

Structuralist, poststructuralist and decolonial identity research in English language teaching and learning: A reflection problematizing the field

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Introduction

This chapter is a personal reflection and it takes the form of an exploratory essay with a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it seeks to explore continuities and discontinuities between structuralist, poststructuralist and decolonial perspectives within the broad theme of research in English language teaching and learning. On the other hand, the chapter presents the work of three doctoral students who have adventured research concerns about identity in the context of English language teacher education. The ideas introduced in this chapter are not very mature at the moment but they constitute a starting point for the reflection on research about identity in major educational contexts in Colombia and in particular about the identities of teachers and students who teach and study English as a foreign language. My locus of enunciation or the “the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks” (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 5) is that of a researcher concerned about gendered foreign language teaching and learning practices which locates my own research in the struggle held by continuities and discontinuities between structuralism, poststructuralism and decolonial options to study identity research in English language teaching and learning.

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From structuralism to poststructuralism

To start with the specific topic of this chapter, I would like to talk about a board game that comes from different traditions. For example, the sixth-century *chaturanga* that entertained, so to speak, the Indian communities. This game has close ties with the *shōgi* found in Japan and with the *xiàngqí* found in China. I mean chess. This is actually a simple game. It could be said that chess is not just a game of chance. It rather is a rational game. This rationality behind the game is indeed so complex that there is no human being (not even computerized chess engines) able to consider all chess contingencies. Chess has only 64 squares (chess board) and 32 chess pieces but the number of potential matches that could be played exceeds the number of atoms already found in the universe. Analogically, one could understand the problem of



identity at a general level with a structural perspective. The pieces used to play chess have no meaning and certainly do not exist outside the game where their relationships are constituted and their behaviours are rule-laden. If the simile is accepted, the perspective of identity in structuralism is no less different. The fundamental notion is not the subject but the structure and the rule-laden relationship. Accordingly, identity research in English language teaching and

learning could see both language teachers and language learners as beings immersed in structures (e.g. psychological, economic, social, etc) where they lose their own meaning, let us say sense, as the “I” is not read in the structure as consciousness or as spirit. Thus English language teaching and learning identities are more oriented towards that goal of identifying decontextualized forms of being in the field of teaching, there is a single and monolithic idea of language teacher and a single and fixed idea of language learner.

Now I would like to analyze another game. My avatar in an online multi-user game called *Second Life* can resemble the chess pawn or the chess King. But there is a vital difference. My avatar is in existence Akiles Thespian and it is a ‘chess piece’ in 3D completely configurable, that is to say, Akiles Thespian is my creation and a projection of my ego or even of my alter-ego. In my second life, I am another persona and I have the opportunity of other “enjoyments”. This game promotes specific virtual interactions that are achieved by exploring one’s own world or others. I have created with the help of some colleagues an(other) world that we called *Kankuruba* in an intercultural idea of honoring the ceremonial house of the indigenous *Kogi*, inhabitants of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia. This symbolically represents the possibility of new ways of relating and sharing new knowledge and actions where we have had immersions with future English language teachers. *Kankuruba* has a central place of initial encounter and socialization. As a central world of interconnection *Kankuruba* also offers the possibility of teleporting to four worlds marked by the presence of the *Siki*, *Wunuu*, *Muria* and *Jutnaa* trees. *Siki* is the red tree that represents fire. *Wunuu* is the yellow tree that represents earth. *Muria* is the green tree that represents air and *Jutnaa* is the blue tree that represents water. *Kankuruba* introduced future English language teachers to several modes (Rowse & Walsh, 2012) of visual languages (e.g. stations and field of observation), spatial modes (e.g. teleporting, flying), oral modes (e.g. argument construction), digital modes (e.g. participants avatars), among others. If the simile is also accepted, the situation in poststructuralism is no less different when it comes to research English language teaching

and learning identities. In my view, and with certain caution, poststructuralism continues the structuralist program for the subject's understanding in relational terms as an element within structures and systems, just as it is understood in chess. But additionally, I want to argue that in



poststructuralism as well as the relational aspect, the subject's construction in terms of situated life histories is also borne in mind and questioned, as it has been the case of the Kantian-Cartesian subject, the phenomenological Hegelian subject, the subject of existentialism, among others. It could be interpreted that, in addition, the understanding of the meaning of man is not only rescued as "I", but as "conscience" and as "spirit". Realationally, future English language teachers are not fixed pieces of chess in *Kankuruba*. On the contrary, and probably due to the possibility of resorting to myriad modes, these future teachers shaped relationally multiple identities.

There is evidence that structuralism was a term actually coined by Roman Jakobson of the Prague Linguistic Circle towards the end of the third decade of the twentieth century. Jakobson argued that if one were to designate the way of doing science in those days, the most appropriate designation would be that of structuralism in that the scientific exercise treated the objects of study as a totalizing structure in which the idea would be that of finding the essential laws of the system. Jakobson speaks in response to De Saussure whose postulates he found abstract and static. But perhaps the most important foundational moment in the historical development of structuralism comes at a time when Jakobson plunges Claude Lévi Strauss into structural linguistics around the 1940s. For Lévi Strauss there are universal structures formed by binary oppositions. In the case of English language teaching and learning identities, and within this strand, one may argue other totalizing oppositions: good English language teacher-bad English language teacher; experienced English language teacher-novice English language teacher, good language learner-bad language learner, proficient user of the language-non-proficient language user, native speaker-non-native speaker, just to mention a few. This binary oppositions have given birth to a structural understanding of English language teaching and learning identities. And this has made accountable our ELT (English Language Teaching) profession. This means that in the same way that the language is structured by grammar and other rules that allow to organize speech in an intelligible form (whether or not we are autistic or we

do not work the vocal tract like in the case of the wild child or feral children), this is what happens to societies and cultures organized by structures in which the “participants” or “members” through their actions give meaning to their social practices and institutions. In other words, we or some of us have made our field accountable as we understand it (let us say as we understand our own identities) as part of a binary thought where one is or one is not carrying the social consequences this might cause.

In my view, it is after the publication of the *Structural Anthropology* by Lévi Strauss that structuralism acquires strength as a revolution, for example, in the figure of Roland Barthes who knows linguistics thanks to Greimas in the 50's. Then it is not surprising that with the advent of later thinkers but contemporary like Althusser, Foucault, Piaget and Lacan the movement will take force and begin to arise myriad positions. These positions are what I personally call continuities and discontinuities of poststructuralism versus structuralism. I think it is important for those concerned with language studies to understand this thesis that is the one I want to develop in a nuclear but very brief way in this chapter to better understand the problem of English language teaching and learning identities. To this end, I would like to talk about how poststructuralism begins to emerge so that we can advance in the explanation of some affinities with structuralism (which I call “continuities”) and to comment on theoretical innovations and differences (which I call “discontinuities”).

I believe that Foucault is a figure who lubricates the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism. I say this because of the resistance he found in thinkers such as Piaget and Foucault's reflexive attitude as he allegedly did not admit being either structuralist or post-structuralist. Early generations of poststructuralists debated Hegel's phenomenology, Heidegger's being, and Sartre's existentialism. Perhaps more importantly they debated Nietzsche. Also, in making a deep historical journey, it is possible to establish that the very term “poststructuralist” has been questioned as to the significance of the “post”. Does it mean continuity? Does it mean criticism? Is it an umbrella term? I will not discuss this in detail, but I do acknowledge that it would be good to understand poststructuralism as a “movement of thought” involving many forms of critical practice. And in that sense, it could be speculated that it is highly interdisciplinary and with several edges. For example, the strict sense of truth is criticized, and emphasis is placed on plurality and interpretation. It is understood the constant process of being for a being to be unfinished and fluid. This is where Foucault's most determined thought is born, as it was perhaps Lyotard's case, and Derrida's as well. But, in order not to make the message of this brief historical synopsis diffuse, I would like to delve into the presentation of the first part of my argument.

It is necessary to emphasize that the humanist philosophy of the Renaissance promulgated a rational, autonomous, perhaps transparent being. It seems that the emphasis is placed on a scientific mode of knowing that is produced by a rational and objective self that understands the world from universal and totalizing categories. We could say, if we continue with the two similes proposed above, that when thinking about the movements of the chess pieces, these are products of a system of movements that occur in relation to other movements within the game itself. From a structuralist perspective, and thinking about language and cultural phenomena, English language teaching and learning identities are the product of a “mainstream” system (e.g. educational, political, social) where the system assigns meanings according to the relations with other organizing structures of the system. Assigned meanings become part of an arbitrary and fundamental complex operation of the system for its own constitution and surveillance. In the case of a being like Akiles Thespian who inhabits a world called *Kankuruba*, one could speak to some extent of a “structuralism without fixed structures”. Yes, I live in a world with its rules but there I use my agency to establish relations of virtual order and it is my fingerprint and that of the others what build meaning(s) and dynamize the game with “movements” that, again with a note of caution, would not be “allowed” in a traditional chess set.

To some extent I see a continuity in the understanding of language and culture in terms of linguistic and symbolic systems where there are notions of difference. This notion is fully studied from the poststructuralist perspective from “approaches” such as genealogy, archeology and deconstruction, among others.

I observe another continuity in the fact that structuralism and poststructuralism share the idea of hidden structures and/or sociohistorical forces that govern behaviour through the high influence of Freud. We should have a better understanding of Freud, Foucault and Lacan and we should also include Derrida, Deleuze, Guattari and Kristeva to incorporate this idea of continuity. In fact, we would have to understand the intellectual heritage and its effect from the Russian formalists.

Poststructuralism and its discontinuities with respect to structuralism

For my second argument, perhaps it has already been evident in this few words, what is the greatest discontinuity of poststructuralism versus structuralism. The

latter disregards history through static analyses of history, while poststructuralism, with renewed interests, writes a critical history that emphasizes analysis, mutation, transformation, and discontinuity of structures. If the plausibility of my simile is allowed, it could be said that chess becomes almost a-problematic insofar as the relational movements required by the game system are preserved. This also happens in *Kankuruba* with the difference that there, my movements can be reversed, I can choose not to talk to who I do not want to, I can fly, I can teleport and multi-dynamize my movements to build my own story based on an excess of self-narrative social behaviour. This would imply, so to speak, the possibility of multifaceted comprehension(s) for English language teaching and learning identities. This connects with the next discontinuity based on the “disrespect” that poststructuralism makes to scientific by introducing a new emphasis that is based on the “perspectivism” of interpretation.

This “disrespect” is a serious challenge to the rationalism and realism that structuralism shares with the so-called positivism, the belief in the scientific method and that legitimate capacity to make the discovery a possibility of meeting the universal. This is true, the logical structure of a system requires its concepts to be defined in an unambiguous way. In the case of chess movements, the ‘L’ movement of the knight has variants but is unequivocal and is opposed to the movement of the bishop to which something similar happens: it does move in a single diagonal direction. The movement of the knight opposes the movement of the bishop and creates an opposition. For De Saussure’s classic case this opposition is binary, and dichotomies are more clearly defined, as in the case of meaning and signifier. Post-structuralism almost decentralizes this binary opposition and makes them lose exclusivity. As I mentioned before, my avatar (Akiles Thespian) operates as a signifier and in its fingerprint (digital) dimension it means me, and my movements, teleporting and flying are controlled. But I, my avatar, in other words, my fingerprint, we are not the same in the *Jutnaa* or when I visit *Muria* or *Siki*. What I mean is that signs do mean but they also connote and when they relate *in situ* they create “senses” susceptible of interpretation for their comprehension and understanding.

I observe that there is also in poststructuralism several “theoretical innovations” if the terms are accepted. They have given dynamism and contributed to its development. It may be necessary to approach Heidegger with more readings. However, it can be said that everything has to do with his philosophy of technology and his criticism of the history of Western metaphysics. Basically, all this is a question of criticizing how technology merges with the being but altering those ways of being. This leads to the germination of ideas of destruction, deconstruction and decentralization in

the ideas proposed by Derrida and the reflections on Foucault's "I". Or those ideas that have to do with cyberspace that (re)configure both identities and subjectivities. Consequently, the problem of English language teaching and learning identities is more complex than what one could have imagined before.

Unlike structuralism, poststructuralism proposes a critical policy of the values of enlightenment. In that sense, modern liberal democracies that construct political identities based on polarized concepts like us-them, citizen-non-citizen, responsible-irresponsible, good language learner-bad language learner, native English language teacher-non-native English language teacher, etc., are criticized. The problem is that binarism has an "exclusionary" effect in constructing "otherness". And in that exclusionary sense "Myness" opposes "Otherness". It is here that the excluded existence of the other refugee, the other immigrant, the other homosexual, the foreigner, the non-native, the bad language learner, the English language teacher that says things with a weird accent, all are questioned. Post-structuralism has this concern in studying how boundaries are socially constructed, maintained, and regulated. The chess pawn is always a chess pawn and by opposition will never be rook or king. Akiles Thespian is Harold, is my digital fingerprint, is an English language teacher, is an avatar, is relational difference. Decentralizing binarism gives poststructuralism the possibility to establish contemporary debates around multiculturalism and feminism. I believe that the notion that gives rise to a strong theoretical vision in poststructuralism is precisely that of the difference or *differance* that basically questions the structural structure of the structure and relativizes the centrality to become anti-essentialist and anti-canonical. It is here that Foucault's reflections might play an important role with the problematization of the power-knowledge nexus and of Lyotard with his postmodern condition.

Some core themes or areas of development for research on identity in relation to language teacher education and/or language teaching

More than a decade ago, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnson (2005) identified Language Teacher Identity (LTI) as an emergent subject in language teacher education and development focusing on the theories used to approach the problem of identity. To my understanding, it is Barkhuizen (2017) who with his permanent concern about identity consolidates this field proposing for academic discussion more angles to explore. Among these future directions and angles, on his *Reflections on Language Teacher Identity Research*, which I foresee as a contemporary seminal work, this author highlights:

Table 1. Topic areas to research LTI
Adapted from Barkhuizen (2017, p. 10).

Transformative research, research on LTIs that brings about change-to teaching practice, language learning, and broader social structures
Competing and contested LTIs, from the perspective of self and others
The construction of LTIs online, in social media, and in interaction with material non-human things
Emotion, and affective aspects of LTI
The relationship between teachers' language learning histories and LTIs
Linguistic choices and sociolinguistic knowledge
Teacher agency in relation to pedagogical practices, and language-in-education policies
LTI in neoliberal times, and within contexts of inequitable schooling practices
Collective as opposed to individual LTIs
Teachers of young learners
The development of LTIs in multilingual contexts, both local and macro, including conflict zones
Teacher aspirations, imagined future identities, and ideal selves
Teacher professionalism and long-term professional development
The interface between LTI and classroom practice and critical language pedagogy

These topic areas to research LTIs are not a limited list but constitute food for thought for those interested in understanding and comprehending LTIs. Back in time, Varghese et al (2005) charted out the shifting paradigms in the study of LTI and identified the social identity theory, the theory of situated learning and the concept of the image-text as pathways used to study LTI (see also Jhonson, 2003; Morgan, 2004 & 2016; Varguese, 2006 and Norton's (2000) and all her scholarly work and, more recently Pennington and Richards, 2016; Golombek and Klager, 2015). Block (2007) in his seminal work *Second Language Identities* makes an interesting analysis of scholarly work around identity (not only LTIs) and shows how in the social sciences "the different identity types are ... co-constructed and, furthermore, simultaneously individual and collective in nature" (p. 42). Then, this author introduces and problematizes different contexts of second language identity work. For example, adult migrant contexts where processes of identity "reconstruction and repositioning do not take place in predictable manners and it is certainly

not the case that the naturalistic context guarantees sustained contact with longer-term inhabitants of the second language context” (Block, 2007, p. 75). This author also points out the “fact of not being there” as an issue that delves into identity work differently in foreign language contexts leaving room for a fertile epistemological site to research where, in my view, those of us “who are not there” should construct our own discourse around English language teaching and learning identities, among other related topic areas (cf. A decolonial option to address English language teaching and learning identities). Block (2007) also examines critically the context of studying abroad where I interpret mechanisms of racialization, sexualization, discrimination, just to mention a few, also operate in terms of identity co-construction and positioning. In her review, Miller (2009) suggests four directions in teacher education programs that incorporate LTI linked to “understanding, knowledge, and practice”.

Table 2. LTI directions in language teacher education
Adapted from Miller (2009, p. 178).

A focus on the nature of identity	There is a need to understand identity as a complex and multiple individual and social phenomenon, which has critical links to power and legitimacy
Understanding the complexity and importance of context	Context and identity play crucial mediating roles in all classroom interactions and teacher work
The need for critical reflection	The ongoing development of professional teacher identities therefore hinges on reflecting on what seems personally, institutionally, and socially doable in classrooms, how change is affected, and how knowledge, pedagogy, and identity intersect
Identity and pedagogy	Identity is enacted and has effect on others (say students)

According to Miller (2007, p. 162) “looking at competing constructions of identity in language classrooms is perhaps one way to problematize practice”. Therefore, LTIs should become an explicit topic underpinning teacher preparation (Morgan & Clarke, 2011). There is however, according to Morgan and Clarke (2011, p. 727), an overuse of the poststructuralist perspective as “it would nonetheless be misleading and limiting to address identity exclusively through [...poststructuralism...], as aptly demonstrated,

for example, by recent research on language education". The authors refer to contemporary research on LTI that draws on the idea of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) which has an identity component. There are also research strands drawing on sociolinguistics, language socialization, sociocultural and activity theory and, postcolonial theory. Morgan and Clarke (2011) also highlight the upsurge of neglected and new areas of research as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. New and neglected areas of interest to research LTI
Adapted from Morgan & Clarke (2011, pp. 727-829).

Neoliberalism and regimes of accountability	It is important to pay attention to language policy and the neoliberal hegemony and the effects on critical language education and by extension on teacher education
Subjectivization of the body	This is done through pathological discourses (especially related to language learners) where disabilities are blamed in relation to academic success
Spirituality	This is not simply about religious faith but about its links with colonization spreading the Word

As it could be inferred, contemporary literature has already identified a good number of angles where identity becomes the centre of attention especially in English language teacher education. But problematizing LTI is a stony road. In terms of identity studies related to LTI there seems to be also a Westernized history where the divide mentioned above (to be or not to be) is very salient. This divide is related to the understanding of identity scholars draw on and corresponds to an apparent tension between continuities and discontinuities between structuralism and poststructuralism or to the fatigue that using this perspective has brought to identity inquiry (Block, 2007; Morgan and Clarke, 2011). In one way or another, and again with caution, this might colonize intellectual minds reinforcing the divide, especially when it comes to researching English language teaching and learning identities. However, we should be aware that most of the work done, wittingly or unwittingly, could be part of a South discursive construction¹ and this has its own merit as it might be possible to establish intellectual dialogue between North and South epistemologies within the North or South-South dialogues within the South. Could then this potential problem of colonization be apprehended

1 See Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2014) for a discussion of a South epistemology based on a sociology of absences.

using a complementary perspective to research English language teaching and learning identities?

A decolonial option to address English language teaching and learning identities

The context and the problem (e.g. English language teaching and learning identities) are problematic on their own. This is because the English language has become a modern commodity and we teach it as a foreign language in Colombia in mainstream school contexts. Identity is a constitutive problem of modernity (which indeed constitutes one side of the coin being coloniality the other one). I will not deeply discuss these two terms (modernity and coloniality) in this chapter as there is fruitful scholarship dedicated to this task (Dussell (2012), Grosfoguel (2011), Castro-Gómez (2010)). I would rather like to argue in this chapter that this is the case based on the long-term discussion inherited by the divide to be or not to be (which of course is rooted in modernity and coloniality).

This binary discussion has established hierarchies (e.g. systems of power/knowledge) which have superseded most themes related to identity and by extension to English language teaching and learning identities. Therefore, thinking of English language teaching and learning identities in Colombia (and in Latin America “The Abya Yala” or “Land of Vital Blood”) becomes problematic and paradoxical. This is problematic in Colombia because of the history of teaching and learning of English in the country. One could argue, as many Colombian scholars have argued, that bilingual policies have been a mechanism installed in the country as part of the power matrix of the modern/colonial world. English language teaching and learning is simply an established hierarchy historically imposed by an European / capitalist / military / Christian / patriarchal / White / heterosexual / male ideology as part of a global “linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages that privileges communication and knowledge/theoretical production in the former and subordinate the latter as sole producers of folklore or culture but not of knowledge/theory” (Grosfoguel (2011, p. 10) based on Mignolo (2000)).

This ideological linguistic hierarchy (part of a global hierarchy) has a strong incidence on English language teachers’ and learners’ identities. I myself, paradoxically being an English language teacher, feel at odds when realizing we have been trapped within and by this ideological prison. But we teach English and English is the language of instruction some of “us” use to “generate” local knowledge in our field. The paradox is double when English

language teachers have also experienced or constantly experience processes, for example, of racism and classism (as I have personally experienced within Colombia and abroad) just to mention a few. This is what Grosfoguel (2011) names “colonial situations”, which means “the cultural, political, sexual and economic oppression/exploitation of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racial/ethnic groups with or without the existence of colonial administrations” (p. 15). This, as paradoxical as it seems to be, challenges us to think of “Abya Yala” discourses in relation to English language teaching and learning identities. It appears necessary to disentangle (and dismantle) the mechanisms that support colonial situations of English language teaching and learning identities to re-signify and comprehend our own identities as English language teachers and those of our L2 students.

Yet this is a risky task that deserves further reflection as planting the seeds for “Critical border thinking”, understood as the epistemic and ontological “response of the subaltern to the Eurocentric project of modernity” (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 26), could operate backwards re-establishing hidden mechanisms to invigorate colonial situations.

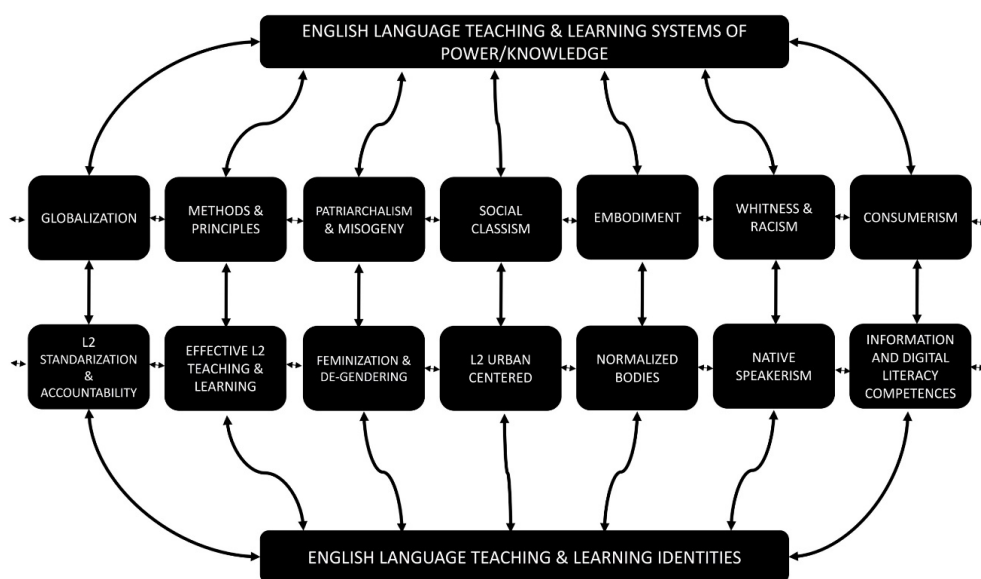


Figure 1. Colonial situations in relation to English language teaching and learning identities.

Figure 1 represents a global planisphere meaning a globalized ELT world. The planisphere has in the upper part a label signalling systems of power / knowledge that hierarchically affect the problem of English language teaching and learning identities expressed in the lower part of the planisphere. These systems are related to colonial mechanisms or devices noxious to human

existence in general (first row in the middle of the hemisphere). The second row in the middle of the hemisphere could be interpreted as realizations of the colonial mechanisms through modern gatekeeping concepts or conceptual metonymies that in the case of English language teaching and learning restrict knowledge, limit theorization and define domination, that is, those devices are threaded to colonize reality exercising epistemic and systemic hegemonic practices.

The colonial objective of these systems is producing a single type of existence within the field of English language teaching and learning. This means there is a dominant / colonizing way of existing as an English language teacher and by extension as an English language learner. But the actual result of this is “non-existence” as there is just one single possibility of being a language teacher and a language learner. Therefore, if one does not comply one does not exist.

In relation to English language teaching and learning identities, the colonial problem can be interpreted as the definition of language teachers’ and students’ identities as stable and unique, possibly abstract and idealized. In that sense both teachers and students are stripped of their chances of “being” in the lifeworld; identity is then universal.

As a result, the problem of decolonial choice is comprehending and unveiling the assault or theft of the identity of the English language teacher and the English language student who co-learns with the teacher. Both language teachers and students appear to be constituted as disposable beings by the structuring of hierarchies and systems of power / knowledge where the dispossession is the centre of the problem and not the exclusion: this is the difference with the phenomenon of “Myness” vs. “Otherness” studied by other epistemological traditions. Now, these systems pose through their realizations the oppression of the “being” when configuring the “non-being”.

But “I am not” is different from “not being” because when “I am not” I do keep existing no matter what! This is not simply a word game. If an English language teacher does not pronounce the language like a “native” speaker (a covert assumption of the colonial device Whiteness realized in forms of racism), then this teacher does not comply with the fallacy of the native speaker (e.g. English language teachers should have native-like pronunciation); therefore s/he could be placed within the realm of the “non-being”. So, s/he “is not” a teacher with native-like pronunciation but this actually does not mean that s/he “is not” a language teacher. S/he is a language teacher who pronounces English with an accent which is also part of her/his identity. This angle of her/his identity should not be disqualifying and stripped away from

the persona this actual teacher embodies. Consequently, the dominance of “whiteness”, in a decolonial perspective, does not simply marginalizes “pronouncing with an accent”, constructing the “other” as “odd” but erases by assimilation to the norm (e.g. Whiteness) the possible existence of teachers who do not pronounce English with a presumably “White” accent. It seems that exhibiting a native-like pronunciation is a White privilege underpinning the supremacy of White raced people. If this were accepted, then we would be also talking of racism within English language teaching and learning identities. This, of course, could be a theme deserving further research and discussion under decolonial lenses as “assumptions that White is right are packaged covertly in several locations of education [by extension English language teaching and learning]. Teachers’ subject formation, parents’ desires, administrators’ agendas, literary and subject area texts, curriculum artefacts, and government policies are all players of circulation of Whiteness as authority” (Berry, 2015, p. 15). In my view, European / capitalist / military / Christian / patriarchal / White / heterosexual / male privileges tend to be left unchallenged in contemporary research on English language teaching and learning identities.

Reading the planisphere, in figure 1, from the centre to the sides, we observe that social class is a colonial mechanism supporting the English language teaching and learning systems of power / knowledge translated in terms of urban centred L2 education. This is a way of stripping away the identity of the rural L2 teacher-student diada or the identity of indigenous English language teachers and learners, for example. Visiting or (re)visiting colonial situations, identity wise in the case proposed in this chapter, is an opportunity to reframe identity work from a more *in situ* perspective as part of a decolonial option in the ELT field. Table 4 illustrates some broad areas of future interest, as represented in figure 1, but this is not a finished list of themes; most of these colonial situations need to be defined as well as their gatekeeping concepts related to English language teaching and learning identities. Additionally, it seems necessary to identify under-researched or unnoticed colonial situations not described in this chapter.

Table 4. Under-explored colonial situations to research English language teaching and learning identities.

Colonial mechanisms	Potential colonial situations to be explored in English language teaching and learning identities	There is a need to understand identity thinking of invisible but current colonial mechanisms or devices that do not let English language teachers and learner exist, be or become.
Globalization	L2 standardization and accountability	It is important to comprehend appropriation processes of manifestations of colonial mechanisms and situations (e.g. language policies) that could evidence identity work to subvert domination and make them invisible
Methods and principles	Effective L2 teaching and learning	Overt and covert curriculum practices and L2 instrumental teaching performances are to be explored to question understandings of teaching and learning and principles that could potentially perpetrate diverse language teaching and learning identities
Patriarchalism and Misogyny	Feminization and de-gendering	Feminization and patriarchalism could be explored as analytical categories of gendered foreign language learning practices that frame students' and teachers' identities also looking into minorities and LGBTI communities
Social classism	Urban L2 centered education	Under-researched identities of English language teachers and students belonging to rural, indigenous, gipsy and other communities are to be comprehended under this lens
Embodiment	Normalized bodies	Policing teachers' and learners' bodies acts upon identity; this is an ideology hiding the existence of multiple body representation and performance
Whiteness and racism	Native speakerism	Teachers' and students' identities are subjected to racialization processes denying multiplicity
ICT consumerism	L2 information and digital literacy competences	Information and digital literacy competences tend not to be linked to personal histories and are rather standardized. This influences language teachers' and language learners' identities.

All in all, there is not only need to define a research program in relation to English language teaching and learning identities but there is also a need of introducing methodologies coherent with a decolonial option. In addition, there is also a need to discuss if this decolonial option to research identity is simply part of scholarly designed work or would involve activism.

Three chapters, three angles, one concern...

Thinking of English language teaching and learning identities appears to be the main concern of the chapters in Part I of this book. They mainly intend to partly present research agendas that in one way or another inquire angles of a related phenomenon. Firstly, the idea of “English language teacher-to-be” is challenged in terms of normalized understandings of English Language Pre-service teachers (ELPTs). Lucero (this volume) problematizes the context of English language teaching education (ELTE) addressing interactional identities that are constituted daily in the classroom of English Language Teacher Education Programs (ELTEPs). This has three angles of exploration: “how English language teachers’ established roles operate or are established throughout classroom interaction in ELTE; how the linguistic, social, and interactional components and factors of classroom interaction in ELTE are the result of English language teachers’ realization of their roles as teacher educators; and how teacher educators’ identities are constituted during classroom interaction in ELTE.” (Lucero, this volume). Then, Posada (this volume) problematizes the fact that neither imagined communities nor their co-related concepts like investment and identity are integrated into the ELTE curriculum at the undergraduate level. Accordingly, “ELTEPs have been affected by the way knowledge has been thought of and transmitted in the language classroom and the historical role and function of the ELTEPs has been developed within this tradition, a tradition and development that has shaped the nature and scope of institutionalized education.” (Posada, this volume). In the same vein, other hidden identities are those of the indigenous students enrolled in ELTEPs to become English language teachers. Arias (this volume) states that “In Latin America, multicultural awareness was shaped in identity politics and politics of recognition [...] which promoted, at least *de jure*, an agentive role for minorities, indigenous, and autochthonous communities that had been so far rather object than subject of policy making.” This objectification imposes a non-existing identity upon existing human beings where it seems necessary to comprehend, firstly, linguistic identities of indigenous English language teachers. Secondly, it is important to understand the potential identity conflict such objectification imposes, and, thirdly, the shaping of such identities in the context of ELTEPs. Therefore, there is a common thread linking these authors’ chapters: the possibility of exploring colonial situations in the now broad theme of identity research in English language teaching and learning.

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