Sustainable Development Goals: Contributions from the Colombian ELT Community Research

Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible: Aportes desde la Investigación en el Área del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera en Colombia

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Abstract

This article reports the results of a documentary review of contributions the Colombian English language teaching (ELT) community has made to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations General Assembly between 2000 and 2023. This document shares the contributions to quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, peace, justice, and strong institutions. The contributions are analyzed considering the studies conducted by Colombian researchers and scholars that have shared the results in Colombian indexed journals endorsed by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (Minciencias) with the language community. In that sense, the journals revised are *HOW, Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, Íkala: Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura, GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal,* and *Colombian Applied Linguistics.* Likewise, this investigation implies a documentary review framed in qualitative-historical research that traces several topics within the ELT communities during the past 24 years. The findings report specific information regarding the contributions considering the actions generated in and outside Colombian language classrooms as spaces mediated by dialogue and concrete actions, which are intended to improve education, reduce inequalities, and construct peace-based environments to promote stronger institutions and a more equitable society.

Keywords: ELT community, English as a foreign language, historical research, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Resumen

Este artículo presenta los resultados de una revisión documental acerca de las contribuciones que la comunidad de profesores colombianos de inglés ha hecho a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) propuestos por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas entre 2000 y 2023. Dichas contribuciones versan sobre cuatro objetivos concretos: educación de calidad, igualdad de género, reducción de desigualdades, paz, justicia e instituciones sólidas. Los resultados se generaron a partir de los estudios realizados por investigadores y académicos colombianos que han compartido sus investigaciones en revistas nacionales indexadas y avaladas por el Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (Minciencias) con la comunidad de lenguas. En ese sentido, las revistas revisadas son *HOW, Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, Íkala: Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura, GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal,* and *Colombian Applied Linguistics.* Asimismo, este estudio es una investigación cualitativa-histórica que rastrea varios tópicos dentro de la comunidad mencionada durante los últimos 24 años. Los hallazgos reportan información específica respecto a las contribuciones considerando las acciones dentro y fuera de las aulas colombianas como espacios mediados por el diálogo y las acciones concretas, que buscan mejorar la educación, reducir las desigualdades y construir entornos de paz para promover instituciones más fuertes y una sociedad más equitativa.

Palabras clave: comunidad ELT, inglés como lengua extranjera, investigación histórica, objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS)

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been a topic of extensive coverage in all fields of progress, education, and change in all the countries involved, including Colombia. These goals in the educational environment involve more egalitarian and inclusive societies where all participants achieve synergy with their environment. "The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity and allow for sustainable development by 2030" (Deloitte, 2024, para. 1). As an action plan, it covers various areas and disciplines that aim to improve the living conditions of current and future generations. Focusing on the 17 SDGs is complicated, considering it tackles multiple areas, such as economic, social, and environmental issues (Halkos & Gkampoura, 2021; United Nations, 2024). For this reason, to direct a study based on the SDGs, delimiting them is essential to clearly and concisely present the scope against the stated goals.

This study analyzes the research results of the Colombian English language teaching (ELT) community in the context of the SDGs (United Nations, 2024). Four SDGs were selected from the seventeen:

1. SDG 4 focuses on quality education, that is, to ensure inclusive and equitable high-quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.

2. SDG 5 focuses on gender equality, that is, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

3. SDG 10 focuses on reduced inequalities, that is, inequality within and between countries.

4. SDG 16 focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions, that is, to (a) promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, (b) provide access to justice for all, and (c) build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that the Colombian ELT community creates synergies with these topics and, through publications in nationally indexed journals, shares the results of their research, which can contribute in some way to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This Agenda, in turn, is about the integration and consolidation of issues of international interest that contribute to building a better society, one that is sustainable over time and across generations. In that sense, the research question that guided this study was the following: What contribution has the Colombian ELT community made to analyzing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5, 10, and 16 between 2000

and 2023? The objective is to share the contributions and advancements made by the ELT community concerning the mentioned goals and period.

Theoretical Framework

SDGs and Colombian ELT Community Research Contributions

United Nations member states established the SDGs in 2015 as a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity and peace for all by 2030. These arose from the need to improve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Griggs et al., 2014; Katila et al., 2019; United Nations, 2024).

SDGs should apply to all countries, since they were created to address global issues, such as inequality, health, and climate change; and to build a sustainable future for both current and future generations. In that sense, the agenda for sustainable development addresses 17 SDGs, which are interconnected and encompass the global challenges people face daily, such as poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace, and justice. Complying with these goals ensures everyone's protection (United Nations, 2024).

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs produces annual reports that provide an overview of global implementation efforts. The reports highlight areas where progress has been made and where further action is required, while reflecting on and analyzing the achievement of the goals and the project proposed on the agenda.

Moreover, it should be noted that sustainable development requires a comprehensive strategy or holistic focus that includes economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection, redistributing and improving resources, and enhancing humanity's global perspective (Sachs, 2014; Fenner & Cernev, 2021; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2019).

Despite the previous requirements, due to COVID-19, the agenda for sustainable development has had great difficulty in pursuing the plan proposed from three areas: political, economic, and socio-cultural (Fenner & Cernev, 2021; Clemente et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic only explains part of the decline in some SDGs. For instance, in education, global progress has not been fast enough. The pandemic resulted in learning loss in 4 out of 5 of the 104 countries studied.

However, the efforts made were not in vain, and the results increased. The SDGs 2023 report provided the following information: For SDG 4, related to quality education and graduation rates, it was observed that, between 2015 and 2021, there was an increase in primary education (85 % to 87 %), lower secondary education (74 % to 77 %), and upper

secondary education (53 % to 58 %) worldwide (United Nations, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024). Nonetheless, "lower- and middle-income countries face a nearly $100 billion funding gap preventing them from achieving their education goals" (Edmond, 2023, par. 4); and it is estimated that, without additional measures, only 1 in 6 countries will achieve universal secondary school completion (United Nations, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024).

On the other hand, the information contained in the same report shows that international commitments to promote SDG 5, related to gender equality, have made progress in certain areas: cases of child marriage and female genital mutilation have declined in recent years, although not fast enough with population growth pace; the proportion of women in the political sphere is higher than ever before. Women's representation in parliament is 30.9 % in countries that implement legal gender quotas, compared to 21.2 % in countries that do not by 2022 (United Nations, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024). "Reducing both within- and between-country inequality requires equitable resource distribution, investing in education and skills development, implementing social protection measures, combating discrimination, supporting marginalized groups and fostering international cooperation for fair trade and financial systems" (United Nations, 2023a, par. 4).

Likewise, COVID-19 triggered the highest rise in inequality between countries in three decades. In fact, through their interconnectedness, SDG 5 and SDG 10 have been negatively impacted not only under the direct influence of the pandemic, but also through the means and effects of crisis management (Shulla et al., 2021). The change in inequality between countries fell from a pre-pandemic forecast of -0.8 % to a post-pandemic of 4.4 %. In the same way, the number of refugees reached 34.6 million in 2022, of which 41 % were children (United Nations, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024).

Regarding SDG 16, there was more than a 50% increase in conflict-related civilian deaths by 2022, largely due to the war in Ukraine. "As of the end of 2022, 108.4 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide –an increase of 19 million compared with the end of 2021 and two and a half times the number of a decade ago" (United Nations, 2023b, para. 17). Finally, it is noteworthy that 2021 saw the highest number of intentional homicides worldwide in two decades (United Nations, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024).

Despite the efforts and progress made on the 17 goals, the 2030 Agenda is still far from being achieved due to various factors: First, some research has shown that it is necessary to identify possible synergies and trade-offs to achieve the different SDGs, and improving progress towards one SDG can either strengthen or hinder progress towards another goal. Second, unequal access to resources limits sustainable development, environmental crises, gaps between SDG visions and actual capabilities, and geopolitical issues (Fonseca et al., 2020; Anderson et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2022).

Anderson et al. (2022) found that, as components of the SDG system and with negative associations, only SDGs 10 and 16 had a negative impact (i.e., trade-offs) with the additional 8 or 11 goals. Challenges in achieving the SDGs are related to economic, social, and environmental concerns (OHCHR, 2019). At this point, it should be highlighted that success in implementation depends on how global ambitions are integrated into national contexts and adapted to their priorities by national governments to achieve the goals, as well as good synergies between the SDGs (Weiland et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the SDGs, which cover various action areas, have produced dissertations of global importance. It is essential to "collaborate between state and non-state actors at all political levels (global, regional, national, subnational) in various areas of society (politics, society, and economy) and across different sectors (energy, transport, food, etc.)" (Weiland et al., 2021, p. 90). The annual reports offer opportunities for discussion and analysis, which are also common in the language research area. Casa (2021) aimed to integrate the SDGs into an English subject in the first year of primary school and early childhood teacher training, since these teachers will show the future generations the culture of sustainability. Therefore, the results showed that the design and application of materials have a positive impact on sustainability.

Similarly, Manzano (2022) had the initiative to create spaces to integrate education for sustainable development and foreign language (English) learning in schools in Almería through content and language integrated learning (CLIL), that is, through sustainability and the English language. The result was an international congress at which a sustainability proposal for the operations center was discussed and defended. With that, various research studies provided data that contributed to understanding the impact of the SDGs from the beginning of their implementation to the present.

As the studies come from different disciplines, analyzing these objectives from multiple perspectives was possible. Likewise, throughout its research career, the Colombian ELT community has produced studies related to specific SDGs. This study will highlight them. From the Colombian EFL classrooms, the importance of conducting studies on the topics of equality, gender, quality of education, peace-building, and society (given that Colombia's history has suffered from armed violence) became necessary, as well as other issues that are not purely local or of a national interest, but have allowed the creation of studies with this international vision, contributing to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

In that sense, this study highlights the contributions of the Colombian ELT community through studies developed as part of the processes related to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). Likewise, a study in Colombia by Chavarro et al. (2017) showed that the challenges of the SDGs are exacerbated by the country's low research and innovation capacity. However, elements such as biodiversity, cultural richness, potential

for food production, transition to peace, increased scientific production, and collaboration, among others, can be viewed as opportunities for sustainable development.

Regarding the research carried out by Colombian researchers, it should be noted that, in recent years, some topics have been part of the EFL panorama, including gender equality, inequality, and peace and society building. These are somehow linked to the possibility of reducing inequality gaps and creating an inclusive world in which there is space for everyone, which is somehow aligned with the SDGs. After establishing a historical trace in the national journals indexed and endorsed by the Minciencias, the traceability of the research of Colombian researchers was determined, as well as the topics that were part of these studies, how they have changed over time, and where ELT research in Colombia is projected.

While keeping track of the latest publications in the ELT field, research on the most common topics took place. The journals included in the investigation were the following: *HOW, Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, Íkala: Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura, GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal,* and *Colombian Applied Linguistics.* The selection of these partner journals was based on their crucial role in disseminating research and promoting scholarly dialogue in the field of ELT in Colombia. These journals offer the ELT community a specific space to publish high-quality research on language and culture. Significantly, their
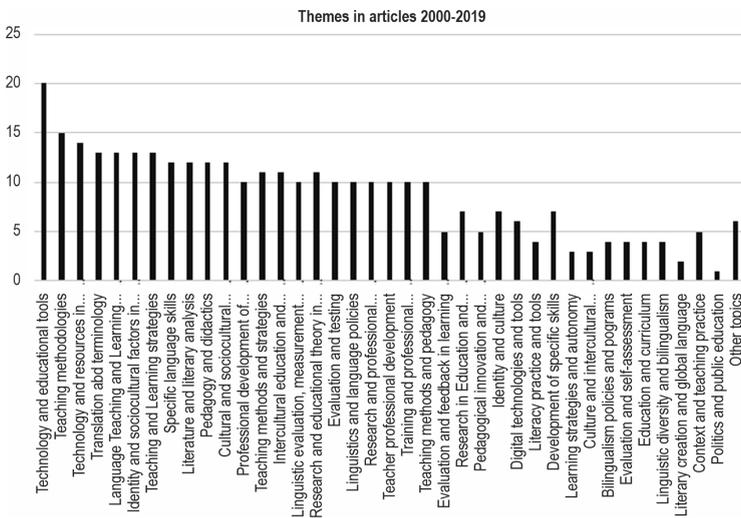

Figure 1. Statistics about the Topics of the Articles in the Mentioned Colombian Journals 2000-2019

Note. Own work.

focus is primarily on ELT, unlike other Colombian journals that cover varied educational fields. This selection of the five journals was also based on their metrics, as evident in the following current statistics:

Table 1. Journals´ Metrics

Journal	Citations	h-index	i10-index
Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development	18038	69	370
Colombian Applied Linguistics	8816	48	201
HOW	4979	39	132
Íkala: Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura	2040	23	70
GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal	31	3	1

Note. Adapted from Google Scholar.

According to Figure 1, the most prevalent topic was technology, technological resources, and devices. Among these studies, we find various studies on implementing information and communication technologies (ICTs) in ELT practices.

Another topic widely explored was methodologies, considering the four basic language skills: Reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Among these studies, we could see some related to improving these four skills. Besides, another noticeable topic was centered on the sociocultural influential aspects from 2000 to 2019, exploring themes such as bilingualism, identity, decolonization, interculturality, curriculum, literary studies, evaluation, assessment, translation, identity, and professional development. One of the most relevant events that changed at some point the way education was implemented and perceived was undoubtedly the pandemic; because of COVID-19, teachers had to adapt to online classes, and new EFL practices were considered during this period. Consequently, new perspectives in terms of research emerged. Considering this, the following topics were explored during 2020-2023 (Figure 2).

As it is presented in Figure 2, the most explored topics refer to interculturality and diversity, professional development, translation and subtitling, linguistic analysis, technological tools, identity and culture, methodologies in EFL teaching, education policies,
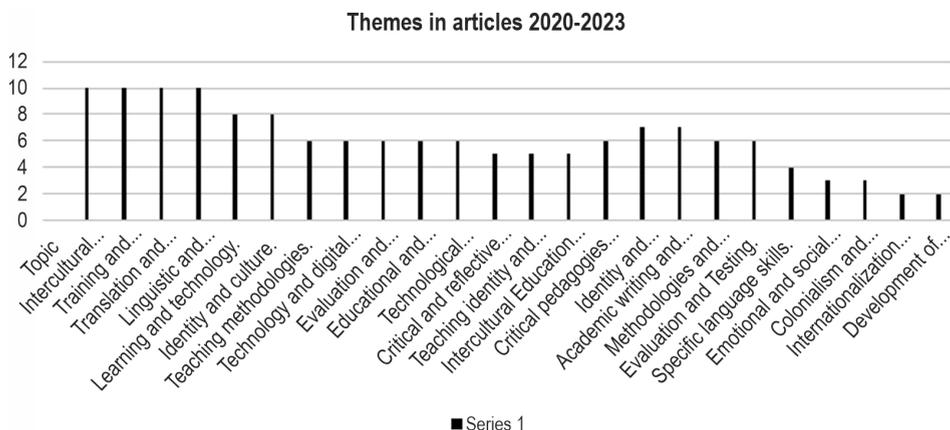
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Themes in articles 2020-2023

Figure 2. Statistics about the Topics of the Articles in the Mentioned Colombian Journals
2020-2023
Note: Own work.

inequalities, assessment and evaluation, decolonization of ELT practices, academic writing
and publication, and identity and gender.

In the previous itinerary, through the articles published during the past 24 years, as may
be seen, there is a wide range of topics which have been very relevant when contributing to
the Colombian ELT community from different perspectives and practices, going beyond the
EFL classroom and raising their voices towards a more equitable and inclusive society.

Research Design

This study is a documentary review that followed Morales's (2015) systematic process
to investigate, collect, and organize information related to the study topic: the Colombian
ELT community's contributions to the SDGs. The analytical technique used was the study of
selected publications in the period of 2000-2023. This period was divided into three phases
in the documentary record (Martínez & Palacios, 2019).

Also, data collection consisted of a documentary analysis of publications produced
in national journals indexed and endorsed by Miciencias in the ELT and EFL field. For
the document analysis procedure and the document selection criteria, the study proposed
by the Investigation Committee (CIFE, 2017, as cited in Martínez & Palacios, 2019)
was followed, which consisted of four phases. The first was centered on selecting five

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nationally indexed journals focused on EFL/ELT and endorsed by the Minciencias; these journals were classified over time in categories C, B, A2, and A1, besides the fact that their focuses are mostly on ELT unlike other journals which are platforms for publishing articles across diverse fields of education. The second phase used a combination of keywords related to the four SDGs selected for this study. For the third phase, a broad time range was identified to search for articles in the five journals; likewise, the study considered articles published in all editions between 2000 and 2023, and only research results from Colombian researchers were considered. Finally, in the fourth phase, the studies were filtered, and those published articles that addressed the SDGs proposed in the study were analyzed.

This qualitative research followed a systematic and critical research process, which included the collection and analysis of primarily qualitative data, supplemented by quantitative information to support this study, as well as their integration and joint discussion to report the results. The quantitative data shows statistics against the research trend of the Colombian ELT community at three different points in time: from 2000 to 2009, from 2010 to 2019, and from 2020 to 2023; these statistics reflected which topics were the most researched and which had the highest tendencies for those years. Moreover, a quantitative analysis was performed using the PSPP statistical treatment program[3]. On the other hand, the qualitative data provided an overview of the analysis of the studies specifically related to the SDGs. In addition, the qualitative data were analyzed using the MAXQDA software.

Data Analysis and Findings

In this section, the results are reported in three different periods: from 2000 to 2009, from 2010 to 2019, and from 2020 to 2023. Altogether, they provide evidence through mostly qualitative information with the integration of quantitative data to support this research. Thus, the results highlight the ELT tendencies and the contributions from this community to the selected sustainable development goals.

SDG4: Quality Education

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ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2000-2009

Figure 3 shows the main tendencies and supports data presented. During this period, studies on quality education emphasized that teacher training should integrate theory,

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[3] Perfect Statistical Professional Presented is a free and open-source statistical analysis program that uses graphs or charts to highlight trends and findings, avoids technical jargon, explains complex concepts easily, and frames the data within a goal.
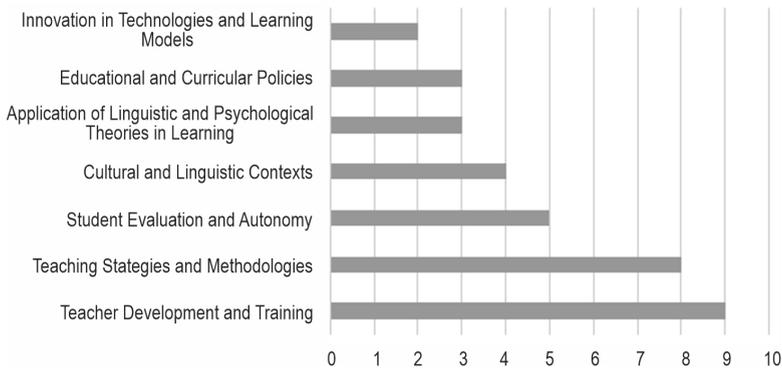
Figure 3. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 4 between 2000 - 2009
Note. Own work.

practice, and continuous education through innovative methodologies, fostering autonomy and reflection as fundamental pillars to strengthen the teaching process. In this regard, research on the subject highlighted how communicative approaches and project-based learning (PBL) proved to be effective teaching strategies, promoting student participation and the development of language skills through more flexible methods. Likewise, self-assessment emerged as a key tool to foster student autonomy and responsibility, yielding positive results in the Colombian context.

Regarding cultural and linguistic contexts, the need to include indigenous and regional languages in bilingual education was underscored, promoting critical cultural awareness that strengthens intercultural competence (de Mejía, 2006; González, 2007). This represented a significant step forward in advancing the debate on recognizing Colombian native languages in educational policies. From a theoretical perspective, Vygotsky's concept of mediation highlighted the importance of social and cultural factors in English learning, while the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and multimodal models marked an advancement in teaching, although their implementation required greater infrastructure and teacher training.

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Finally, educational and curricular policies were found to require better adaptation to local realities (Cárdenas, 2009), particularly in rural areas, to ensure a significant impact on educational equity and quality. These findings set a precedent to revise bilingualism policies in Colombia, since bilingualism was considered a monolithic and homogeneous concept based on the English language (Guerrero, 2008).

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ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2010-2019

Figure 4 shows the main tendencies and supports the data presented. Studies on educational quality indicate that the ELT community has made significant progress in key areas. Those benefited from innovative strategies such as simulation games, translanguaging, gamification, and the use of blogs, fostering autonomous and creative learning. Additionally, formative assessment through social networks and the curricular alignment of teaching materials contributed to optimizing the educational process.

However, the implementation of innovative approaches faced challenges, including the lack of integration of advanced technologies and PBL, as well as the misalignment of textbooks with the official curriculum. These studies highlighted the critical role of teacher training, emphasizing that communities of practice and critical pedagogy strengthened teacher identity and agency, although technological training remains a pressing need (Bedoya et al., 2018).

Moreover, inequalities in access to English learning persisted, particularly in rural areas, where the digital divide and socioeconomic barriers limited learning opportunities (Herazo et al., 2012). Therefore, while technology –including virtual reality and artificial intelligence– presents promising solutions, its implementation requires greater investment in infrastructure and teacher support.

Finally, as previously reported between 2010 and 2019 regarding policy issues, there is still a need to better adapt bilingualism policies to local contexts by balancing English instruction with the preservation of indigenous and local languages. This remains a challenge for the ELT community to ensure a more inclusive and contextually relevant educational approach.
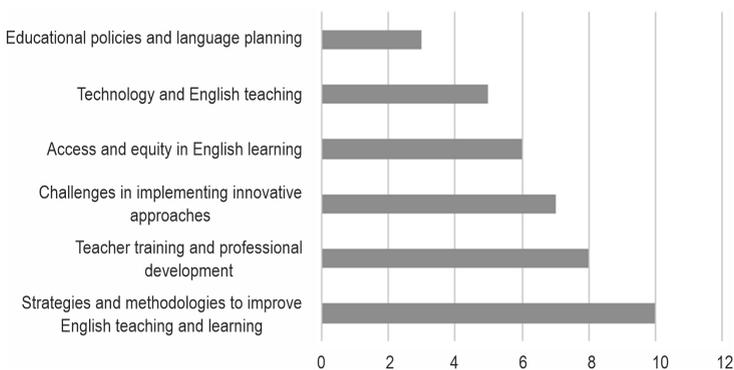
Figure 4. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 4 between 2010 - 2019
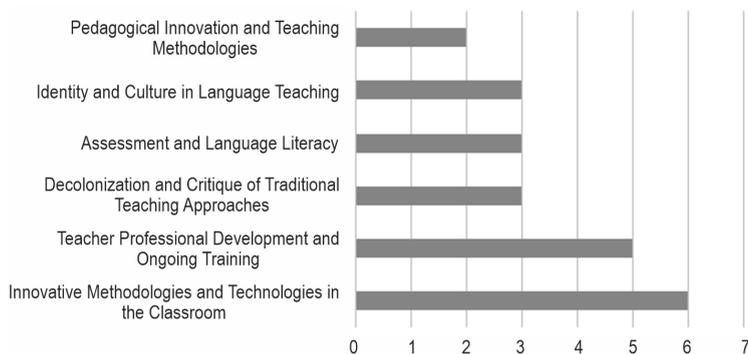**Note**. Own work.

Figure 5. ELT Tendencies in data SDG 4 between 2020-2023
Note. Own work.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2020-2023

Figure 5 below shows the main tendencies and supports data presented during this period. The ELT community made progress in the implementation of innovative methodologies and the use of technologies in English classes, including digital platforms such as Schoology, and methodologies such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

Studies reported that these approaches are essential to enhancing student participation and strengthening both linguistic and disciplinary competencies. In Colombia, where access to educational resources remains limited, the integration of technology addresses the need to improve educational quality, underscoring its relevance to SDG 4.

At the same time, Colombian researchers emphasized decolonizing teaching through translanguaging and decolonial pedagogical practices, challenging traditional approaches that have historically marginalized native languages and local perspectives, particularly in indigenous and rural communities (Fandiño, 2021). This has sparked academic debates regarding biased language teaching and learning in the educational field.

Additionally, when it comes to teacher professional development, educators in rural areas continue to face significant barriers to access continuous training (Barrientos et al., 2023), especially in innovative methodologies such as CLIL. Likewise, continuous and authentic assessment, adapted to students' real-life contexts, has proven crucial to measuring progress and bridging the gap between theory and practice, an essential issue in the Colombian educational context.

Finally, studies highlighted that, although critical pedagogy remains underutilized due to a lack of specialized training, it represents a powerful tool to foster critical thinking and social participation (Herrera & Portilla, 2021). These elements are particularly relevant in

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a country like Colombia, known for its significant cultural diversity and persistent social inequalities.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2000-2009

Figure 6 below shows the main tendencies and supports the data presented for this period. Studies conducted by the English language teaching (ELT) community revealed that gender dynamics in the classroom remained influenced by stereotypes and inequalities, affecting students' participation and identity construction (Castañeda, 2008; Durán, 2006).

Traditional gender roles limited equity in academic interactions, shaping the perception of women in educational settings and the workplace; and, at the same time, gender identity and language learner identity interacted, enabling students to challenge stereotypes through their communication styles and adopted roles. These studies also highlighted the crucial role of inclusive education and curriculum diversification to promote equity by incorporating pedagogical practices that challenged gender norms and strengthened students' self-esteem (Posada, 2004). However, the persistence of stereotypes in student interactions underscored the need for increased sensitization and teacher training in gender equality, as unconscious biases continued to shape classroom dynamics.

Nevertheless, findings between 2000 and 2009 did not provide specific data on gender inclusion and equality in the English classroom. Instead, they emphasized the necessity of
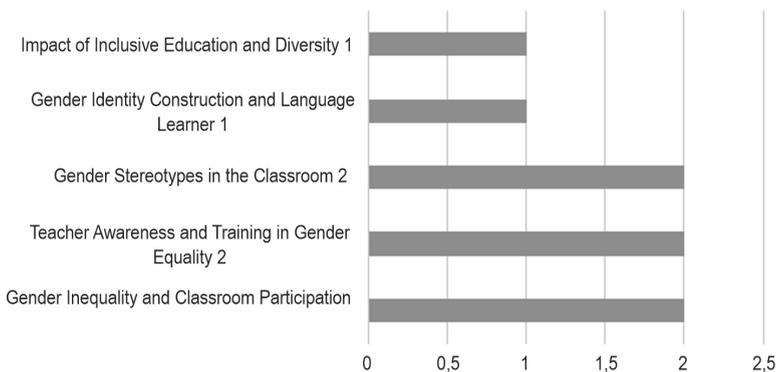

Figure 6. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 5 between 2000 - 2009
Note. Own work.

pedagogical strategies that promote equality, representation of diverse voices, and critical thinking. Addressing these issues is essential to foster a more inclusive learning environment within Colombian educational policies.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2010-2019

Figure 7 below shows the main tendencies and supports the data presented that advances in gender equality in Colombia have been limited.

Studies indicated that gender stereotypes continue to shape the social perception of voice, image, and cultural narratives, reinforcing traditional roles in the representation of individuals (Aguirre, 2018). In that sense, gender identity, far from being static, is constantly negotiated based on sociocultural and personal factors, with literature serving as a space to challenge established conventions (Hincapié, 2018).

In this context, masculinity has been constructed through discourses of power and violence, where symbolic figures, such as the death of the father, reflect dynamics that impact both family and social relationships. As a result, art and literature matters have emerged as tools of resistance, enabling the redefinition of identities and empowerment in contexts of discrimination.

Within the Colombian educational system, gender gaps persist in access to education and academic success, underscoring the need for policies that promote equality, including bilingual education, where inequalities in implementation and benefits remain. The studies reviewed did not report significant progress in educational policies, curricula, or institutional frameworks explicitly addressing gender equality.

Figure 7. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 5 between 2010 - 2019
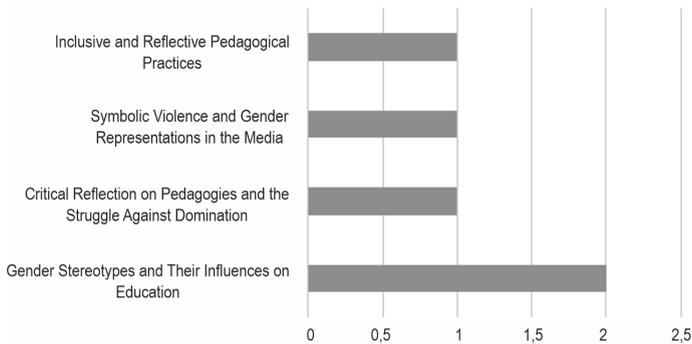**Note**. Own work.

Figure 8. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 5 between 2020 - 2023
Note. Own work.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2020-2023

Figure 8 shows the main tendencies and supports data presented. Studies indicated that gender stereotypes profoundly influence educational practices and classroom interactions, shaping both teaching and the identities of teachers (Rodríguez, 2022) and students.

Findings revealed that these stereotypes not only reinforce traditional roles, but they can also be challenged through student narratives and critical pedagogies. In this sense, transformative pedagogies, grounded in feminist epistemologies, criticize power structures and seek to evidence gender inequalities in the Colombian educational context (Nieto, 2023).

In the same way, research on gender highlights that symbolic violence in the media, particularly in advertising, reinforces an image of women as sexual objects, as well as the normalization of unattainable standards, reinforcing dynamics of inequality both inside and outside the classroom. In response to this reality, advances in the ELT community point to inclusive and reflective pedagogical practices as an alternative to fostering more equitable learning environments. These studies emphasize the importance of teachers critically examining their own gender biases and adopting educational approaches that promote equality and diversity (Rodríguez, 2022). Finally, the reviewed studies did not provide data on initiatives promoting educational or institutional policies for gender equality.

SDG 10: Reduce Inequality within and among Countries

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2000-2009

Figure 9 below shows the main tendencies and supports data presented. In this period, new tendencies emerged, because this time was influenced by new reflections regarding the
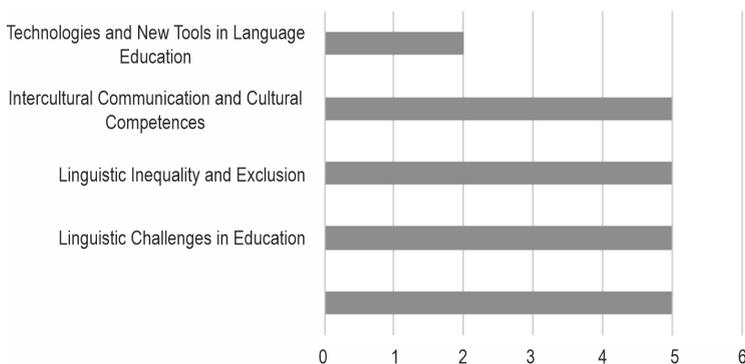
Figure 9. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 10 between 2000 - 2009
Note. Own work.

adaptation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR); the implementation of ELT textbooks, which seemed to be limited by the different school settings and their social realities; the decolonization of research practices; the new gender-based studies; the intercultural practices; the tribal languages in Colombia; and the professional developments.

One of the projects about bilingualism that promotes the awakening of the ELT community´s awareness was called the COFE project (Colombian Framework for English), and its main objective was to improve the teaching of EFL in secondary schools in Colombia. "Through this project teachers made a complementary arrangement between the government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and Colombia for the improvement of teaching EFL" (Rubiano et al., 2000, p. 37). In that sense, through this project, high school teachers and university professors added new features to the curriculum that reinforced the development of the four basic language skills; besides, they had the chance of being more exposed to activities, to promote their professional development, and they relied on research for reflecting more in their teaching practices.

Moreover, another article proposed a study about the need for teachers' development, so that they could raise their voices about the standards necessary for the profession. "Results suggest that EFL teachers experience needs in three different domains of their professional lives: as workers, as instructors, and as learners" (González et al., 2002, p. 29). Considering this, another aspect that is very relevant when it comes to EFL teaching practices is concerned with the teachers' autonomy in terms of changing the teacher and the school practices (González et al., 2002).

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Similarly, another article identified the processes of innovation in the language curriculum. Thus, some studies reflected the need to create more flexible curricula, considering the real needs of the educational contexts, reflecting on students' needs and expectations (Usma & Frodden, 2003).

In the same line, more studies about reducing inequalities show that "Colombia Bilingüe reduces bilingualism to the learning of English by Spanish speakers, disregarding the linguistic complexity of the country and perpetuating inequalities in terms of linguistic prestige" (Mejía, 2006, as cited in González, 2007, p. 312). In this way, a relevant aspect to consider regarding the Colombia Bilingüe program is the need for post-method approaches that promote higher professional growth among English teachers in Colombia.

Moreover, Usma (2009) developed a study that entails an equitable plan for ELT practices in private and public schools to reduce inequalities (p. 19). In the previous articles, there was a challenge that started with the modifications of a curriculum in EFL settings, breaking down the barriers of the status quo to promote the contextualization of the ELT practices in Colombia despite the implementation and adaptation of foreign policies. For example, the CEFR and its guidelines are implemented not only in developed countries, but also in developing countries. In this way, the Colombian ELT community becomes more aware of the importance of analyzing their practices inside and outside the classroom, being also agents of social change.

Additionally, EFL teachers and professors are also required to take international tests, the most common are the IELTS and the TOEFL, which are accepted by many universities to get permanent job positions. Other tests are the In-Service Certificate in English Teaching (ICELT) and the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), as stated by González (2009): "These teaching certifications may represent some forms of standardization, exclusion, inequality, and businessification in the professional development of EFL teachers" (p. 183).

Considering these inequalities, we have a controversy, since nowadays there are many studies based on the decolonization of ELT practices and communities; however, these tests are still a requirement for teachers and, mostly, university professors to get better job opportunities. In this sense, the studies explored in the articles from the five journals presented the panorama created as the effect of implementing the normativity mentioned and revealed only the contribution of the ELT community to four SDGs, but not the reduction of inequality within this community.

Progress toward this SDG demonstrated that bilingualism played a crucial role in the cultural resilience of indigenous communities (Alarcón, 2007). However, structural barriers persisted, particularly in rural areas and contexts where indigenous languages were marginalized by English-centered educational policies (de Mejía, 2006).

In education, linguistic challenges included the gap between colloquial and academic language, gender disparities in English learning, and the need for innovative strategies, such as the use of hypertext to enhance writing, and the integration of values in the teaching process. Studies also revealed that the exclusion of indigenous languages and the stigmatization of Creole in San Andrés and Providencia reflected forms of linguistic discrimination that limited the teaching of minority languages and the possibility to keep sociocultural inequalities (Flórez, 2006).

Similarly, intercultural competence emerged as a crucial factor in ELT, given the intrinsic connection between language and culture in the English learning process. Hence, findings revealed that teachers faced challenges while integrating interculturality into the curriculum due to a lack of training in that field. Finally, technology was increasingly recognized as a powerful tool to improve English instruction, particularly in universities, although its impact presented disparities between 2000 and 2009 due to limited resources and the lack of teacher preparation in this regard.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2010-2019

Figure 10 shows the main tendencies and supports the data presented related to this SDG between 2010 and 2019.

On the one hand, regarding this period, several authors highlighted in their articles a linguistic discrimination in terms of a "native speaker idealization", and a mother tongue restriction (Vanegas et al., 2016). In this regard, there is a linguistic policy for the Certification

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Figure 10. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 10 between 2010 - 2019
Note. Own work.

of Foreign Language Competence implemented in some universities (Restrepo, 2012), which promotes the implementation of international tests, valid only for two years, favoring international businesses and policies that nurture the technification and marketization of EFL. In that time, there was still a need to raise the voice regarding the implementation of an international test as a demand for English language teachers and professors to get job positions in universities. Since the ELT community has been promoting the decolonization of ELT practices, this requirement is still a permanent contradiction.

On the other hand, findings from studies related to this SDG revealed that ELT in Colombia has faced multiple linguistic and cultural challenges, particularly for indigenous communities and academics in peripheral contexts (Usma et al., 2018). The data suggested that specific areas, such as language barriers in higher education, the preservation of regional identities, and academic publishing difficulties highlighted the need to broaden equality in access to bilingual education and academic networks. Globalization has intensified these tensions, since English is perceived both as a tool for global communication and as a potential threat to local languages. However, cultural resistance and efforts to balance English learning with the preservation of Colombia's rich linguistic diversity have been observed.

From a pedagogical perspective, the use of metacognitive strategies, tutoring, and effective feedback strengthens students' autonomy and language skills, facilitating their academic development. However, higher education in Colombia continues to face challenges related to academic ethics, including a lack of awareness about plagiarism (López & Fernández, 2019) and barriers to academic publishing, underscoring the need for greater emphasis on training in academic integrity and accessible scientific production.

Additionally, some studies suggested that the dynamics of violence in Colombian society have influenced perceptions of fatherhood and gender roles, reshaping representations of masculinity and affecting the identity of new generations (Orozco, 2018). These findings highlight the need to address such issues from a critical perspective in both education and social research.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2020-2023

Figure 11 shows the main tendencies and supports data presented. Among the topics explored in the period (2020-2023), there is one about the difficulties of English teachers to publish scientific articles (Cárdenas, 2019) in some Colombian journals, since the percentage of rejected articles written by Colombians is high. Thus, these researchers must submit their articles to foreign journals after the rejection of their work, since the standards for publication in the Colombian journals are increasingly demanding, and these are more willing to publish articles written by foreign English language teachers.

In the same way, "native speakerism" is a new concept that emerged due to the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers, and due to the discrimination against
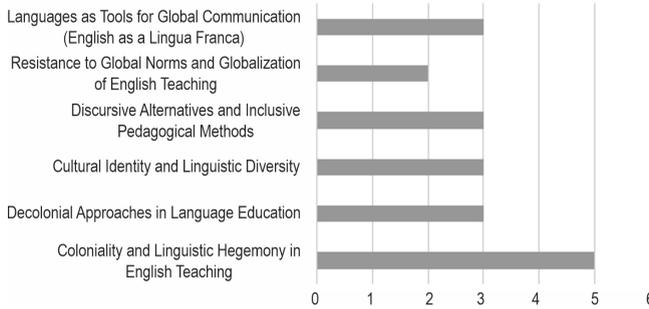
Figure 11. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 10 between 2020 - 2023
Note. Own work.

non-native speakers and the idealization of native speakers in some contexts. This position was perpetuated for many years until the EFL teachers raised their voices and tried to reduce inequalities, as proposed in SDG 10, regarding reducing inequalities and neglecting the concept of native speakerism, deracializing ELT practices.

Other changes on ELT in Colombia were about the critical and unsubordinated pedagogies (Castañeda & Méndez, 2022), emerged from the decolonized practices, leaving aside imperialism and the hegemonic discourse coming from some dominant countries, exploring English as a lingua franca (ELF), a common language to communicate but with some requirements. This language can be considered a global one, because of economic reasons, power, and ease of access to this language.

On the one hand, now there is a tendency to promote not only bilingual teachers but also multilingual teachers who are aware of and implement intercultural practices in their EFL settings, which can be seen as ELF settings. On the other hand, there are other voices to be considered, like those of indigenous communities, because their languages have been neglected and culturally oppressed. Thus, indigenous people are now EFL teachers in different school environments having wide cultural and linguistic richness; all of that is part of their communities and is worth spreading.

In the Colombian context, some bilingual programs have been implemented; for example, COFE and Colombia Bilingüe. These have guidelines based on the CEFR. Through the implementation of these programs, there have been more reflections upon several perspectives: decolonization of ELT practices, plurality of literacies, ELT in rural areas, professional development, students as citizens of the world, supranational language policies (Gómez et al., 2023), governmental agendas, bilingualism (Alarcón, 2007),

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mainstream research, and curriculum, among other topics of current interest in the ELT community.

Likewise, inequalities do not imply only the economic ones, but also those of the education system. In the EFL/ELF contexts in Colombia, teacher/professors researchers are planning new methodologies in their communities of practice, keeping in mind the processes of inclusion, exclusion, and stratification that accompany current school reforms (Usma, 2009): multiple intelligences, learning standards (Cárdenas & Hernández, 2011), blind and visual impaired students (Arenas, 2012), sign language, hard of hearing individuals (Castillo & Flórez, 2020), and dyslexic individuals' narratives on their process of becoming English language teachers (Cuervo & Castañeda, 2021).

Studies in ELT revealed that ELT in Colombia continues to follow colonial models that associate language with modernity and prestige, while indigenous and Afro-Colombian languages remain underestimated and marginalized (Gutiérrez & Aguirre, 2022). This linguistic colonialism positions English as an instrument of power, affecting the representation of both ethnic and local communities, and generating tensions in the classrooms.

To counteract this hegemony, decolonial approaches advocate for an ELT model that values local languages and worldviews (Fandiño, 2021), promoting inclusion through pedagogies that challenge the dominance of English foreigner models. This is one of the ELT community's most significant contributions to SDG 10, as it reflects a commitment to reduce inequality in a country recognized worldwide for its multicultural and linguistic richness, ensuring the preservation of indigenous cultures.

Additionally, studies suggested that teachers' training should integrate a critical perspective that strengthens future educators' cultural identity and promotes translanguaging as a strategy to respect Colombia's linguistic diversity. Findings also indicated that inclusive pedagogical methods aim to reject linguistic hierarchies and to adapt ELT to local realities, resisting the globalization of a homogeneous model (Mosquera, 2022).

Likewise, redefining English as a lingua franca (Macias, 2010) would allow for the recognition of its multiple cultural and linguistic variations, meaning the moving beyond the imposition of hegemonic norms and fostering a more equitable and representative learning experience within the Colombian context.

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SDG 10, focused on reducing inequalities, has been widely explored in the field of ELT practices in the period 2000-2023. New methodologies and reflections have emerged as key points to be considered. These have contributed to the field of ELT. Still, some inequalities need to be solved to have a more equitable society and participants who promote their critical thinking to favor different communities of practice.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2000-2009

During this period, there were no topics registered in the articles about this SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions within the five journals analyzed, as this topic gained more relevance in later years.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2010-2019

Like the 2000-2009 period, no articles published within the five journals analyzed for the present study were recorded in these years. However, these topics were present in one way or another within the reflections of the ELT community.

ELT Colombian Community Contributions to SDGs: 2020-2023

Figure 12 below shows the main tendencies and supports the data presented. SDG 16 strives to achieve all the above to encourage peaceful and inclusive societies, ensure equal access to justice, and construct efficient institutions at all levels. People across the world must be free from any fear of possible violence or feeling unsafe in terms of their ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. However, current and new violent conflicts around the world are derailing the global path towards peace and the achievement of SDG 16. Regarding the ELT field in Colombia, very few studies have been published in the five journals (United Nations, 2024).

On the one hand, Aristizábal and Ortiz's (2023) article reflects on the armed conflict in Colombia and how this situation has affected ELT practices. These victims have been heard
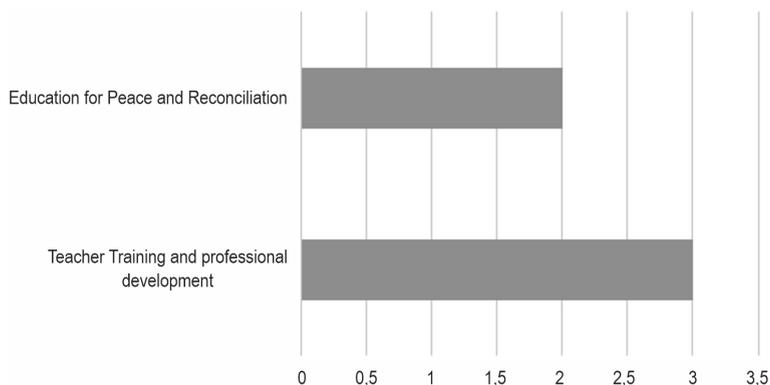

Figure 12. ELT Tendencies in Data SDG 16 between 2020 - 2023
Note. Own work.

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HOW Vol 32, No. 2, Special Issue 2025 - ISSN 0120-5927. Bogotá, Colombia. Pages: 187-216

by the Peace Commission agency, where people who have experienced violence in Colombia can raise their voices and try to get an indemnification. On the other hand, we found the study developed by Aldana (2021), which talks about ELT as a peripheral field in which peace construction has not been explored enough in the ELT community.

Thus, the ELT community's contributions to SDG 16 highlighted how English language education can be addressed as a powerful tool for peacebuilding, fostering intercultural understanding and empathy among students from diverse backgrounds (Aristizábal & Ortiz, 2023). The findings indicated that future teachers play a key role as agents of peace, integrating approaches that promote reconciliation and dialogue within their pedagogical practices.

Additionally, studies suggested that Colombian students' training should incorporate a critical and inclusive pedagogy, enabling them to question structures of inequality and conflict while developing strategies that foster respect and peaceful problem-solving. In line with this, teacher training curricula should integrate principles of peace and reconciliation to generate a positive impact in the Colombian communities.

Authors such as Aldana (2021) identified six main tendencies in how peacebuilding can be addressed within Colombian ELT, including critical peace education, social activism, global citizenship, and reconciliation. Notably, despite the relevance of this topic, the number of studies related to SDG 16 remains limited, considering the number of journals consulted and the volume of issues and articles published between 2000 and 2023. Thus, regarding this SDG 16, it is suitable to do more research about this topic and promote peace and justice in the ELT classroom, to have stronger institutions that respond to the new requirements of this changing society. In Colombia, with an existing armed conflict, it is necessary to reflect more on these topics that have started to be more recognized and valued by Colombians.

Finally, studies also revealed that reflection and mentoring support help transform these challenges into opportunities for growth, strengthening teachers' professional identity and refining their strategies to manage complex classroom situations with flexibility and resilience while developing their conflict-resolution skills (Aguirre et al., 2022).

210   Conclusions and Limitations

The SDGs are represented as a call for action. These are proposed for all the countries, and include: No poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), good health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate

action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), life on land (SDG 15), peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17) (United Nations, 2024).

As observed, four of these goals are mostly referred to in the education system: 4, 5, 10, and 16. Although many studies reflect the voice of the teachers and professors who expect to have a more equitable society, reducing inequalities. However, there are still more topics to be explored in terms of governmental policies for bilingual or multilingual programs in Colombia, to promote the knowledge, spread, and make aware of the tribal languages, and accept inclusion and the decolonization of ELT practices.

Although some progress has been made, challenges remain. Regarding SDG 4, there are disparities in access to quality education between urban and rural areas, which affects the teaching of English in the most remote areas. Since 2004, Colombia has implemented a National Bilingualism Program (PNB), which is regularly updated and has been subject to changes over the years, to improve the teaching of English in the Colombian education system, with a focus on teacher training and curricular improvements favoring EFL and ELT. In this context, the Colombian bilingualism strategy aims to achieve intermediate level proficiency in English by 2025 for secondary school students, although it should be noted that the bilingualism policy opened some space up for the indigenous Colombian languages through recognition and efforts, to integrate educational technologies, and to strengthen teacher training, scholarships and training programs. Thus, teachers continue to improve their teaching and English skills and contribute to a fairer and higher-quality education.

Similarly, in relation to SDG 5, progress has been made in improving the gender equality perspective in access to quality education for girls and women, while the challenge remains for women in rural and vulnerable communities, who are the most affected and face the greatest obstacles when it comes to learning English and seizing their opportunities. Also, empowerment programs were implemented to train women and girls in vulnerable communities through ELT and provide them with better educational and employment opportunities In addition, it is worth noting that gender equality studies have increased by 300 % since 2015 in publications in Colombian indexed journals, which shows that there is now more awareness of the topic and that the results of such research are not aligned to the research interest of Colombian English teachers. As a result, Colombia has made significant progress in the areas of EFL and ELT, in line with the SDGs 4 and 5. However, it is needed to ensure that these advancements remain sustainable over time, that efforts are directed towards strengthening these goals, and that the latter benefit all population groups equally.

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Concerning SDG10, there are still some inequalities that need to be solved to have a more equitable society, and participants who raise their voices to favor different ELT communities. These inequalities refer to the spread and acknowledgement of tribal languages, the implementation of more contextualized materials in ELT, reducing inequalities between

native and non-native teachers, the implementation of standardized international tests as part of the decolonization practices, as well as the search for more egalitarian and fair societies where the process of learning English as a foreign language can be seen from multiple perspectives.

Regarding SGD 16, there is still a long path to be discovered by the ELT teachers, professors, pre-service teachers and stakeholders, so they must propose different practices, strategies and methodologies to be implemented in the ELF classrooms to promote peace. This is very important in a country like Colombia, which has experienced an armed conflict for many years. Besides, it is also necessary to promote practices based on social justice, where all the students can have the same opportunities and try to be more resilient after being restituted, after experiencing armed conflicts and displacements, or after being victims over the years. In this way, educational institutions can be stronger.

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