philosophical underpinnings of educational research [PDF File]. *Polyglossia*, 19. Retrieved from https://en.apu.ac.jp/rcaps/uploads/fckeditor/publications/polyglossia/Polyglossia_V19_Lindsay.pdf
- Mackenzie, N., and Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology, *Issues In Educational Research*, 16 [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.iier.org.au/iier16/mackenzie.html> .
- Mackenzie, L. (2020a). A Case of Capability Expansion or Capability Reduction? An Exploration of Loan Recipients' Views of ICETEX: Colombia's Higher Education Student Loans Institute. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192720920071>
- Mackenzie, L. (2020b). A critical evaluation of the social justice implications of the Colombian government's English-Spanish bilingualism policies, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 21(2), pp. 117-134
- Mahony, P., and Weiner, G. (2019). Neo-liberalism and the state of higher education in the UK, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43(4), pp. 560-572.
- Mann, S. (2011). A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews in Applied Linguistics, *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), pp. 6-24
- Marginson, S. (2006). Dynamics of national and global competition in higher education. *Higher Education*, 52, pp. 1-39
- Marginson, S. (2018). World higher education under conditions of national/global disequilibria, Working paper no. 42, October 2018 [PDF File]. *Centre for Global Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchcghe.org/publications/working-paper/world-higher-education-under-conditions-of-nationalglobal-disequilibria/>
- Martinez, F. (2015). English in advertising in Colombia. *World Englishes*, 34, pp. 600-619.
- Martínez, S. L. R. (2016). Bilingualism in Colombian Higher Education. *Enletawa Journal*, 9(2), pp. 91-108.
- Matear, A. (2008). English language learning and education policy in Chile: can English really open doors for all? *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(2), pp. 131-147.
- Matrícula cero en universidades públicas: ¿cuánto cuesta cumplir la propuesta del Gobierno? (2021, May 11). *Semana* [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.semana.com/economia/articulo/matricula-cero-en-universidades-publicas-cuanto-cuesta-cumplir-la-propuesta-del-gobierno/202127/>
- Mauthner, N. S., and Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis. *Sociology*, 37(3), pp. 413-431.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 1(2), Art. 20 [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2385>

- Maxwell, J. A. (2004). Using Qualitative Methods for Causal Explanation. *Field Methods*, 16(3), pp. 243-264
- McCowan, T. (2016). Universities and the post-2015 development agenda: An analytical framework. *Higher Education*, 72(4), pp. 505-523.
- Melguizo, T., Sanchez, F., and Velasco, T. (2015). Credit for Low-Income Students and Access to and, Academic Performance in Higher Education in Colombia: A Regression Discontinuity Approach. *World Development*, 80, pp. 61-77.
- Melo, L., Ramos, J., and Hernández, P. (2017). La educación superior en Colombia: Situación actual y análisis de eficiencia. *Desarrollo y Sociedad*, 78, pp. 59-111.
- MEN (1992). *Ley 30 de Diciembre 28 de 1992* [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.cna.gov.co/1741/articles-186370_ley_3092.pdf
- MEN (2006). *Formar en lenguas extranjeras: el reto. Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés* [PDF file]. Retrieved from https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1621/articles-115174_archivo_pdf.pdf
- MEN (2015). *Ministerio de Educación Nacional Decreto No. de 2015* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/1759/articles-354964_recurso_1.pdf
- MEN (2017). *Annual Colombian Higher Education Statistics (Anuario Estadístico de la Educación Superior Colombiana)* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://snies.mineduacion.gov.co/1778/articles-391288_recurso_1.pdf
- MEN (2019). *Tasa de Cobertura en Educación Superior en Colombia* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/sistemasinfo/SNIES/>
- Mendoza, D. C., and Flores-Crespo, P. (2012). Capabilidades en el Bachillerato de México. In G. Tonon, and S. Aragón (Eds.), *Desarrollo Humano, Educación y Empleo en el Siglo XXI* (pp. 86-103). Buenos Aires: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora.
- Mertens, D. M. (2013). Ethical Use of Qualitative Data and Findings. In U. Flick (Ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 510-523). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., and Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Mineducación anuncia 'Colombia Very Well, estrategia nacional de bilingüismo. (2014, July 15). *El Universal* [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.eluniversal.com.co/educacion/mineducacion-anuncia-colombia-very-well-estrategia-nacional-de-bilinguismo-164634>
- Ministerio de Cultura (2018). Lenguas nativas y criollas de Colombia [webpage]. Retrieved from <http://www.mincultura.gov.co/areas/poblaciones/APP-de-lenguas-nativas/Paginas/default.aspx>
- Migration Policy Institute (2015). *The Colombian Diaspora in the United States* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/RAD-ColombiaII.pdf>
- Ministerio de Educación, Perú (2015). *Normas Legales* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://www.minedu.gob.pe/ingles-puertas-al-mundo/pdf/ds-n12-2015-minedu.pdf>
- Mkwananzi, F. (2019). *Higher Education, Youth and Migration in Contexts of Disadvantage: Understanding Aspirations and Capabilities*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mkwananzi, F., and Cin, F. M. (2020). From Streets to Developing Aspirations: How Does Collective Agency for Education Change Marginalised Migrant Youths' Lives? *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, DOI: 10.1080/19452829.2020.1801609

- Mohanty, A. (2008). Perpetuating inequality: Language disadvantage and capability deprivation of tribal mother tongue speakers in India. In W. Harbert, S. McConnell-Genet, A. Miller, and J. Whitman (Eds.), *Language and Poverty* (pp. 102-124). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Mohanty, A. (2017). Multilingualism, education, English and development: Whose development? In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Multilingualisms and Development* (pp. 261-280). London: British Council.
- Montenegro, J. (1994). La Educación Superior en Colombia. *Revista de la Educación Superior*, 92, pp. 1-33.
- Mora, R. A., Chiquito T., and Zapata J. D. (2019). Bilingual Education Policies in Colombia: Seeking Relevant and Sustainable Frameworks for Meaningful Minority Inclusion. In B. Johannessen (Ed.), *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Politics, Policies and Practices in a Globalized Society* (pp. 55-80). Cham: Springer.
- Naidoo, R. (2011). Rethinking Development: Higher Education and the New Imperialism. In R. King, S. Marginson, and R. Naidoo (Eds.), *Handbook on Globalization and Higher Education* (pp. 40-58). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Nel Páez, P., and Teelken, C. (2016). Perceived quality of private education and fears of stratification: Investigating the propositions of human capital theory by exploring the case of Colombia. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(6), pp. 597-616.
- Novelli, M. (2010). Education, conflict and social (in)justice: insights from Colombia, *Educational Review*, 62(3), pp. 271-285.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., and Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16, pp. 1-13.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2000). *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2006). Education and Democratic Citizenship: Capabilities and Quality Education, *Journal of Human Development*, 7(3), pp. 385-395.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2008). Human Dignity and Political Entitlements. In B. T. Lanigan (Ed.), *Human Dignity and Bioethics* (pp. 245-264). New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2016). Introduction: Aspiration and the Capabilities List, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17(3), pp. 301-308
- OECD (2016). *Education in Colombia, Reviews of National Policies for Education*, Paris: OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2017). *How's life in Colombia?* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/countries/colombia/Better-Life-Initiative-country-note-Colombia.pdf>
- OECD (2020). Unemployment rate [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm>
- OECD (n.d.). OECD Better Life Index [webpage]. Retrieved from <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org>
- OHCHR (2018). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Colombia in Spanish* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://www.hchr.org.co/documentoseinformes/informes/altocomisionado/informe-anual-2017.pdf>
- Oliveira, A. B. C. de. (2019). ENEM and the Language Policy for English in the Brazilian Context. *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*, 19(2), pp. 361-383.

- Opazo, A. S., and Gutiérrez, L. C. (2012). Reflexiones Iniciales sobre el Enfoque de Capacidades para la Formación Universitaria. Tensiones, Encrucijadas y Desafíos. In G. Tonon, and S. Aragón (Eds.), *Desarrollo Humano, Educación y Empleo en el Siglo XXI* (pp. 63-76). Facultad de Ciencias Sociales. Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora.
- Özden, C. (2005). Educated Migrants: Is There Brain Waste? In M. Schiff, and C. Özden (Eds.), *International migration, remittances, and the brain drain*. (pp. 227-244). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Özden, C., and Kone, Z. L. (2017). *Brain Drain, Gain, and Circulation. KNOMAD Working Paper 19. KNOMAD (Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development)* [PDF File]. The World Bank Group. Retrieved from https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2017-04/KNOMAD%20WP19_Brain%20Drain%20gain%20and%20circulation.pdf
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Park, J. S. (2011). The promise of English: linguistic capital and the neoliberal worker in the South Korean job market, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14(4), pp. 443-455.
- Pattanayak, D. B. (2017). Preface: Multilingualism and development. In H. Coleman (Ed.). *Multilingualisms and Development* (pp. 11-14). London: British Council.
- Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical Applied Linguistics: A Critical Introduction*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum.
- Pennycook, A. (2007). The Myth of English as an International Language. In S. Makoni, and A. Pennycook (Eds.), *Disinvesting and Reconstituting Languages* (pp. 90-115). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Pennycook, A. (2017). *The Cultural Politics of English As an International Language*. Milton: Routledge.
- Peralta, J., S., and Pacheco, T. (2014). Resisting “progress”: The new left and higher education in Latin America. *American Political Science Association*, 47(3), pp. 620-623.
- Pérez-Pulido, M. O., Aguilar-Galvis, F., Orlandoni-Merli, G., and Ramoni-Perazzi, J. (2016). Análisis estadístico de los resultados de las pruebas de estado para el ingreso a la educación superior en Colombia. *Revista Científica*, 27, pp. 328-339.
- Pettit, P. (2001). Symposium on Amartya Sen’s Philosophy. “Capability and Freedom: A Defence of Sen.” *Economics and Philosophy*, 17(1), pp. 1-20..
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (1998). Globalizing English: are linguistic human rights an alternative to linguistic imperialism? *Language Sciences*, 20(1), pp. 101-112.
- Phillipson, R. (2001). English for Globalisation or for the World’s People? *International Review of Education*, 47(3), pp. 185-200.
- Phillipson, R. (2008). The Linguistic Imperialism of Neoliberal Empire, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 5(1), pp. 1-43.
- Phillipson, R. (2010). *Linguistic Imperialism Continued (1st ed.)*. Florence: Routledge.
- Phillipson, R. (2012, March 13). Linguistic Imperialism alive and kicking. *The Guardian* [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/mar/13/linguistic-imperialism-english-language-teaching>
- Phillipson, R. (2018). Linguistic Imperialism. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 1-7). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Piller, I., and Cho, J. H. (2013). Neoliberalism as language policy. *Language in Society*, 42, pp. 23-44.

- Preibisch, K., Warren, D., and Su, Y. (2014). *Irreconcilable differences? Pursuing the capabilities approach within the global governance of migration* [PDF File]. Solidarity. New York: Center. Retrieved from [https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Migration.Purusing-the-Capabilities-Approach-within-t](https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Migration.Purusing-the-Capabilities-Approach-within-the-Global-Governance-of-Migration.-Guelph.5.15.pdf)
[he-Global-Governance-of-Migration.-Guelph.5.15.pdf](https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Migration.Purusing-the-Capabilities-Approach-within-t)
- Psacharopoulos, G., and Patrinos, H. A. (2018) Returns to investment in education: a decennial review of the global literature, *Education Economics*, 26(5), pp. 445-458.
- Rabossi, M. (2009). Two Different Organizational Reactions: The University Sector in Argentina and Colombia and the Neoliberal Proposal. *Policy Futures in Education*, 7(5), pp. 532-543.
- Radinger, T., Echazarra, A., Guerrero, G., and Valenzuela, J. P. (2018). *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Colombia 2018*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Rassool, N. (2013). The Political Economy of English Language and Development: English vs. National and Local Languages in Developing Countries. In E. J. Erling, and P. Seargeant (Eds.), *English and development: Policy, pedagogy and globalization* (pp. 45-67). Bristol: Multilingual Matters
- Real Academia Española (n.d.). *Palancazo* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://dle.rae.es/palancazo>
- Richardson, M. (2007). Constructivism in education: An overview of contributions to the literature and to the JPACTe annotated bibliography. *Journal for the Practical Application of Constructivist Theory in Education*, 2(1), pp. 1-16.
- Robeyns, I. (2003). Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities, *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), pp. 61-92.
- Robeyns, I. (2005). The Capability Approach: a theoretical survey, *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), pp. 93-117.
- Robeyns, I. (2006). Three Models of Education. *Theory and Research in Education*, 4, pp. 69-84.
- Robeyns, I. (2017). *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: The Capability Approach Re-Examined*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
- Robeyns, I. (2018). The Capability Approach, In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition) [online]. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/capability-approach/>
- Roulston, K. (2013). Analysing Interviews. In U. Frick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 297-312). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rubin, B. C. (2003). Unpacking Detracking: When Progressive Pedagogy Meets Students' Social Worlds. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(2), pp. 539-573.
- Rubin, H. J., and Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative Interviewing. The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rudestam, K. E., and Newton, R. R. (2014). *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Salario Minimo Colombia (2021). [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.salariominimocolombia.net/>
- Sánchez, A. (2013). Bilingüismo en Colombia. *Documentos de trabajo sobre economía regional*. Cartagena: Banco de la República.
- Santos, B. de Sousa (2016). Epistemologies of the South and the future [PDF File]. *From the European South*, 1(2016), pp. 17-29. Retrieved from <http://europeansouth.postcolonialitalia.it/journal/2016-1/3.2016-1.Santos.pdf>
- Santos, J. M. (2016). *President Santos' statement* [Press statement] [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/president-of-colombia-state-visit-prime-ministers-press-statement>

- Sayer, P. (2012). *Ambiguities and tensions in English language teaching: Portraits of EFL teachers as legitimate speakers*. New York: Routledge.
- Sayer, P. (2015). "More & Earlier": Neoliberalism and Primary English Education in Mexican Public Schools. *L2 Journal*, 7(3), pp. 40-56.
- Schendel, R., and McCowan, T. (2016). Expanding higher education systems in low- and middle-income countries: the challenges of equity and quality. *Higher Education*, 72, pp. 407-411.
- Schreier, M. (2013). Qualitative Content Analysis. In U. Frick (Ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 170-183). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing As Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (4th ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sen, A. K. (1985). Well-being, agency and freedom, *Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXII (4), pp.169-221
- Sen, A. K. (1992). *Inequality Reexamined*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen, A. K. (1993). Capability and well being. In M. Nussbaum, and A. Sen (Eds.), *The quality of life* (pp. 30-53). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sen, A. K. (1997). From Income Inequality to Economic Inequality, *Southern Economic Journal*, 64(2), pp. 383-401.
- Sen, A. K (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. K. (2002). Response to commentaries, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 37(2), pp. 78–86.
- Sen, A. K. (2004). How does Culture Matter? In M. Walton, and V. Rao (Eds.), *Culture and Public Action: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on Development Policy* (pp. 37-58) [PDF File]. World Bank Publications. Retrieved from <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/243991468762305188/pdf/298160018047141re0and0Public0Action.pdf>
- Sen, A. K. (2009). *The Idea of Justice*. London: Allen Lane.
- Sen, A. K. (2010, April 22). Amartya Sen on Language as Capability [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3MZvPnZW8g>
- Sen, A. K. (2013). The Ends and Means of Sustainability, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 14(1), pp. 6-20.
- Shahjahan, R. A. (2014). From 'no' to 'yes': postcolonial perspectives on resistance to neoliberal higher education, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 35(2), pp. 219-232.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2004) pp. 63-75.
- Shin, H. (2016). Language 'skills' and the neoliberal English education industry, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 37(5), pp. 509-522.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2015). Linguicism. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* [online]. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1460>
- Smith, M. L., and Seward, C. (2009). The Relational Ontology of Amartya Sen's Capability Approach: Incorporating Social and Individual Causes, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 10(2), pp. 213-235.

- Sonntag, S. K. (2003). *The Local Politics of Global English: Case Studies in Linguistic Globalization*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Soto Iguarán, C. (2016). Lucha contra la pobreza y extensión de la cobertura social en Colombia. *OPERA*, 18, pp. 35-59.
Retrieved from <https://revistas.uexternado.edu.co/index.php/opera/article/view/4534>
- Spivak, G. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson, and L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 271–313). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Steger, M. B. (2017). *Globalization: a Very Short Introduction (4th ed.)* [online]. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stewart, F., and Deneulin, S. (2002). Amartya Sen's Contribution to Development Thinking? *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37, 2(Summer), pp. 61-70.
- Stewart, F. (2005). Groups and capabilities, *Journal of Human Development*, 6(2), pp. 185-204.
- Suter, W. (2012). Qualitative Data, Analysis, and Design. In: W. Suter (ed.), *Introduction to Educational Research: A Critical Thinking Approach* (pp. 342-386). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tamim, T. (2010). *Languages In Education: Improving Schooling Outcomes For Poverty Reduction In Pakistan* [PDF File]. Policy Brief RECOUP number 10 October 2010 Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes & Poverty.
Retrieved from
<http://ceid.educ.cam.ac.uk/researchprogrammes/recoup/publications/policybriefs/pb10-Languages%20in%20Education%20Pakistan.pdf>
- Tamim, T. (2013). Higher education, languages, and the persistence of inequitable structures for working-class women in Pakistan, *Gender and Education*, 25(2), pp. 155-169.
- Tamim, T. (2014). The politics of languages in education: issues of access, social participation and inequality in the multilingual context of Pakistan. *British Educational Research Journal*, 40(2), pp. 280–299.
- Tao, S. (2010). Applying the capability approach to school improvement interventions in Tanzania [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://www.edqual.org/publications/workingpaper/edqualwp22.pdf/>
- Temple, B., and Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research*, 4(2), pp. 161-178.
- Terzi, L. (2007). The Capability to Be Educated. In M. Walker, and E. Unterhalter (Eds.), *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education* (pp. 25-43). US: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Terzi, L. (2010). *Special Education Needs. A New Look* (ed.). London: Continuum.
- Tikly, L. (2016). Language-in-education policy in low-income, postcolonial contexts: towards a social justice approach, *Comparative Education*, 52(3), pp. 408-425.
- Tikly, L., and Barrett, A. (2011). Social justice, capabilities and the quality of education in low income countries. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31(2011), pp. 3-14.
- Thanh, N. C., and Thanh, T. T. L. (2015). The Interconnection Between Interpretivist Paradigm and Qualitative Methods in Education. *American Journal of Educational Science*, 1(2), pp. 24-27
- Thornberg, R., and Charmaz, K. (2013). Grounded Theory and Theoretical Coding. In U. Frick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 153-169). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tollefson, J.W. (2000). Policy and ideology in the spread of English. In J. K. Hall and W. G. Eggington (Eds.), *The Sociopolitics of English Language Teaching* (pp. 7-21). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Transparencia por Colombia (2016). *Barómetro Global de Corrupción 2016* [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://transparenciacolombia.org.co/2019/02/15/barometro-global-corrupcion-2016/>
- Tuckett, A. G. (2005) Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher's experience, *Contemporary Nurse*, 19(1-2), pp. 75-87.
- UNDP (2001). *Human development report 2001: Making new technologies work for human development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- UNDP (2018). *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update* [PDF file]. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/COL.pdf
- UNESCO (2003). *The National accreditation system in Colombia: experiences from the National Council of Accreditation (CNA)* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000131066>
- UNESCO (2016). *Global education monitoring report, 2016: Place: inclusive and sustainable cities* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246230>
- UNESCO (2017). *Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259338>
- UNICEF (n.d.). *Colombia: Migration Profiles* [PDF File]. Retrieved from <https://esa.un.org/migmgmprofiles/indicators/files/Colombia.pdf>
- UNHCR (2016). *Colomba: Hoja Informativa* [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Colombia/2016/Factsheet_Colombia_Diciembre_2016.pdf?file=fileadmin/Documentos/RefugiadosAmericas/Colombia/2016/Factsheet_Colombia_Diciembre_2016
- Unterhalter, E. (2003). The capabilities approach and gendered education. An examination of South African complexities. *Theory and Research in Education*, 1(1), pp. 7-22.
- Unterhalter, E. (2009). Education. In S. Deneulin, and L. Shahani (Eds.), *An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach: Freedom and Agency* (pp. 207-227). London: Earthscan.
- USAID (2014). *Country development cooperation strategy 2014-2018* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1862/country-development-cooperation-strategy-2014-2018>
- Usma, Wilches, J. A. (2009). Education and Language Policy in Colombia: Exploring Processes of Inclusion, Exclusion, and Stratification in Times of Global Reform. *PROFILE: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(1), pp. 123-141.
- Vavrus, F. (2002). Postcoloniality and English: Exploring language policy and the politics of development in Tanzania. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(3), pp. 373-397.
- Villegas Correa, D. (2017). Colombia's nationwide EFL policy and the construction of equity in policy documents. *Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 11(4), pp. 57-74.
- Walker, M. (2006a). Towards a capability-based theory of social justice for education policy-making, *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(2), pp. 163-185
- Walker, M. (2006b). *Higher Education Pedagogies*. Maidenhead: Open University Press and The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Walker, M. (2010). Critical Capability Pedagogies and University Education, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 42(8), pp. 898-917.

- Walker, M. (2015). Advancing student well-being and agency: outline of a 'capabilities-friendly' approach. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 29(5), pp. 279-296.
- Walker, M. (2019). Defending the Need for a Foundational Epistemic Capability in Education, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 20(2), pp. 218-232.
- Walker, M. (2020). Failures and possibilities of epistemic justice, with some implications for higher education, *Critical Studies in Education*, 61(3), pp. 263-278.
- Walker, M., and Unterhalter, E. (Eds.) (2007). *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Walker, M., and Mkwanzani, F. (2015a). Challenges in accessing higher education: A case study of marginalised young people in one South African informal settlement. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40, pp. 40-49.
- Walker, M., and Mkwanzani, F. (2015b). Theorising multiply disadvantaged young people's challenges in accessing higher education. *Perspectives in Education*, 33(1), pp. 12-25.
- Warriner, D. S. (2016). 'Here, without English, you are dead': ideologies of language and discourses of neoliberalism in adult English language learning, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 37(5), pp. 495-508.
- Watts, M., Comim, F., and Ridley, B. (2008). Adaptive Preferences and Educational Policies. Paper presented at the 5th annual conference of the HDCA, 10-13th September, 2008. New Delhi, India [online]. Retrieved from <https://hd-ca.org/publications/adaptive-preferences-and-education-policy>
- Williams, E. (2011). Language policy, politics and development in Africa. In H.Coleman (Ed.), *Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language* (pp. 39-56). London: British Council.
- Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wilson-Strydom, M. (2015a). University Access and Theories of Social Justice: Contributions of the Capabilities Approach. *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 69(1), pp. 143-155
- Wilson-Strydom, M. (2015b). *University Access and Success. Capabilities, diversity and social justice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wilson-Strydom, M. (2016). A Capabilities List for Equitable Transitions to University: A Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approach. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17(2), pp. 145–160.
- Wilson-Strydom, M. (2017). Disrupting Structural Inequalities of Higher Education Opportunity: "Grit", Resilience and Capabilities at a South African University, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 18(3), pp. 384-398.
- Wilson-Strydom, M., and Okkolin, M. (2016). Enabling environments for equity, access and quality education post-2015: Lessons from South Africa and Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 49, pp. 225-233
- Wolff, J., and de-Shalit, A. (2007). *Disadvantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- World Bank (2013). *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Tertiary education in Colombia, 2012* [PDF file]. Washington DC: World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/571691468018591760/Tertiary-education-in-Colombia>
- World Bank (2018). *COLOMBIA Policy Notes* [PDF File]. Washington DC: World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/451371544569098125/pdf/Colombia-Policy-Notes.pdf>

World Bank (2021). *Gini index (World Bank estimate) - Colombia* [online]. Retrieved from

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?contextual=region&end=2019&locations=CO&start=2019&view=bar>

WEF (2015). *The Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016* [PDF File]. Retrieved from

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/gcr/2015-2016/Global_Competitiveness_Report_2015-2016.pdf

WTO (n.d.). *Understanding the WTO: Developing Countries* [online]. Retrieved from

https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/dev1_e.htm

9. Appendices

APPENDIX A: Participant information sheet and consent form

Project Title: How English in Colombian higher education institutions impacts the lives of graduates from low- and middle-income backgrounds

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University, and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about the effects of English as a foreign language on the well-being of low-income higher education graduates in Colombia.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This study aims to find out in what ways learning English in higher education has improved or negatively impacted the lives of graduates from poorer backgrounds.

Why have I been invited?

I am interested in understanding whether learning English has been beneficial or detrimental to you, and in what ways. I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide to take part, this will involve attending a one-hour interview at a time and place of your choosing. The interview can be conducted either in Spanish or English: it is up to you.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you to share your experiences of being a low-income learner of English in a Colombian higher education setting, and how this has affected your life. You may also, if you wish, take this opportunity to practise your English. Your insights will contribute to our understanding of the relevance of English education at higher education level in Colombia for graduates from low-income backgrounds. All travel expenses will be reimbursed. In addition, if the interview takes place in a restaurant/cafe, up to 15,000 Colombian pesos towards the cost of food and drinks consumed will be covered.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time before or during the interview and up to two weeks following your interview. After this point, the information from the interview will already have been processed, so extracting and deleting it will be too time-consuming.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You will have to sacrifice up to an hour of your free time (not including travel time). You will be asked personal questions about your life situation such as your current salary or your experiences during your studies. However, your identity and other personal information that could identify you will be kept confidential.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interview, only I, the researcher conducting this study, and my supervisor, will have access to the ideas you share with me. The only other person who will have access to what you contributed is a transcriber who will listen to the recordings and produce a written record of what you have said. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement.

I will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential. That is, I will not share it with others. I will remove any personal information from the written record of your contribution.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use the information you have shared with me for research purposes only. This will include for my PhD thesis, and for academic publications and presentations.

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (i.e. from my interview with you) so that although I will use your exact words, you cannot be identified from the data.

How my data will be stored

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office. I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic). In accordance with university guidelines, I will keep the data securely for a minimum of ten years. I will exclude all personal data from archiving. I intend to archive/share the data via Lancaster University's cloud.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself, Lee, or my PhD supervisor, Dr. Melis Cin.

Lee Mackenzie Department of Educational Research Tel: +57 310 463 4051 l.mackenzie@lancaster.ac.uk	Dr Melis Cin Department of Educational Research Tel: +44 (0)1524 592884 m.cin@lancaster.ac.uk
--	---

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact:

Professor Paul Ashwin
Head of Department,
Department of Educational Research,
County South,
Lancaster University,
Lancaster, LA1 4YD, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1524 594443
Email: p.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The impact of English in Colombian higher education institutes on low-income students' capabilities
Name of Researcher: Lee Mackenzie
Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within two weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within two weeks of taking part in the study my data will be removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation without my consent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I understand that data will be kept according to university guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant Date Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Name of Researcher Date Signature

APPENDIX B: Themes and subthemes

THEME	SUB-THEMES
Capabilities and English	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciating artistic and cultural expression• Access to knowledge• Buying and selling goods• Improving life opportunities through mobility• Successful completion of academic studies• Respect, dignity and recognition• Sociality and participation• Having aspirations• Communicating with people from different cultures• Improving job opportunities
Conversion factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educational resilience• Amiguismo• Level of English• Academic credentials• Internet access• Geography• Visa requirements• Age• Learning context• Financial situation• Family• Opportunities to use English• Obligatory ELE• Quality of ELE
English and disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linguistic imperialism• Exams• Social stratification• Struggling, failing, and dropping out• Missed opportunities due to lack of English
Attitudes and beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Different varieties of English• HE in Colombia• “English opens doors”• “English is a must”• Other languages• English compared to other languages• Attitudes to private and public education
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How ELE in HE works• How HE in Colombia works

APPENDIX C: Most relevant themes and subthemes

