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ELT Local Research Agendas IV

Harold Castañeda-Peña
Editor

UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL
FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación DIE

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Universidad del Valle · Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas · Universidad Pedagógica Nacional

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Abstract

This fourth volume in the ELT Local Research Agendas series, presented in six chapters, highlights research agendas for doctoral programs in education and the broader English Language Teaching (ELT) academic community. The first chapter employs collective autoethnography to create a space for healing and emotional liberation among doctoral thesis advisors, suggesting a new research direction. The second encourages multidisciplinary research on the multilingual identities of teachers. The third examines teacher leadership from a social justice perspective. The fourth explores the classification of identities among English teachers. The fifth discusses the investigation of emotions as vital to training future English teachers and promoting an inclusive, re-humanized pedagogy. The sixth presents transpedagogies as strategies to dismantle oppression in teacher education and promote healing and liberation. This volume presents new challenges for renewing research agendas in ELT through novel and reimagined themes.

Keywords: emotions in education; multilingual identities; social classification; pedagogical leadership; teaching and thesis advising; transpedagogies.

Resumen

Este cuarto volumen de la serie *ELT Local Research Agendas* presenta en seis capítulos las propuestas de investigación de programas de doctorado en educación y de la comunidad académica sobre English Language Teaching (ELT) en general. En el primero, la autoetnografía colectiva revela un espacio de sanación y liberación emocional para los docentes asesores de tesis doctorales. El segundo estimula la investigación mediante perspectivas multidisciplinares para desentrañar las identidades multilingües de los docentes. El tercero estudia los liderazgos docentes desde una perspectiva de justicia social. El cuarto explora los procesos de clasificación identitaria de docentes de inglés. El quinto reflexiona sobre la investigación de las emociones como un componente clave en la formación de futuros docentes de inglés para fomentar una pedagogía inclusiva y re-humanizada. Finalmente, el sexto concibe las transpedagogías como estrategias de desmantelamiento de la opresión en la formación docente al promover la sanación y la liberación. En conjunto, el libro plantea desafíos para renovar las agendas de investigación en el campo de ELT con temáticas novedosas y re-imaginadas.

Palabras clave: emociones en educación; identidades multilingües; clasificación social; liderazgo pedagógico; docencia y tutoría de tesis; transpedagogía.

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Contenido

Foreword

Álvaro H. Quintero-Polo
Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

As a Colombian teacher educator and researcher in the field of applied linguistics to English Language Teaching (ELT), I am pleased to have witnessed how the *Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación* of Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (DIE-UD) has long been committed to advancing critical, socially engaged, and transformative knowledge. Within this framework, the emphasis on ELT has become a fertile space for encouraging diverse ways of knowing, questioning orthodoxies, imagining alternatives to mere linguistic ability, and fostering a community of practice among doctoral students, faculty, and affiliated researchers.

The publication of *ELT Local Research Agendas IV* is the result of a collaborative effort that reflects the DIE-UD ethos. It marks an important contribution of its authors to the imperative of "reimagining ELT through the lenses of locality, inclusion, and critical engagement" (Quintero-Polo & Bonilla-Medina, 2025, p. 1). This volume also continues the tradition of the earlier *Local Research Agendas* books while advancing it by explicitly positioning methodological uncertainty and decolonial reflection as central to the formation of new researchers. In this sense, the book consolidates a path of collaborative and critical inquiry within the emphasis of DIE-UD on ELT.

As with the previous volumes in the series, this book brings together the voices of doctoral actors committed to situating their research in the realities of Colombian classrooms, schools, universities, and communities. Meanwhile, they also dialogue with broader debates in applied linguistics and educational research.

The book has six chapters, each derived from an individual doctoral research proposal. Together, they present updated perspectives on key topics: multilingual teacher identity; English teacher leadership; the social classification of English teachers by race, gender, and epistemology; emotions and identity in

English teacher training; and transpedagogies that dismantle obedience to colonial representations of pedagogy. Although diverse in focus and approach, these chapters converge in their commitment to critical research practices and decolonial reflection. They also follow a textual structure that highlights the place of enunciation of each author, a review of the literature, the individual research interest, and the potential contributions of each study.

This plurality of topics underscores a central message of the volume: there are multiple legitimate research paths, each shaped by the positionalities of the researchers, the institutional contexts, and the ethical commitments. Topical and methodological diversity informed by reflexivity is not only inevitable but also desirable. Therefore, each chapter contributes to critical discussions both locally and globally, amplifying the voices of ELT actors in Colombia and foregrounding the power relations and symbolic forms of domination that currently underpin the field.

I envision this book as a resource for multiple audiences. For doctoral students and early-career researchers, it offers models of inquiry that embrace rather than shy away from complexity. For experienced scholars, it provides fresh perspectives on the ongoing debates on methodology, identity, and pedagogy. For teachers and practitioners, it opens a window into the ways in which research can be connected to classroom realities while also inspiring new possibilities for professional practice.

I reaffirm my conviction that ELT research must remain critically engaged, contextually grounded, and open to uncertainty. In doing so, it can contribute to broader conversations about the role of English in Colombian society, the possibilities and limits of educational research, and the responsibilities of scholars and educators in contexts marked by inequality, diversity, and transformation. Beyond Colombia, this volume is a significant contribution from the Global South to global debates in ELT, demonstrating how situated perspectives can enrich and challenge dominant paradigms.

References

Quintero-Polo, Á. H., & Bonilla-Medina, S. X. (2025). Reimagining ELT through locality, inclusion, and critical engagement. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal, 27*(1), 1-3. https://revistas.udistrital.edu.co/index.php/calj/article/view/23933

On Becoming Dissertation Advisors from a Decolonial Stance: Coming to Terms with Our Contradictions. A Collective Autoethnography*

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Abstract

This chapter presents a collective autoethnography exploring the decolonial practices and emotional experiences of doctoral advisors in ELT within the Colombian context. The authors reflect on their journeys of self-cultivation, navigating emotional challenges, and fostering intersubjective growth through collaborative autoethnography. Emphasizing decoloniality as a praxis, they challenge dominant discourses of knowledge and authority in academia, highlighting the potential of collective reflexivity to promote healing and transformation. The findings reveal themes of emotionality, self-awareness, shared growth, and collective knowledge production, illustrating how decolonial approaches can reconfigure advisor-student relationships and contribute to more inclusive, reflexive doctoral practices.

Keywords: autoethnography; collective reflexivity; decoloniality; doctoral advising; ELT.

* This chapter is the final result of a research project certified by the Centro de Investigaciones y Desarrollo Científico at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, with Acta de Inicio No. 5, 2022.

Introduction

The field of ELT (English Language Teaching) in Colombia has been present in social and academic life since the first years of the republic and has steadily grown. The interest (genuine or implanted) of Colombian society in learning English led to the creation of bachelor's programs aimed at training English teachers. It also gave rise to the creation of the oldest association of English teachers in the world, Asocopi (Asociación Colombiana de Profesores de Inglés), important journals (*Íkala*, *Profile*, *HOW Journal*, *Colombian Applied Linguistics*, *GiST*, among others), academic events, master's degrees, and more recently the creation of the emphasis on ELT in the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (hereinafter DIE-UD) at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (2016) and Universidad del Valle (2017) campuses.

It is in this last event that this study is framed, while, of course, being fed by all the previous developments that have informed the field from various perspectives. The ELT field, by its very nature as a field that studies the teaching of English, whether as a foreign language, second language, L2, additional language, another language, or any other terminology one wants to adopt, has been a field colonized in the different dimensions that compose it, be they methodological, investigative, or linguistic. And while it is true that this way of assuming the field has been the dominant one, it is also true that throughout its history, in Colombia and in other latitudes, academics have resisted these dominant practices and, through their academic work, have been consolidating dissonant voices against the hegemony of discourses on English and its teaching and learning. Somewhere else we have told the story that brought us together (Guerrero-Nieto *et al*., 2023) in setting in motion the research emphasis in ELT education as part of the majors offered in the Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación. Throughout our professional careers, we have been part of a group of academics that has problematized the categorical, absolute, and hegemonic constructions in the field of ELT.

Doctoral education in Colombia is relatively recent. Soto Arango (2009) places the creation of the first doctorate in Education in 1996 (before it closed in 2000) and the second, which is still ongoing, in 1998, from Rudecolombia. The DIE-UD was born in 2005 thanks to the cooperation between three universities: Universidad del Valle, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and Universidad Distrital. Like the Rudecolombia doctorate, the DIE-UD has a flexible and student-centered curricular model. The latter aspect implies shoulder to shoulder work between tutor and student towards the formulation, realization, and completion of the doctoral work. This relationship has been scarcely explored and there is much to know about how it is forged, how the investigative and

knowledge generation challenges are assumed between these two actors in the process, and how the relationships and tensions between them occur, among many more issues that need to be addressed. In our particular case, given that we decided to conduct the research seminar in a collegial manner and that we agreed to adopt a decolonial perspective on the field and on the ways of doing research, the need to explore the tutor-student relationship is even more relevant because a series of curricular and research aspects that are taken for granted in a "traditional" perspective are put into discussion and tension (for example, who serves as a guide and as the main expert, what are the steps that are followed to do research, and what are the objects of study, to mention a few). This is not our case, since we are venturing into a fairly new and complex topic that constantly challenges us as researchers and researcher trainers.

In this meeting of theoretical perspectives of the three researchers of this study, who move between the critical and the post-structural, this path towards decolonial work begins to take shape in our work as advisors of doctoral students. Being aware of the scope of our inquiry, for this first phase of our study we ask ourselves the following research question: How has our experience been navigating the decolonial turn as researchers and as researcher advisors in the field of ELT?

As members of an academic community that has been built in the disciplinary and research heterarchy and that seeks to contribute to consolidating a local perspective on doing (or "doings") in ELT, it is our interest to share our own experiences as doctoral advisors dismantling our own fears, contradictions, and gains. By doing so, we hope to be able to generate ways to address what it means to do decolonial research in ELT and how this knowledge takes place in academia. Also, we would like to open, particularly for those who serve as tutors, a dialogue on how to be and remain consistent with decolonial doings without falling into a normalization and protocolization of what the investigation would be like from this perspective.

A note of caution to our readers: This is a collective work, and while we value the consistency that comes from a unified perspective in the way of conducting this study, we also wanted to allow our individual voices to emerge in the text. Each one of us took the lead in the writing of a particular section, incorporating the ideas and contributions of the other. However, we agreed to respect each person's voice (writing style) and that is why the reader will find some small stylistic differences that do not affect the essence of our report.

Some Theoretical Considerations

Doctoral Education in Colombia

According to a local review of the specialized literature, studies that report on the experiences lived by advisors in doctoral programs in Colombia are scarce. Research on doctoral training in education in the country focuses mainly on the gaps (Lasso, 2020), on the significance of education at this level (Vélez, Osorio, Marín, Rodríguez, Flórez, Henao, Peña, & Saldaña, 2014; Vélez, Peña, & Saldaña, 2014; Bello, 2007; Montenegro *et al*., 2023; Garcés Prettel & Santoya Montes, 2013; Ramírez & Astorga, 2023) and on the challenges of training and curricular innovation (Echeverri, 2018; Novoa & Pirela, 2020; Carvajal, 2019).

Lasso (2020) points out in her statistical study that in Colombia, doctoral studies continue to mark a significant binary gender gap given that "there is still a delay in the integration of women into the university, possibly due to social and family factors, added to the fact that the opportunities to enter this type of studies are not equitable" (p. 169).

Vélez, Osorio, *et al*. (2014) claim that the contribution of doctoral studies in education in science, technology, and society could impact the social development of Colombia after opening "its national and international borders in the interest of the discipline to social and economic issues in citizens' competences, health education, virtual learning scenarios, and curricula for skills not only for work but also for life" (p. 100). This coincides with what was stated by Bello (2007) and then expanded on by Vélez, Peña, & Saldaña (2014) and their proposal for a triple reform around thinking, knowledge, and sensitivity. However, it seems evident that this country's efforts focus on quality. Montenegro *et al*. (2023), in their documentary study on Colombian doctorates in education, conclude that these are focused, of course, on education and "establish relationships and links with places and discursive fields of the culture" (p. 51). In a general reflection on doctoral training in Colombia and other geographical locations, Garcés Prettel & Santoya Montes (2013) point out what is required to achieve a doctorate. In that line of argument, Ramírez & Astorga (2023) find that, after obtaining a doctorate, the main objective is "to obtain positions of power to influence other people and carry out actions conducive to achieving their objectives, as well as achieving economic and job security" (p. 272).

In his study on the research field of doctorates in education in Colombia, Carvajal (2019) mentions the advisor and states that "this professor-advisor must have demonstrated experience in research; this not only refers to having a doctoral degree in the field of education or a related field but also to the development

of research and scientific publications in nationally and internationally indexed journals" (p. 184). This shows that research on the experiences of doctoral thesis advisors has not been sufficiently explored, and this research contributes to this line of knowledge for the country and its educational research.

Embracing Epistemic Decolonization

> *The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth; after a short stay in the mother country, they were sent home, whitewashed.*
> (Fanon, 1963, p. 5)

The decolonial turn in English Language Teaching has meant the recognition of the fact that English language teachers themselves have played a role in perpetuating canonical ways of knowing, power, and being. In teacher education, including doctoral teacher education, the logics of modernity/coloniality have been the operating principles for classifying and selecting knowledge as relevant or irrelevant. Moreover, these logics have also contributed to the creation of teachers' subjectivities to resemble those of White ideology while simultaneously governing the curriculum and upholding the hierarchies that have been established within disciplinary racialized domains of existence (TESOL, TEFL, TESL). This perfectly aligns with the notion of Black or Brown skin with White minds (David, 2013).

As members of the ELT community in the Global South, our lives have been marked by tensions about our identities as English language speakers, faculty, and advisors. On the one hand, local constructions of our identities have branded us as an elite that promotes Western or North American visions of the world that turn their backs on critical and local praxis against oppression, exclusion, and subalternization. On the other hand, Western perspectives have placed us in a zone of "non-being" as speakers of English who are non-native, non-learned, and non-authorized to produce knowledge in English Language Teaching, applied linguistics, and education.

The ways we dealt with these tensions made us acknowledge our wounds and the types of struggles we face to subvert and resist hegemonic discourses and practices in education. However, resisting imperialism and neoliberalism,

although important, has not been enough because colonial mechanisms that whitewash our existence underpin these tensions. That is precisely the reason why decoloniality as a political project opens up the possibility of thinking about how to decolonize the mind (wa Thiong'o, 1986) and the imaginary (Gruzinski, 1991). This means getting rid of the racist, xenophobic, and exclusionary practices that ignore the identities that are part of otherness.

Embracing epistemic decolonization has meant for us working toward a praxis of re-existence in which disobedience or "not being dependent upon the forced imposition of one ideal of society" and being (Mignolo, 2007, p. 459) guide our pedagogization of ELT decolonization. In that sense, we have selected contents and terms for an ELT education that denaturalizes the colonial mechanisms that govern our existence. In doing so, our approach to epistemic decolonization mobilizes us to blacken and indigenize our praxis in order to provoke dialogues between the Global North and the Global South in a horizontal relation (Smith, 2016) to make our critical take on decolonization.

In our particular case, as doctoral advisors in this ELT education program, this has posed many challenges both at the professional and the emotional level. As we will show below, small but significant actions we have taken as teachers have allowed us to find our way towards a decolonial turn in academia, specifically in relation to how knowledge and knowers are placed within a doctoral structure.

Being a Doctoral Advisor

One of the core ideas that makes the three of us—Harold, Pilar, and Carmen Helena—ponder has to do with what being a doctoral advisor means, particularly when we decided, as a collective of professors, to embrace a decolonial stance. We realized that being a doctoral advisor, in general terms, is founded on "must-be" discourses (Méndez, 2012; Méndez *et al*., 2019); in mainstream discourses, the doctoral advisor is constructed as the absolute possessor of knowledge and the one who knows, without flaws, the path towards the production of new knowledge. Although, as reported in various studies, being a doctoral advisor spans beyond the academic realm to the personal and emotional ones, none of these studies address the struggles doctoral advisors face as part of their academic role. Being aware of this, in this section we present current literature that explores the various dimensions of the doctoral advisor role, but insist that studies that problematize the monolithic, positivist, efficiency-driven roles of the doctoral advisor are highly needed.

Mentorship

Doctoral advisors serve as mentors, providing students with guidance, knowledge, and expertise in their respective fields. According to Smith & Hatfield (2017), effective mentorship involves fostering the intellectual and professional development of the doctoral student, nurturing their independent thinking, and encouraging critical analysis.

Academic guidance

The doctoral advisor assumes the responsibility of providing academic guidance to their students. As highlighted by Johnson & Brown (2019), this involves assisting students in defining research objectives, formulating research questions, designing appropriate methodologies, and developing strong research proposals.

Emotional support

In addition to academic guidance, doctoral advisors must recognize and address the emotional challenges that students often face during their doctoral journey. A study by Davis & Gardner (2018) suggests that advisors who provide emotional support create a positive and nurturing environment, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing students' overall well-being.

Research collaboration

Very often, doctoral advisors engage in research collaboration with their students. This collaborative approach enhances students' research skills and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge. According to Liu & Wang (2016), productive collaborations between advisors and students lead to joint publications, conference presentations, and networking opportunities.

Ethical considerations

Doctoral advisors hold a crucial responsibility in guiding students to conduct ethical research. As highlighted by Jones & Anderson (2019), advisors must ensure that students adhere to ethical principles, maintain research integrity, and comply with institutional policies and guidelines. By providing ethical guidance, advisors create a foundation of trust and integrity in the research process, fostering responsible conduct and upholding the credibility of the doctoral degree.

Our Decolonial Doings (aka Research Design)[1]

As we have mentioned previously, this phase of the study was carried out following a collaborative autoethnography. Collaborative autoethnography is a qualitative research design that combines the principles of autoethnography with collaboration among researchers. This approach is relevant to our study since, as stated by Ellis *et al*. (2011, p. 2) "[it] challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially just, and socially conscious act" (our translation). This design is consistent with our interest in documenting our own experiences as tutors of doctoral theses that aim to adopt decolonial perspectives. The central objective of autoethnography is to systematically examine a personal experience about a topic in order to establish connections between that purely individual experience and the ways in which one could try to understand a cultural experience (Ellis, *et al*., 2011). Hence the name "auto-ethnography," because, on the one hand, it includes the individual component in the "self" and, on the other, it seeks to explain the cultural part with "ethnography." The fact that it has a compound name does not mean that each of the components is taken literally, but rather that they add up, and elements are taken from each one.

A collaborative autoethnography, in turn, allows bringing each person's perspectives on the object of study because, as Hernández & Nguniri (2013) point out, the researcher is at the same time a participant while also playing that double role of being a "provider" of data and being the one who analyzes it. For some, this double nature represents a limitation in the face of objectivity, but as we have said above, what is objectivity after all? Who can say what is objective and what is not? These questions put us in a philosophical perspective that is not the topic of this research, but, as we have stated above, we distance ourselves from those canonical norms of doing research.

Some of the characteristics of autoethnography, according to Hernández & Nguniri (2013), are the following:

- Centered on the self: In this approach, the self, and their experiences, opinions, views, ideas, and perspectives are at the core of the study and are the basis to interpret the world around us.

1 Our own path towards finding decolonial ways of doing research has taken us to try new words and new meanings. Here we call this section "Decolonial doings" in an attempt to break (at least a little bit) from the rigidity of the research design. However, in order to be intelligible to wider audiences, we try to put our doings in the same order as in any other qualitative study.

- Visible researcher: This approach seeks for the researcher-participant to explore their being in depth and at the same time be able to show themselves, to let their struggles, their fears, their inconsistencies be seen.
- Aware of the context: The researcher-participant is aware that their experiences constitute and are constituted by the context; there is a constant coming and going between the macro contexts and the intimate and personal look at the topics. In our case, in addition to our autoethnographies, we will do what Hernández & Nguniri (2013) call "collaborative autoethnography" to delve even further into that dialogic perspective.

In our own understanding of what it is to know and how it is known, ideas that are established from our transition from the critical to the decolonial, we find in this methodology fertile ground to investigate our own condition as advisors in a doctoral program, since, as Yazan (2019) points out, "[autoethnography] dismantles the intimate connection between our academic work and our personal stories" (p. 41). In this same sense, it is important to emphasize that for us research can never be neutral, nor totally objective (Hernández & Nguniri, 2013), and with this in mind, we embrace the opportunity that this methodological approach gives us to make way for subjectivity, to emotionality, to recognize our privileged place as researchers and to recognize, with Mignolo (2010), the body-politics of research.

Storying Our-Selves[2]

The process of constructing our stories consisted of two parts: written autoethnographies and conversations. In order to put our experiences in a format, we held a meeting to agree on the topic of our first autoethnography, which was a written account where each person decided on the length and the language to write it in. Harold wrote in Spanish, and Pilar and Carmen Helena in English. The three pieces were approximately 3000 words.

Afterwards we sat during a whole afternoon session via an online meeting platform to share our autoethnographies and to comment on them. This session was recorded on video and transcribed.

Analyzing our Autoethnographies

Autoethnographies are process and product. In this sense, each autoethnography is, on the one hand, the process of evoking, reflecting, connecting with the

2 The spelling of 'our-selves' is intentional to signal that we, together, dialogued about our individual autoethnographies, that is, we constructed a collective story based on individual (self) stories.

contexts and existing theories; on the other hand, the written story is the product, where the author links and gives meaning to the themes and problematizations that constitute the question and objectives of this study.

With the two sets of information (each author's autoethnography and the transcriptions of the conversations) we carried out a meta-analysis. We followed a general thematic analysis procedure, where we read the data over and over, marked common themes, and grouped those themes in order to reduce them. The final result was one major theme that encompassed four sub-themes. In the following section we present these themes that constitute the findings of this phase 1 of our research project. A kind reminder to our readers: we all conducted the analysis, but each person led the writing of a section; we agreed to respect each other's writing style and that is why the reader will find some small differences that do not affect the essence of our findings, just the way of presenting them.

Emerging themes (aka findings)

A Journey of Self-Exploration, Healing, and Continuous Growth

When embarking on this collaborative autoethnography (CAE), the three of us knew we had a lot to say about the research question that guided phase 1 of our study. After sharing our autoethnographies and actively conversing about each one of them, we found that four major themes crossed our stories. These four themes, which we will address below, are: emotionality, cultivation of the self, intersubjectivity as a way to grow together, and the potential intellectual fact. These four themes constitute, metaphorically speaking, the pieces of a puzzle, and, together, form the major theme that gives the title to this section. Our journey has been mediated by pain, wounds, and uncertainties, many of which came to light for each one of us and for the three of us collectively while doing this CAE.

By historicizing our experiences, apart from the wounds and pain, we have also had the opportunity to heal—to a certain extent (Mizzi, 2010; Spry, 2001)—and continue growing. None of this is finite or finished, but rather it is a continuous process that can be likened to a spiral: We identify wounds, we heal, and we learn, and, again, repeat the process (like in life itself).

As researchers, and as research advisors, we like to think, following Mignolo (2010), that we cannot detach ourselves neither from our bodies nor from our minds because we are both, and in our minds, along with cognition, lives emotion. Harold and Carmen Helena recount the emotional toll they experienced as professionals and the physical consequences of that:

Harold: With these horizons I began my escape from an unfair and suffocating work environment in which there was never administrative support to deal with practices that I am not afraid to say were devoid of ethics, camaraderie, humanism… which was ironic given the now false critical stance that was promulgated in that graduate program that I joined when I left the private sector. It is sad to see the degree of violence reflected in marks, now lifelong in my corporeality, with which I continue to deal.

Carmen Helena: …my escape, which coincides with Harold's escape in many aspects (you know which ones), meant curtailing my career, that is, mutilating it. Up to this point, I had been that person who had been building a career for years but had to start from scratch somewhere else. And from that moment until today I have been those two people, in a way, almost schizophrenic because on the one hand I am a person with recognition, with a career, with a whole construction, and on the other hand I feel that I am nobody [laughter]. I mean, I am at the head of a graduate program, yes, but my cultural capital, my linguistic capital, my social capital does not reside there. So, I always feel like I'm neither from here nor from there because of that escape. And, also, for me, it meant a very strong physical issue of illness.

For Pilar, the relationship between mind and body had a different origin but has been crucial in shaping her professional persona. In her written autoethnography, Pilar brings again the body as a key element in the being of a doctoral advisor, and how she experienced—physically—the challenge of being a member, for the first time, of a doctoral faculty:

Pilar: I must confess that learning-by-doing involved for me recognizing that the arrangement of ideas is a challenging task (even more so when the code seems elusive) and tremendously challenging when you present your points of view in front of those who are ready to push as hard as possible to spin an argument. The pressure that I initially felt in my body gradually and exponentially dissipated with each encounter. However, today, I learned to live with it, embracing it and being surprised by what it empowers. In the past, like today, aware of my own shortcomings, I tried my best to contribute to the intellectual achievement. It was fascinating to have the possibility of speaking with people who were openly critical and incisively distrustful of the apparent certainties that mobilize theoretical bodies.

These three excerpts show how the three participating doctoral advisors carry along pain, caused by external or internal agents (others/oneself), but also that there is redemption. For Harold and Carmen Helena, redemption resides in escaping from a toxic environment, while for Pilar it has to do with embracing and profiting from the anxiety produced by her new (at that time) participation in the

ELT community, in a doctoral program. Being together has helped the three of us confront our insecurities, deal with new ones, and continue growing as academics. In the following sections we will delve into each one of the sub-themes that comprise this major theme.

Emotionality

It is relevant to understand that directing doctoral dissertations is not only a socio-cognitive process whose ultimate goal is constructing knowledge with the advisee. Directing a doctoral thesis is also an emotional process, not simply a rational one. Over the last two decades, there has been an approach to the emerging field of research on teachers' emotions. However, it is essential to highlight that the emotions of advisors and advisees should be more frequently considered. For example, Boler & Zembylas (2003), in their pedagogy of discomfort, state that "it is a painstaking process to develop a critical and conscious awareness of something as omnipresent as oxygen" (p. 107). This is true! Emotions are always present and do not go anywhere else. They are like the oxygen in the air we breathe. Sometimes, that air is thick because something happens. So, the meanings attributed to the oxygen in our air can be multiple when situated. Breathing in the workplace, where you live, or when taking public transportation is different. By analogy, emotions are then sensitive to contexts; they are evidence of knowledge, and the binary and modern understanding of them as negative vs. positive must be overcome.

Regarding emotion studies, Zembylas (2003) states that "power and resistance are at the center of understanding the place of emotion in self-formation" (p. 108). From this collective autoethnography, we are interested in the phenomenon of resistance to the hegemonic understanding of emotionality. We are also interested in a first approach to the emotionality of the dissertation director when advising a doctoral student.

Zembylas (2003) affirms that, at times, it is necessary to "adopt resistance and support strategies to care for themselves and explore new forms of subjectivity" (p. 123). In our case, we have become aware that one of the best strategies to deal with our impostor syndrome[3] (Carmen Helena and Harold) and to face new epistemologies (Pilar) is precisely to carry out this collective autoethnography, also as an intersubjective way of being together (see below). This has allowed us to understand that our synergy as a research group clothed in humanism and relationality is a way of self-formation and self-care resistance. This happens

3 Impostor syndrome is a psychological pattern where highly accomplished individuals feel incompetent.

because, as the specialized literature demonstrates, there are few or reduced spaces in academia to talk about these topics that leave us wounded and the impact that such wounds can have on our professional work (in our case, on our work as advisors in a major doctoral degree that goes through the decolonial). But we resist without tapping out, instead seeing the advising process through as an exercise of responsibility, self-care, and formation.

Cultivation of the Self

An awareness of the implications of guiding education from a decolonial perspective led the three of us to undertake an in-depth study of the decolonial project and its practical realizations in different fields. Although some readings on the matter have been liminal between what is known and what is yet unknown, this "no-yet" confronts us with the question of knowledge and power in the form of doubts, weaknesses, and uncertainties. On one hand, the question posits tensions in the ways of knowing already learned through formal education and professional research traditions. On the other hand, it creates cautions and warnings about how to proceed as advisors to guarantee coherence with the decolonial project and with good advising practices. It is interesting to see in the case of Carmen Helena how the impostor syndrome that has stalked her for years keeps her alert. In the case of Pilar, she questions how professional identities have been constructed as a secure zone to hide other identity struggles beyond didactic dispositions. And, in the case of Harold (as the ELT emphasis creator), this research emphasis itself became a healing space to reconcile with his views on relationships, education, and possibilities to impact higher education at a doctoral level.

Carmen Helena: Something that has been very challenging, personally, and that has become a source of constant thinking and overthinking, is the fact of trying to embrace a decolonial perspective, which is very new and has led to more questions than answers (…) It has increased my "impostor syndrome" which I have had since I started my PhD degree. I feel like an impostor in front of my colleagues and my students. I want to be really suitable for all of them; however, most times I feel awkward, like what I provide as feedback is irrelevant, shallow, or useless. Nevertheless, the ride has been amazing, and I hope I will come to terms with myself and being able to balance what I have achieved as an advisor and my flaws.

Pilar: The decolonial was presented in the program as a horizon, but it is not the destiny or the doctrine to be obeyed. I vividly remember how, in a research seminar, one of my interventions raised uncertainties as something that should be openly declared, along with the tensions, doubts, and fears caused by questioning what is taken for granted. Although decoloniality as a reading content

was not unknown to me, bringing it to the work within the emphasis had other implications. Getting entrenched in our professional identities made it easy to hide, not see, or leave in pause mode any other glimpses of our identity that would undermine professionalism. For the three of us, it was clear that embarking on a decolonial project was not purely a question of didactic disposition but of a political and pedagogical positioning that should cut across our ways of teaching.

Harold: The initiative was based on observing the need that we all had in the countryside to expatriate to carry out studies at that level and I confess that I was attracted by the idea that the University would be the first in the country to, in a manifest way, offer the possibility. This would not only bring benefits for those who chose to train at the University, but would also expand the institutional service provided to the city-region. With these reasons, I began my escape from an unfair and suffocating work environment in which there was never administrative support as a backup for practices that I am not afraid to say were devoid of ethics, of camaraderie, of humanism…

The Potential Intellectual Fact

This idea emerged in Pilar's narrative to refer to several aspects that have been popping up in the making of syllabi, co-teaching classroom practices, and working with doctoral students. In particular, what this term encompasses is the possibility of working with others to trigger reflexivity and some forms of collective thinking that are also collectively produced. When Giroux (2011) refers to teachers as transformative intellectuals, he makes a critique of scholarly reflection, disregarding practical dimensions in the work of teachers. For decolonial thinkers, knowledge is produced from a body and geopolitical location (Anzaldúa, 1987; Dussel, 1977; Grosfoguel, 2011), which goes beyond mere activism. In this respect, the three of us started to problematize the field and the role we (ELT teachers) have played in the perpetuation of colonial legacies in education. Thus, what doctoral students bring as situations to be discussed inevitably leads to greater problematization of theory and practice to shed light on: 1) Colonialism in ELT conservative classrooms, as Carmen Helena pointed out; 2) The co-construction of meaning in collective seminars, as Pilar explains, and 3) The heteronormative ways of conceiving relationalities in ELT classrooms, as Harold commented. Although post-structural and critical notions underpin the majority of our previous thoughts, now that these are invested with the (de)colonial scaffolding, they take on a different meaning. More precisely, noticing colonialism, practices of domination, naturalization, and circulation of colonial objects brought for the ELT doctoral major the (re)humanization of the teaching body.

Carmen Helena: When I read the proposal, something that made me fall in love with it was that Harold and his colleagues had given this major a post-colonial approach. It fitted my intellectual, epistemological, and political stand, which from a very young age has aligned with leftist/progressive ideas. I must confess that Harold's proposal was, for me, wonderfully subversive (…) First, because although it is kind of expected that universities (particularly public ones) are sites for freedom of speech, and liberal (as opposed to conservative) positions, overtly stating that a program embraces a post-colonial stand was daring (in my opinion). Second, because this major was in ELT education. This field, from its core, is a colonial one, meaning that contents, methods, materials, standards, tests, certifications, curricula, etc., are mandated from the Global North, which is (for the most part), Great Britain. As such, we, English teachers, and teacher educators around the globe, have been "trained" to obey.

Pilar: After the enrollment process of our first cohort (seven students in total), came the design of syllabi and the methodological option to guide the seminars. Harold suggested that it was desirable to guide the seminars in a collegial manner. This way of working with others had many elements that, today, are tremendously challenging for a teacher like me, who had never had the experience of co-teaching with other teachers in the way it was presented. It was a move that, although there were some consensual relays in the approach to certain topics, it also implied allowing oneself to give up control, to let oneself be questioned, to let oneself be surprised, to let oneself be translated and read for the benefit of intellectual fact. The intellectual fact, for me, is an event that is not planned but desired, pursued, and achieved when different voices come together (most importantly those of the students).

Harold: As I reflect on our doctoral program's launch, I am reminded of the theatricality of our introductions. We divided our narratives into three acts, each a deliberate performance of our values, experiences, and aspirations. In this autoethnographic section, I will weave together these acts, revealing the complexities of my own journey and its intersections with the program's goals. In act one, I believe in diversity and support genders, sexual orientations, and love that aren't heteronormative. In act two, where I present publications and relationships with institutions, I simply say that from what I narrate, I have elements of two worlds: the public and the private, which are normally seen as antagonistic, and that subverts the discourse of gender representation in the texts. And the third act has to do with diversity, innovation, and emerging ELT pedagogies and learning for all, because I believe in the diversity that guides educational innovation as an emerging paradigm from an onto-epistemological point of view for the participation of all and not just some.

Intersubjectivity is a Way to Grow Together

Thinking collectively is a decolonial challenge (Borsani & Quintero, 2014). This research is a collective undertaking that Carmen Helena, Pilar, and Harold established as a critical element in designing and delivering research seminars with a decolonial perspective. Holding these seminars taught simultaneously by the three of us (e.g., inter-epistemic dialogues) represents a challenge to the colonial spirit of the modern university that also breaks the advisor-advisee dyad and transforms it into a multivocal and polyphonic relationship. We also cultivate other forms of detachment from the traditional doctoral professorship by inserting our students into academic communities through joint writing (e.g., books written by chapters and joint participation in local and national doctoral colloquiums). We have yet to reach an instance of co-authorship, but we certainly disobey ways of being a teacher, dissertation advisor, and researcher. Growing together thus becomes an incipient but maturing form of decolonial praxis (e.g., disobeying what is normative and naturalized in doctoral education). That is, we do the best in our capacity to not legitimize the educational processes of the modern Colombian university. This is very difficult—but possible—because what we do is inscribed within the contemporary university; our insurgent intersubjectivity is constituted from our unlearned experience in a university that produces knowledge and does not co-construct it. As Palermo (2014) expresses it:

> Our practice—which attempts to pursue decolonial and, consequently, political and ethical goals—is not carried out with Indigenous communities, nor with Afro-descendants with a clear political profile, but in the classroom, with student groups of different levels of education and characterized (…) by the heterogeneity of their origins and competencies. Students that we advise at the doctoral level of schooling and that we present as the result of a decolonial aspiration in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. (p. 125)

Although we are aware of our intersubjectivity that becomes decolonial praxis through pedagogical ways of doing (see Castañeda-Peña & Méndez-Rivera, 2022), we also understand that there are more challenges than achievements when decolonizing our minds and those of our advisees.

Conclusions

At the first stop of this journey, that is, the conclusion of the phase one of our study, we find that for the three of us doing this autoethnography has represented the opportunity to open up about feelings, emotions, fears, insecurities, and expectations of what it means for each one of us to be a doctoral advisor. Although our written accounts and our later conversation about them took us to a different

path than the one originally envisioned, being able to voice our feelings was liberating and, in a way, a chance to heal. We are very aware that these themes are not finite, and that there is still much more to be explored, shared, analyzed, and discussed in order to be able to paint a better and more complete picture of what it means to be a doctoral advisor in the Colombian context. We do believe that this activity needs to be understood in the context where it occurs to get a sense of the multiple layers encompassed in such a task, and that all those complexities interact and are interrelated with all the complexities and life experiences of our students. We envision a phase two to invite the voices of our advisees to complete the picture that we have just sketched here.

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Multilingual Teachers' Identity(ies) in the Colombian Language Classroom*

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Abstract

This chapter explores the identities of multilingual teachers in Colombia, focusing on how English dominance has shaped, limited, or erased other subjectivities within language education. Drawing on my personal trajectory as a teacher of English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, I critically examine the colonial legacies embedded in educational policies and institutional practices that privilege English. The discussion highlights the struggles and possibilities of teachers who resist English-only discourses by cultivating multiple languages. By linking multilingualism with identity, this study contributes to understanding how teachers negotiate professional recognition, pedagogical practices, and subjectivities in a context marked by linguistic hierarchies.

Keywords: Colombian education; coloniality; English hegemony; multilingual identity; teacher subjectivity.

* This chapter draws on my doctoral research project at Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (DIE-UD) and it investigates the construction of a multilingual teacher's identity.

Une introduction[1]

I am a multilingual teacher who loves teaching English. In my case, I normally teach in a context where this language is mandatory. I must confess that teaching is one of my favorite things to do in life as it keeps me active as a professional and continuously learning. I teach English, *français, português* and *español*. Particularly with English, I do not feel the same connection as I do with other languages. I am certain that my self-image entirely changes when I switch from *español* to English: It is a whole new way of doing things. When I switch to *français*, I feel like I am seeing the world in a different way. Likewise, I am aware that it is constantly challenging to master these diverse languages. In fact, my personal learning process with *français* has been difficult. I have enjoyed it, but keeping it and investing time in it has been challenging. Regarding *português*, this language has been more autonomous for me, and my learning has been developed more because of personal interest than demands of the market or essential need.

In this context, in this chapter I would like to first unfold my interest in mapping multilingual teacher identities that rely on the ways languages are connected to personal realizations of different linguistic repertoires to affirm identities otherwise, from my own path as a multilingual teacher who speaks and teaches English, *français, português* and *español*. From this interest, I have been working on a literature review about the identities of multilingual teachers in order to start acknowledging what has been said about this. In this working research, I have noticed that in Colombia, the work conducted on teachers' multilingual identities is quite incipient. Possible, from different events happened in the country such as bilingualism motivation to get a better job or to travel, market demands, the launch of Bilingual Plan of Bilingualism by the government, among others, English has prevailed and sealed a kind of pact with the English language. Previous global research on multilingual identities has mostly addressed the connection between identity and pedagogy separately, focusing primarily on how these factors influence students' learning processes, motivation, or beliefs about multilingualism in teaching. This is why the second part of the chapter unfolds a discussion about multilingualism beyond applied linguistics approaches or students' affectations. Because, for me, it would be more interesting to see how our identity is linked to the languages we speak, to record the possibilities that a predominant language like English may have negated other languages, and to see if this has a direct impact on the identity of foreign language teachers who have cultivated other languages for different reasons.

1 Introduction - Introducción.

To unpack the discussion, I start by reconstructing the trajectory of my multilingual journey. I would like to narrate how this path has led me to reflect upon several situations in which will, institutions, and societal and professional demands have shaped and influenced my relationship with language. By reflecting upon various situations, I aim to shed light on the significance of multilingualism and its implications in contemporary society. In the final part of the chapter, I would like to bring the reader to what I consider to be a colonial situation that emerges from these scenarios where English is predominant and where some possibilities have been neglected to multilingual teachers. As I navigate this narrative, I also dare to subvert this writing by inviting my linguistic repertoire to have visibility. Some excerpts are deliberately written in French, *português* and *español* in a call for heightened visibility and recognition of the diverse linguistic landscapes that exist.

Mon lieu d'énonciation[2]

My first contact with English was at school. I do not remember very well how, but I think that I learned English basics. For me, English was just another class to pass. I continued learning English as a school subject; I do not remember whether I was good or not, or if I even enjoyed it. Then, during 1999 and the 2000s—my teen years—that thought started to change for me because I discovered the technology of the time. My family acquired cable TV, and we had plenty of international channels to watch and enjoy. I started watching the channels that broadcast American TV series subtitled in Spanish. They were so cool, and I loved them not because of their content but because I enjoyed the language a lot. It is unclear to me why or how I could understand the jokes, the references, most of the words, and how the interactions and communication worked in that language. I fell in love with English.

Furthermore, I started to ask for dictionaries, music, and books in English. We were not exactly millionaires, but we had what we needed: food on the table and education. But my mother made a big effort to buy those things I was asking for. I learned how to listen to English naturally by watching those series, music, and audiobooks, and my mother noticed it. She encouraged me to take an English course (they were a trend at the time) because her friend's son was taking it. I accepted the offer and entered Universidad Libre to start my formal education in the language. It was the first time I did not feel English as an imposition as at school: It was fun, and I used all the expressions I knew from TV shows. That made me noticeable as the girl who had a good English level.

2 My locus of enunciation.

Time went by and in high school I was the girl who was good at English, so I used to do my peers' homework and compositions. At the time I went to a public school, and I felt that my classes were not as advanced as those of my neighborhood friends who studied in private schools or in other public schools. I already knew most of the things the teacher taught us, so I thought that English was too easy. Maybe that is why I pursued a career in languages. This makes me think of students at public schools who succeed at school, but their experiences of learning are ignored—those schools are not failure scenarios at all for them.

When it was time to enter a university and study something, I was certain that I wanted to study languages, so I just had to look for the university we could pay for. At that moment, there were not too many options for me. It was 2008, I was 18, and I did not work. My mother worked at a company, and she earned the minimum wage, so the options were few. I applied to Universidad Pedagógica, Universidad Distrital, and Universidad Nacional but did not pass.

When examining the obstacles faced by economically disadvantaged students in Colombia who aspire to study a language or pursue a career in languages, it becomes evident that socioeconomic factors significantly impact their educational opportunities and prospects. Firstly, limited financial resources pose a considerable barrier for these students. Language courses and materials, study abroad programs, and certification exams often entail substantial costs that are beyond the means of many disadvantaged individuals. This financial constraint hinders their ability to access "quality language education" and inhibits their progress in acquiring proficiency in a foreign language.

Furthermore, the lack of educational infrastructure and resources in economically disadvantaged areas exacerbates the challenges faced by poor students. Many schools in such areas struggle to provide adequate language instruction due to insufficient funding, outdated materials, and a shortage of qualified language teachers. The absence of language laboratories, libraries, and technological resources further restricts the opportunities for comprehensive language learning. As a result, students from these marginalized communities are possibly at a disadvantage compared to their more privileged counterparts who have access to better-equipped educational institutions.

In addition to economic and infrastructural barriers, cultural and societal factors also contribute to the obstacles faced by poor students in pursuing language studies or careers. The prevailing societal perception that other languages are secondary or non-essential subjects undermines the value attributed to language learning. This attitude often leads to limited support and recognition for language education programs, leaving disadvantaged students with few opportunities to cultivate their linguistic skills and limited motivation to pursue

careers in language-related fields. In Colombia, for people who do not have many economic resources to access a very high-quality private education, the first option is a public university. For many students, like me, entering one of these universities is a dream; for some, it becomes a conviction; for others, a personal and academic disappointment. We must study twice as hard and pay for extra courses to level the knowledge required in the entrance exams. Even, and if possible, pay for tutors or extra classes to arrive prepared to take an exam that we must also pay to take. I personally tried it. I invested money and effort, but it was not enough at the time, and I lost the opportunity to study at these institutions more than three times. It was disappointing and frustrating, but I wanted to study, and if I could not access this education, I had to look for another one. Not everyone has that option.

Due to my budget, my options were Universidad Libre or La Salle. Because of a family tradition I chose Libre, my mother's *alma mater* and my previous English school. When I started studying there, the degree was called *Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Humanidades e Idiomas Inglés y Francés* (Bachelor's Degree in Basic Education with Emphasis on Humanities and English and French Languages). The promise was simple: You will learn how to teach English and French to students at schools. In the first semester I had good grades in English; it was the easiest. *En français, c'était différent. J'ai eu de gros problèmes avec ça, peut-être parce que je n'avais aucune idée de comment ça fonctionnait. Je l'ai enfilé comme l'anglais, je n'ai pas considéré son essence. J'avais dans mon esprit que c'était juste une autre langue comme l'anglais. Bien sûr, à l'université, les professeurs nous ont appris la grammaire, la prononciation, le vocabulaire comme quand on débute avec l'apprentissage de l'anglais. Quand je suis venu demander conseil à mes professeurs, ils m'ont dit que je ne devais pas m'en inquiéter ; je connaissais l'anglais et j'étais doué pour ça. Donc le français était comme une chose supplémentaire mais pas aussi nécessaire que l'anglais. Ces mots traînaient dans ma tête mais transformaient le français en mon défi personnel. Je n'étais pas éduqué pour enseigner des «* idiomas *» comme le disait le diplôme, on m'apprenait à enseigner principalement l'anglais et si j'en avais peut-être l'occasion le français, comme un plus dans ma carrière pas aussi importante, à ne pas reconnaître.*[3]

3 In French it was different. I had big problems with this, maybe because I had no idea how it worked, I put it on like English. I did not consider its essence. I had in my mind that it was just another language, it was exactly like in English. Of course, at the university, teachers taught us grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary as when you start with English learning. When I came for advice from my teachers, they told me that I should not be worried about it, I knew English, and I was good at it; so French was like an extra thing but not as necessary as English. These words

As we can notice, not many contexts provide scenarios to teach French. This happened, for example, in Colombia when English became mandatory. There is no doubt that the pact with English has neglected these other professionals' possibilities and ignored their struggles to win recognition, as it decreased opportunities for learners like me who were very curious and open-minded to learn new things. Furthermore, "it has also ignored the blighted past and future possibilities for different subjectivities and forms of bilingualism" (Méndez-Rivera, 2021, p. 19).

Back in 2008, the *français* instruction that I received at the university was not as strong as the English one in terms of time intensity, spaces, and opportunities. The demand for practicum spots as a pre-service teacher was mainly in English teaching contexts. If you wanted to teach or practice in French, you had only one school to do so, and there were few spots that were normally already full. These are situations or moments where we can see the pact with the English language reflected, that gave rise to dominant or mainstream discourses that resonated with my beliefs at the time—discourses that, to some extent, continue to influence my thinking. For example, nearly all the most admired scholars are mainly English speakers or writers, and it could be harder to publish and be recognized in other languages (Ferguson *et al*., 2011; Zhao, 2017). Besides, I often listen to the idea that English academic literature is one of the best and strongest ones when doing research. It is possible that when the academic community writes in English, they believe that they have a direct entry to the indexed magazines or the academic world. Just to give one example, articles written in other languages are rarely cited or made visible like those written in English.

English supremacy to me was strictly connected to global demands and related issues, so I did not foresee the negative consequences of English-only practices for the development of my multilingual identity and personal and professional development. *Algum tempo depois, o português apareceu na minha vida, não por causa da universidade, não por demanda do mercado, apenas por interesse. Claro, aprender, mas acima de tudo cultivar, não foi fácil. Comecei por conta própria, estudando como aprendi inglês. Então, o contato com a língua foi significativo, eu sentia que cantar em português era muito mais bonito do que cantar em inglês. Decidi viajar para conhecer este país. Lá descobri pessoas e lugares maravilhosos, mas, acima de tudo, uma conexão imensa com o idioma. Alguns odiavam que comparassem a facilidade do português com o espanhol. Outros*

lounged in my head but turned French into my personal challenge. I was not being educated to teach *idiomas*, as the diploma said. I was being taught to teach mainly English, and if I possibly had the opportunity, French, as a plus in my career that was not as important or worthy of being acknowledged.

sentiram que sua língua era sua marca, sua essência. Essa linguagem cheia de sabor e encanto não pode ser comparada sem conhecê-la, sem senti-la. Assim como o francês emite elegância, cultura, sonoridade, o português emite música, dança, energia, resistência. As línguas com as quais convivo permitem que meu ser flua de maneiras diferentes cada vez que falo com elas, penso nelas e as ensino. O tempo permitiu que eu certificasse o idioma como requisito para ensiná-lo. Ensine depois, ouvindo comentários ao longo do caminho - Porque você não melhora seu inglês- Você deveria ter certificado inglês primeiro do que português--Mas onde você vai ensinar português, um nativo é melhor, aqui em Bogotá há vários - Trabalhe por conta própria, trabalhe como professor de inglês.[4]

Another example resides in the possibility to teach or work with the language you have learned (with effort, dedication, time, and investment) and not be limited to the English-only hegemonic discourse. The pact with English has been detrimental to other subjectivities, with teaching practices that invisibilize the contact with other languages by failing to acknowledge and celebrate linguistic and cultural identities (Méndez-Rivera, 2021) of students and educators who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, leading to a loss of opportunities for individuals to utilize their language skills in various contexts, whether it be teaching, translation, interpreting, or any other field where multilingualism is valuable.

When certain possibilities are dismissed due to policies, new laws, hegemonic discourses, or even widespread beliefs, this can lead to serious and troubling consequences professionally and personally speaking for these multilingual teachers. On the one hand, if most of the legitimized knowledge is expected to be produced only in English, the other languages students have learned are often sidelined, forgotten, or regarded as irrelevant to their continued learning. On the other hand, introducing and maintaining the belief that a single language

4 Sometime later, Portuguese appeared in my life, not because of the university, not because of market demand, just out of interest. Of course, learning it but above all cultivating it was not easy. I started on my own, the same way I learned English. Then, the contact with the language was significant; I felt that singing in Portuguese was much more beautiful than singing in English. I decided to travel to Brazil to have a vivid experience and real contact with the language. There I discovered wonderful people and places, but above all an immense connection with the language. Some hated that they compared the ease of Portuguese with Spanish. Others felt that their tongue was their mark, their essence. This language full of flavor and charm cannot be compared without knowing it, without feeling it. Just as French emits elegance, culture, and sound, Portuguese emits music, dance, energy, resistance. The languages I live with allow my being to flow in different ways every time I speak in them, think about them, and teach them. Time allowed him to certify the language as a requirement to teach it. Teach it later, listening to comments along the way; What don't you improve your English; you should have certified English first before Portuguese; but where are you going to teach Portuguese, a native is better, here in Bogotá there are several; work on your own thing, work as an English teacher.

is more than another and that it is important to speak in it to be heard or read somehow destroys the knowledge that was formed with history, that is, it erases others and invalidates what is known of them. Many would even say that this is why translations exist, but translation can modify, adapt, and prevent the essence of the ideas from remaining. Thus, among many other consequences that I will surely find and share later, maintaining these ideas of a hegemonic discourse denies the possibilities of being and performing for these multilingual teachers.

These practices open the way to dispossession and a kind of withdrawal of other subjectivities. According to Quijano (2007), this Eurocentric knowledge framework and widespread beliefs have been used to legitimize and justify colonial domination. The prevalent English imperial discourse has played a significant role in establishing a hierarchical framework for civilizations, where Western knowledge is often positioned as superior while other forms of knowledge are unfairly labeled as primitive or backward. This hierarchy has had adverse effects on multilingualism, which can be viewed as a form of hidden knowledge colonialism. For instance, the dominance of English has led to the neglect or devaluation of other languages, such as *français*. In this context, multilingualism, and the diverse linguistic capabilities it encompasses are not given the recognition and respect they deserve, thereby perpetuating a system that undermines the linguistic diversity and cultural richness of non-English languages. There are people who believe that these other languages are a privilege and that those who speak them are an elite. But, despite this belief, other languages have their own undervalued possibilities and connections with their speakers, regardless of their geopolitical location. That is why this research is intrinsically linked to me and to teachers that somehow identify with this scenario.

Situation coloniale sous examen[5]

Blaise Pascal (1670) *a dit que le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas* (has said that the heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing). From this reflection, I would like you to know how my lived experience and my heart led me to the previous enunciation in this text. A few years ago, I worked at a very well-known university in Bogotá. I was a member of the foreign language program as a *professeure de français*. I had plenty of projects working and increasing their potential. Furthermore, I encouraged my leader and my colleagues to create a more substantial curriculum in *français*, as well as events and visualization of languages other than English. English was the dominant language because it was

5 Colonial situation under examination.

the emphasis of the program, but students were also being formed and certified to teach other languages (in this particular case, *français* and *português*).

I am convinced that students need to understand that, although English is one of the most important languages, they should also develop their multilingualism as an integral part of their identity—something that is not always encouraged in other teacher education programs. To expand the idea of making other languages visible, I started by creating the first hotbed to include *français* in their research and provided another subjectivity to balance the large number of projects focused exclusively on English. When we got our first recognition, some (multilingual) teachers joined me, and we offered the students the chance to be a part of national events on languages that also included *français* as a significant language. We invited some native and non-native speakers to share with our students their struggles being a *français* teacher in an English-speaking emphasis and how they can also develop their potential in a language field being multilingual. They shared with their peers and teachers all their knowledge in this language as well as how balancing their learning processes is important for their future. Suddenly, *le français* started to get on the radar, and more and more students started to study it and promote it in the program.

I was so excited about the fact that, in my view, I was contributing to students' professional and personal identity and to enriching the language program from my small role in it. But some subjectivities might have felt threatened or uncomfortable with *le français recevant un peu plus d'attention que l'anglais*.[6] So, it started to create a very distressing atmosphere. A few weeks later, *il y a eu un changement dans la direction du programme et je ne pensais pas que mon travail en valait la peine. J'ai décidé d'arrêter. Non seulement à cause du changement, mais aussi parce que j'étais épuisé, j'ai donc choisi ma santé mentale en premier. Aujourd'hui, j'ai été informé que le foyer, l'équipe et les événements étaient annulés, et qu'ils devaient maintenant chercher une autre personne pour tout reconstruire depuis le début. J'ai dû chercher un autre travail et heureusement je l'ai trouvé mais devinez quoi : il s'agissait d'enseigner l'anglais, car les places de français ou d'autres langues étaient ou prises ou moins payées que l'anglais. Ne vous méprenez pas, j'adore enseigner l'anglais, mais je voudrais savoir s'il y a d'autres enseignants qui ont des difficultés similaires et comment ces expériences les ont formés pour devenir des enseignants d'anglais dans un contexte politique et éducatif comme celui de notre pays*.[7]

6 French was receiving a bit more attention than English.

7 There was a change in the direction of the program, and I didn't think my work was worthwhile. I decided to quit. Not only because of the change, but also because I was exhausted, so I chose

Literature on English teachers' identities has been influenced, in general, by broader societal norms, cultural expectations, and institutional practices (Gu & Benson, 2014; Mosquera-Pérez & Losada-Rivas, 2022). They are subjected to various discourses and power relations that prescribe and regulate what it means to be an English teacher. These discourses can include notions of expertise, professionalism, and desirable teaching practices. But beyond English teachers' identities, which, as evidenced, have had a very long trajectory in academic literature, I would like to unpack identities that have not yet been explored such as English teachers who are also multilingual speakers because they have resisted the dominance of English, both politically and academically.

According to Mosquera-Pérez & Lozada-Rivas (2021), from a historical perspective, the concept of language teacher identity (LTI) has been linked to the collection of customs, convictions, and conduct that define educators deeply involved in the field of language instruction. By acknowledging the historical dimension of LTI, these authors shed light on the complex interplay between language teaching and individual identity formation. They emphasize that language teachers' identities are not static but are continuously shaped by sociocultural and educational factors. Such an understanding prompts us to consider the diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and teaching approaches that language educators bring into the classroom, acknowledging the rich tapestry of experiences that contribute to their professional practice.

The pact with English has meant, in terms of the curricula adaptation for many language teacher education programs, the colonization of teachers' identity to fulfill hegemonic discourses (Méndez-Rivera *et al*. 2019), the dispossession of other subjectivities, and the perpetuation of colonial legacies in education. The discourses that we have been hearing in our era of globalization, progress, and expansion call for strengthening a hegemonic idea about what should be and what should happen to each one of us at a professional, academic, and personal level. Our identity is linked to contributing to a single model to be copied, to remain rooted in what has been brought from abroad, and to be indifferent to what is ours. The convictions with which we as teachers and our students perform every day are part of a great bombardment of supremacy that inhibits

my mental health first. Today I was informed that the hotbed, team and events were cancelled, and they are hoping to find another person to build it from scratch. I had to look for another job and, luckily, I found it, but guess what: it was teaching English, because the French or other language places were either taken or paid less than English. Do not get me wrong, I love teaching English, but I want to know if there are other teachers who have similar situations and how these experiences have shaped their identities to become English teachers in a political and educational context like the one in our country.

others. Many aspects have been addressed and problematized from a less colonizing discourse. These include knowledge (Quijano 2002), power and authority (De Sousa Santos, 2018; Fanon, 2005; Mignolo, 2007), culture (Moloney, 2022; Walsh, 2018), identity (Hall, 2011; Trotter, 1990). However, as has been discussed in this chapter, it is also evident that a coloniality of knowledge (Quijano, 1992) prevails and predominates when we allow one language to have more power over another.

This has also had an impact on a social and political level, as we see more and more schools and political initiatives that promote the inclusion of other languages in school curricula. Mejía (2016) mentions that Colombia recognizes its ethnic and cultural diversity in an official capacity. However, it has not implemented a comprehensive educational approach that acknowledges and celebrates this diversity while also facilitating the country's integration into the global economy. This implies that Colombia has not fully maximized its potential to participate in the global market despite its recognition. In this context we understand, according to Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero Polo's (2009) commentary on the National Constitution of 1991, that Colombia is acknowledged as a multicultural and multilingual nation where there is a convergence of Indigenous languages, creoles, many foreign languages, and Spanish. The recognition of Colombia and the focus on Indigenous languages is clear, but it is worth mentioning that several foreign languages and cultural diversity are mentioned. *Mais ces autres langues sont cachées d'une certaine manière, et nous ne savons pas si nous pouvons simplement parler de langue indigène, par exemple, ou des langues actuelles que nous pouvons voir dans les programmes d'études comme le français, le portugais ou l'espagnol*.[8]

When we elaborate on multilingualism as a term, we understand from García (2013) that it refers to the ability of an individual or community to use and understand multiple languages proficiently, regardless of the number of languages involved. It can refer to a wide range of language abilities, from basic conversational proficiency to advanced levels of fluency. So, it is important to identify the relationship between identity and multilingualism. Both in Colombia and internationally, these identities have not been sufficiently explored—as can be seen in the literature review, which reveals trends related mostly to applied linguistics approaches. Thus, multilingual teachers are on the spot when it comes to teaching better through multilingualism, dealing with students' multilingualism

8 But these other languages are hidden in some way, and we don't know whether we can simply speak of Indigenous languages, for example, or of current languages we can see in degree programs such as French, Portuguese or Spanish.

in the classroom and, motivating students to reach multilingualism for their future teaching practices.

These results reflect an understanding of multilingualism shaped by Western perspectives, where classrooms often include students from diverse countries, cultures, and languages. Many challenges in such settings arise from multilingual environments and the role of bilingual or monolingual teachers managing them. However, the situation in Colombia differs significantly, as most school classrooms have predominantly monolingual or bilingual students over extended periods. But I want to unveil what could be said about teachers like me, who have been cultivating other languages even though English is the predominant teaching language at schools or universities. English-only as an imperial discourse has reduced the possibilities that multilingual teachers in Colombia have of speaking about their own identities.

As a language teacher of languages other than English, and as someone who has been immersed in the world of languages out of personal interest, I have been genuinely committed to the academic process of professional development for foreign language teachers—not only in English but also in other languages. *Isso moldou minha identidade de maneira diferente, continuo cultivando, mas tem sido difícil conseguir um emprego ou reconhecimento na área de ensino ou uso de outros idiomas*.[9] In my geopolitical context,[10] doors have been opened to professional growth in the language field. Since the launch of the National Bilingual Plan in 2004, I have noticed how the need to learn a new language and the demand for teachers who could cover this need has increased. It should be noted that the language included in this plan was English. This fostered the strengthening of learning and teaching of this particular language. However, for various reasons, several individuals, like me, choose to strengthen not only English but also other languages.

9 This has shaped my identity differently. I keep cultivating them, but it has been difficult to get a job or recognition in the field of teaching using other languages than English.

10 I refer here to the Colombian geopolitical context, where the lingering effects of European colonization, particularly Spanish colonization, continue to shape the country's language, culture, and power dynamics. Marginalized groups, including Indigenous communities and Afro-Colombians, face ongoing struggles for recognition and agency within dominant power structures. The exclusive focus on English as a mandatory language further marginalizes local languages, perpetuates linguistic and cultural homogeneity, and reinforces the dominance of Western knowledge systems (Mejía, 2016).

Quelques contributions possibles[11]

Over time, the identity of the English teacher has been explored in various parts of the world and from different perspectives. According to Behin *et al*. (2018) English teachers' identities are influenced by broader societal norms, cultural expectations, and institutional practices. They are subjected to various discourses and power relations that prescribe and regulate what it means to be an English teacher. These discourses can include notions of expertise, professionalism, and desirable teaching practices. Nowadays, many countries are increasingly adopting educational programs in schools with the goal of enhancing students' proficiency in multiple languages to prepare them for success in an interconnected global society. So, multilingual teachers are hired all over the world to meet these kinds of demands.

The main problematization focuses on those possibilities that have been denied to multilingual teachers due to the predominance and command of English in the field of foreign languages. This does not allow work, efforts, and investment in other languages to be visible, problematized, or studied. I intend to begin by exploring the identities that have been denied in this area, especially after the educational policies whose hegemonic discourse positions English as the language of progress and success (Méndez-Rivera, 2021). This includes the growth of foreign language institutions offering French courses, which, although not as in-demand as English, still provide the opportunity to teach this language (Méndez-Rivera *et al*., 2020), among others.

In a previous exploration of how multilingualism and multilingual identities have been approached in the sphere of foreign language teaching, psychology and sociolinguistics throw up ideas directly linked to trends in motivating students to learn several languages (Dressler, 2015; French, 2019; Portolés & Martí, 2018; Zheng, 2017). They emphasize the importance and positive impact of having a multilingual teacher in foreign language classrooms with multilingual students, although sometimes they acknowledge exceptions where students come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This contrasts with contexts such as Colombia, where it is usually the teacher—not the students—who is multilingual. Teachers' beliefs about multilingualism (typically regarding their students) and how these beliefs influence their pedagogical practices are also important considerations (Forbes *et al*., 2021; Portolés & Martí, 2018).

Finally, one of the most popular aspects within the studies on the multilingual identity category is the need for and importance of interaction between

11 Possible contributions.

multilingual students and teachers (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Solsona-Puig *et al*., 2018) to improve students' linguistic and sociolinguistic skills as well as promote the learning of various languages.

Globally speaking, and as we can see, the identity of teachers who, like me, have cultivated several languages despite the predominance of English and the demands of the market has not yet been explored. Despite the ideas and discourses about the obsolescence or non-importance of the teaching of other languages and even their exclusion from the elites, teachers who teach other languages have become predominant. It is crucial to challenge the narratives that dismiss the teaching of languages other than English as obsolete or unimportant. By presenting evidence and arguments that demonstrate the ongoing relevance and significance of multilingual education, we can counteract these misconceptions. This exploration could contribute to highlighting the impact of cultivating diverse languages, as well as strengthening the value of multilingual teachers' subjectivities, personal pedagogies, and beliefs in the language field.

A nivel nacional, este estudo pode fornecer ao campo do ensino de línguas estrangeiras na Colômbia uma compreensão geopolítica das identidades multilíngues que informará o campo ELT sobre identidades. Essas outras razões que foram ignoradas pela pesquisa corrente dominante sobre identidades multilíngues em demandas de mercado, benefícios de cognição, estratégias pedagógicas, entre outros. Para expandir a compreensão das identidades multilíngues, é valioso conectar-se com campos relacionados, como psicologia, sociologia, antropologia e estudos culturais. Essas disciplinas fornecem perspectivas e estruturas adicionais para compreender de forma abrangente as complexidades das identidades multilíngues, adotando abordagens interdisciplinares, a criação de uma compreensão mais rica e holística dessas identidades e suas implicações para vários domínios.[12]

Au niveau local, cette recherche contribuera à déballer les mécanismes de connaissance du pouvoir au sein des systèmes éducatifs colombiens qui entravent les possibilités des enseignants de faire de l'enseignement autrement. En

12 At the national level, this study can provide the field of foreign language teaching in Colombia with a geopolitical understanding of multilingual identities that will inform the ELT field on identities. These other reasons have been ignored by mainstream research on multilingual identities in market demands, cognition benefits, pedagogical strategies, among others. To expand the understanding of multilingual identities, it is valuable to connect with related fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. These disciplines provide additional perspectives and frameworks to comprehensively understand the complexities of multilingual identities by taking interdisciplinary approaches, creating a richer and holistic understanding of these identities and their implications for various domains.

dévoilant les mécanismes de connaissance du pouvoir au sein du système éducatif colombien, nous pourrions mieux comprendre les barrières structurelles qui entravent les possibilités des enseignants d'enseigner autrement. Cette expansion aide à mettre en lumière les défis systémiques qui doivent être relevés pour favoriser un système éducatif qui permet aux enseignants de s'engager de manière critique dans leur pratique, d'explorer des pédagogies alternatives et de mieux répondre aux divers besoins des élèves, mais aussi des enseignants.[13]

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13 At a local level, this research will help to unpack the mechanisms of power knowledge within Colombian education systems that hinder teachers' opportunities to teach differently. By unpacking the knowledge mechanisms of power within the Colombian education system, we may better understand the structural barriers that hinder teachers' opportunities to teach differently. This expansion helps shed light on the systemic challenges that need to be addressed to foster an education system that enables teachers to engage critically with their practice, explore alternative pedagogies, and better meet the diverse needs of both students and teachers alike.

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Teacher Leadership Otherwise: Problematizing Teacher Leadership Practices*

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Abstract

This chapter shares my personal journey, which begins from a universal I attempted to foster and the struggles I faced through the doctoral program to problematize it. TL has extensively been studied under Euro-Western paradigms, analyzing how teachers' belongingness practices of leadership in and out the classroom through a decolonial perspective tension the top-down approach of TL. Unpacking what teachers have to say about their TL practices based on their specific constructions of belongingness. It will contribute to delinking from the canonical theorization of TL in ELT. Furthermore, it will problematize TL from a bottom-up approach where ELT teachers unveil their struggles to enact TL using their life experiences and practices.

Keywords: belongingness; leadership embodiments; life experiences; social justice; teacher leadership.

* This chapter draws on my doctoral research project at Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (DIE-UD) and investigates teacher leadership practices of belongingness.

Introduction

This chapter attempts to discuss teacher leadership (TL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) from the perspective of leadership practices of belongingness under a decolonial take. It problematizes teacher leaders' tensions towards being classroom teachers and leaders, using their geopolitical positions to overcome students' adversities and look for social justice.

The first section, entitled "Locus of enunciation," presents my personal experience as an experienced formal leader and my shift to being a schoolteacher. In it I describe how these professional versions of myself merged and placed me in the grey area of leadership. Being placed outside of the standard made me feel I was out of place, but now that I belong to a place and a community, I live my authentic version, my true self. The second section, "Research interest," discusses in general terms the three waves of TL in the U.S., as well as some studies about TL in ELT which explore the phenomenon using a management approach. The following section, called "Colonial situation under examination," provides a brief profiling of relevant research articles about TL abroad and in Colombia, setting the framework for the research questions and objectives of this proposal. The last section, "Contributions," speaks about TL practices and belongingness and the relevance of exploring these issues in ELT to present new paths to unpack our teacher identity.

I hope you enjoy this journey full of questions to reflect on your own appreciations of your ELT teacher role and the actions we can take inside and outside of the classroom to advocate for equity in the school community.

Locus of Enunciation

As an English language teacher, I feel deeply concerned about TL. In my professional life, I have been a project manager, educational consultant, academic coordinator, teacher educator, and material developer. After playing these roles, I wanted to share all the experiences I had from living, working, and studying in Colombia and abroad. I have studied in public institutions my whole life, and I wanted to make my contribution to education. When I decided to be a schoolteacher, leadership was a part of myself. Exercising power from different professional roles made me defiant and critical of the status quo; I was not afraid to speak my mind, and my personal interest in becoming an agent of change unfolded in my TL.

As a novice teacher, I helped some of my students avoid recruitment into gangs and enrolled them in extracurricular clubs. Because of this, I was threatened by criminal groups. The first warning came from a parent who had heard

that I was a target and asked me to leave for my own safety. I ignored the situation and kept working. Some days later, the second warning came from a gang member who came to the school and gave me 24 hours to leave. I was scared and anxious; I could not work, I looked for a new school, and I was relocated.

I was lucky to be quickly removed: I know there are numerous teachers who have been killed and did not have the chances I had. I am grateful to have the opportunity to share my experience and even more to be part of a school where my voice matters. When I arrived at this school, I was scared to face a similar situation, so I played my role as a teacher. I did not want to draw any attention, and I was focused on my classes. However, my commitment to helping students was intact, and it was just a matter of time before I began to be more active in the school. I noticed that these teachers were like me: They were all working on different projects to motivate students' learning. They were committed professionals who built strong bonds with families. Therefore, I felt safe and happy to be teaching once again.

Nevertheless, I wondered why these teachers were so out of the ordinary. They know their students and care about them, as well as their colleagues. They make decisions keeping in mind students' needs, and when a family is struggling, teachers mobilize and take action to help. TL is something they feel like their own; they lead based on their expertise and work together as a team. If a teacher suggests a project, all peers discuss the advantages students can take from it and embrace the new venture with commitment. There is no resistance to change and bringing forth innovative ideas; they are critical, and if they consider new policies do not benefit the school, they reject them and keep working on their personal and team projects. Thus, these teachers' strong institutional identity is clear: They are proud of the community they belong to; they believe in and keep a record of the school project they have been building for so long.

Although I was a part of the school community, I wanted to understand more about this warming school, and I carried out my first research project entitled *Liderazgo docente y justicia social. Aproximaciones desde la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en Colombia* (Teacher leadership and social justice. Approaches from teaching English as a foreign language in Colombia) to identify the connection between TL, school improvement, and teachers' reflexivity towards social justice. At the time, I understood TL from a colonial perspective, that is, under a canonical approach which subjugates teachers to perform TL based on a set of behaviors to improve students' learning. Mignolo & Walsh (2018) state that coloniality refers to the control and management of knowledge by "universals" of Western modernity, Eurocentrism, and global capitalism. According to my research project, the "universals" of teachers following policies and working

together to improve students' outcomes to empower communities replicates the top-down approach of TL. This Westernized assumption of reciprocity between teachers' efficacy and academic results allowed me to keep digging into teachers' identity. I developed a second research project entitled *Prácticas pedagógicas: Espacios reflexivos para la caracterización del liderazgo docente en los maestros en formación y en ejercicio*[1] (see Méndez-Sarmiento, 2022). It was an attempt to characterize teachers' TL profile from pre-service and in-service ELT teachers' voices. I explored TL from the angle of identity, focusing on teacher leader characteristics. This study concluded in a TL profile, and a set of desired personality features that constitute teachers as agents of change in ELT. These two works contributed to the top-down mainstream literature in teacher leadership.

My conceptualization of TL based on school improvement and teachers' personality was problematized in this doctoral program. My exploration of TL as a facilitator to implement policies effectively, by means of inspirational teachers able to influence peers and mentor pre-service and in-service teachers formally or informally, building an intermediate leadership level according to McMahon (cited in Bernal & Ibarrolla, 2011) mobilizing colleagues and educational administrators to make a positive impact on students' learning to foster quality in education. I thought TL must be exercised by ELT teachers. These universals forced me to adapt to conceptualizations and ways of doing aligned to canonical ways of conceiving leadership. In other words, TL was disposed of critical elements that shed light upon other relationalities with the team, the content, and the students.

After being exposed to decoloniality, I could embrace a new perspective towards TL. I was able to see beyond the surface, and new elements emerged, such as TL struggles: the bright, the grey, and the dark side. I understood TL as something you own and choose to take—a personal decision you make to help students overcome adversity—but I wondered why TL had numerous ways of being portrayed. Mignolo & Walsh (2018) state that "decoloniality is a perspective, stance, and proposition of thought, analysis, sensing, making, doing, feeling, and being that is actional (in the Fanonian sense), praxistical, and continuing" (p. 100). I pinpointed the grey areas: What about a decolonial relational perspective of TL? How do teachers' lives influence the way they enact TL and are how belongingness and TL related? After several inner talks, I could navigate my boundaries and dive into the cracks of TL. My research problem delves into unveiling our (my colleagues' and mine) English language teachers' leadership

1 Pedagogical Practices: Reflexive Spaces for the Characterization of Teacher Leadership for In and Preservice Teachers.

practices of belongingness[2] both inside and outside of the classroom by exploring our life stories to bring to the surface the political, affective, and social component of ELT. We work in a public school in Bogotá, we work in different shifts (morning and afternoon), branches (A and B), and levels (Primary, Secondary, and High School Complementary Project), and we are a team. Through a Professional Training Program (PTP) we were able to share and learn more about each other, and we built a bond by caring for each other and working together.

After the PTP, in 2016, we designed a down-to-earth and an articulated syllabus addressing students' needs covering all levels (Primary, Secondary, and High School Complementary Project). There, we understood our ideas and concerns and found a shared interest in helping our students to overcome their hard living conditions. Teachers' actions to support the community turned around: looking for sponsors to improve our teaching resources, pedagogical training, and parents' involvement. Through these activities we discovered who we were and understood what we could do as individuals. There was a mutual recognition of ourselves as educators, and we began to support each other: There was an embodiment of TL[3] in each of us. We embraced TL based on ourselves as humans who belong to different settings outside of school. Our fluid TL embodiment expresses who we are as individuals and community members—it evolves and changes, in the same way we do as educators.

This first attempt to unpack the concept from an ontological perspective acknowledges how teachers exercise their TL practices of belongingness inside and outside the school, exploring their ways of being, doing, and feeling, as well as problematizing the tensions regarding TL that exist within them.

Research Interest

In the following section I will go through an exploration of the work that has already been done in relation to the concept of TL and TL in ELT (even though there is scarce research about TL in ELT). My aim is to highlight the importance of bringing TL to the ELT field and present my uncertainties towards TL drawing on the decolonial turn. I am working on a discussion about belongingness, and I am aware that there is still a gap. As a first attempt, belongingness is defined

2 Teacher Leadership Practices of Belongingness are the ways each teacher chooses to navigate school daily life under a relational perspective of being, doing, and feeling free and safe to be his/her authentic self in a given space (Grant, 2020).

3 "Embodiment" refers to feminist theory, where the body plays a key role in understanding the different relations of domination/resistance that are established: the marks of power that are traced in the body, but also the process of healing these wounds.

according to Grant (2020), Riley (2022), and Allen *et al*. (2021) as specific senses of affinity (school, place, and culture) where one feels free and safe to be one's authentic self in a given space.

Regarding TL, this concept has been conceptualized under three waves in U.S.: The first wave had to do with organizational roles and the ways in which teachers are put in positions of authority by administrators (Smylie & Denny, 1990). The second wave is based on teachers' professional knowledge, and the ways teachers are placed in roles to apply instructional knowledge as specialists (Silva *et al*., 2000). The third wave combines formal and informal roles, meaning that teachers lead both inside and outside of the classroom (Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Thus, in the last 20 years the concept of an individual leader has been replaced. TL styles have turned into a collective, task-oriented, and organizational approach, under the following leadership styles:

- Distributed (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), where leadership responsibilities are spread among teachers and administrative staff.
- Shared (Lindahl, 2008), based on a collaborative decision-making process which involves teachers and administrators.
- Transformational (Hallinger, 2003), which inspires teachers to contribute to school improvement.

Considering schools can be managed as companies sharing common principles of improvement and productivity.

TL in ELT has been discussed to explore how power in role positions fosters or inhibits teacher-leaders' performance (Shah, 2020). This hegemonic view of TL is about exercising hierarchical power to control and achieve management goals such as students' enrollment or students' performance in standardized tests and does not allow teachers to embody their own TL practices. On the other hand, Greenier & Whitehead (2016) searched for an authentic leadership model of teacher education programs, suggesting that teachers were not conscious of their classroom leadership; however, this leadership was evident in their pedagogical practices. Furthermore, Kavakli & Arslan (2019) studied the perceptions of EFL teachers as educational leaders in the Turkish EFL context, identifying goals for building teacher-leaders' capacity to achieve outcomes in language teaching and learning.

In contrast, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge by unpacking what teachers have to say about their TL practices based on their specific constructions of belongingness. It will contribute to delinking from the canonical

theorization of TL in ELT. Furthermore, it will problematize TL from a bottom-up approach where ELT teachers unveil their struggles to enact TL using their life experiences and practices. This is an attempt to unfold TL from teachers' voices, under a relational and situational perspective (unlike TL in Colombia, which has been exercised from the canonical approach of management, productivity, and improvement).

Colonial Situation Under Examination

In this section, I would like to analyze the concept of TL worldwide and TL in ELT in Colombia to problematize English teachers' leadership practices of belongingness. With this purpose in mind, it is necessary to reflect on the varied ways TL is embodied. There are two main trends regarding TL in Colombian publications: the conceptualization of TL in official education policies in Colombia, and cross-cultural perspectives towards TL. TL has been openly discussed as a professional skill one can perform; however, I would like to tackle TL from the perspective of belongingness and enlightenment, as a personal choice one makes.

Conceptualizing TL

The wide exploration of TL around the world highlights the importance of debating this concept in the Colombian educational setting. However, it is necessary to go deep into the concept of TL because it has been studied from different academic fields and perspectives, making it hard to understand and define it. In order to explore TL, I will present some relevant research articles which focus on its conceptualization.

Kahler-Viene *et al*. (2021), in the article "Exploring the concept of teacher leadership through a document analysis in the Australian context," discussed how teacher leadership is understood and conceptualized from an Australian documentary perspective spanning the national, state, regional, and local education administrative levels. Results indicated that teacher leadership is strengthened through professional and collaborative practices. Harris & Jones (2019) found that the importance of leadership is recognized as a critical factor. Furthermore, Kahler-Viene *et al*. (2021) stated that teacher practice is positively impacted by teacher leaders who influence their colleagues to take a lead in policy-making decisions. However, the definition of what constitutes teacher leadership and how it manifests across school settings remains ambiguous. Although it is clear that many teachers serve as leaders, schools have traditionally relied on a hierarchical system where leadership responsibilities appear to be clearly demarcated and reinforce the idea of the top-down approach (Harris, 2003). This contradicts

the idea that teachers play a pivotal role as agents of change through collaborative, informed decision making.

Moreover, Bradley-Levine (2018), in the article "Advocacy as a Practice of Critical TL," states that teacher advocacy is displayed in TL; TL takes place within the classroom and across the school. By advocating on behalf of students who are marginalized, teachers demonstrate a model for critical TL. Findings show the need for teachers to take on leadership roles, informal or formal, in order for personal and professional growth to take place and to improve in schools. Internal and external impediments to teachers becoming leaders make the transition from "just a teacher" to "teacher leader" difficult.

Besides, Hunzicker (2017), in her publication "From teacher to teacher leader: A conceptual model," presents conceptions of TL embracing informal and integrated approaches. According to this author, TL is a stance or a way of thinking and being, rather than a set of behaviors. As a result, understanding how teachers progress from teacher-to-teacher leader remains unclear. This article offers a visual model conceptualizing eight teachers' progression from teacher-to-teacher leader, including the factors and conditions that influenced their progress and their varying self-perceptions as teachers and as leaders. Four developmental stages of teacher leader self-perception are explored: teacher leader, developing teacher leader, situational teacher leader, and classroom teacher leader. Findings of the study indicate that TL stance precedes the actions of TL; development of teacher leader self-perception may take longer.

In addition, Wenner & Campbell (2018), in the article "Thick and thin: Variations in teacher leader identity," discuss TL identity that reveals itself in soft and strong manifestations. These authors explore the ways in which individuals participated in TL and how participation and identities— described as 'thick' and 'thin' TL identities—were shaped.

For this study, TL emerges from classroom teachers who challenge the status quo and perform actions to support students and teachers' needs to overcome adversity (Hunzicker, 2017). TL is the combination of the professional and personal choices we make in school (Kahler-Viene *et al*., 2021). It is based on our reflexivity, the community we belong to, the people we are, the pedagogical knowledge we have built, the life experiences we have had (Wenner & Campbell, 2018), and the formal or informal leadership positions we have been in (Bradley-Levine, 2018).

TL in Colombia

Colombian scholarly work regarding the conceptualization of TL in-service English teachers was taken from three articles: Pineda-Baez (2021), Fierro-Evans & Fortoul-Ollivier (2021), and Arden & Okoko (2021). Due to the lack of studies carried out in relation to this concept, no more information was available. However, the relevance of these studies and the profiling trace the first trend: the conceptualization of teacher leadership in official education policies in Colombia.

According to Pineda-Baez *et al*. (2019), the conceptualization of TL in official education policies in Colombia is scarce and has been mainly focused on the role of principals, neglecting teachers' voices and their contributions regarding school leadership. In the article "Conceptualizations of teacher leadership in Colombia: Evidence from policies," Pineda-Baez (2021) examines the concept of TL in Colombia's official education policies, using teachers' qualifications to expand the concept. The author conducted a content analysis of recruitment, selection, and evaluation of teachers. Results indicate that the concept of TL is nonexistent in Colombia and that the documents conceptualize leadership in terms of hierarchical figures, leaving aside the role of teachers in school improvement. The study identifies the importance of promoting the image of the teacher as a leader.

Furthermore, Fierro-Evans & Fortoul-Ollivier (2021), in the article "Reflexivity: An essential feature of TL in Mexico, Colombia, and Spain," discussed a comparative analysis of educational policy documents on leadership and teacher development in Spain, Colombia, and Mexico, in order to better understand the concept of TL from one of the most important elements in terms of teachers' personal and professional growth. They inquired about the relevance of teacher reflexivity in TL, especially in highly complex contexts. Their findings show that reflexivity is an appropriate category to explore the association between the international discourse on TL and the personal and professional growth that has a deep impact on teachers' performance.

For the second trend in cross-cultural perspectives towards TL, the article "Exploring cross-cultural perspectives of TL among the members of an international research team: A phenomenographic study" (Arden & Okoko, 2021) presents a phenomenographic study exploring diverse understandings and experiences of TL among 12 members of the International Study of TL research team comprised of 20 academics based in 10 countries. Phenomenographic analysis of interview artefacts revealed three broad domains of TL: 1) The school, school community, and formal education system; 2) The teacher-leader's professional self; 3) The

broader historical, sociopolitical, and global contexts of TL. The study speaks to the experience of TL as a relational phenomenon showing referential and structural components of awareness, involving personal and professional growth, advocacy, and agency as main features.

TL in Colombia is going to be addressed in this research through a journey of unveiling classroom teachers' voices from a decolonial perspective, inviting participants to unpack their life experiences and TL practices of belongingness using their reflexivity. This study aims to explore teachers' TL practices of belongingness to subvert the hierarchical TL conceptualization, under the following research questions and objectives:

Research Questions

What teacher leadership practices of belonging are embodied by English language teachers to foresee other educational possibilities?

Objectives

Main objective:

To signify teacher leadership practices of belongingness from the voices of English language teachers to envision new paths to build a school of possibilities.

Specific objectives:

- To identify English language teacher leadership practices that contribute to belongingness by subverting prescribed roles.
- To explore relationalities, actions, and new senses for being at school in which English language teachers embody belongingness.
- To make visible the actions performed by English language teachers to create possibilities for English teaching/learning otherwise.

TL has been discussed and explored from a top-down approach. In Colombia, the struggles of ELT teachers related to TL have not been problematized yet. This makes me wonder what it is like to be on the other side of TL. ELT teachers have been subjected to following policies and responding to the demands of authority roles, but what about teachers who are on both sides? Those teachers who belong to the boundaries of the school system, teachers who led inside and outside of the classroom, teachers who are doing their own actions to support others (teachers, students, families), teachers who participate, enact or resist policies, teachers who go further their responsibilities. Some teachers at this public school in Bogotá exercise leadership without having a management role. Their interest

in contributing mobilizes their agency and contributes to the discussion—what do they have to say about TL?

ELT teachers have been subjected by TL; their life experiences in TL are unseen, their leadership practices ignored. The Western narrative of TL validates a hierarchical school structure where teacher leaders such as specialists or coordinators set new ways to support students' learning and contribute to social change through shared and inspirational practices spread in the staff. However, ELT teachers have been labeled under the tag of subaltern intellectuals, as Kumaravadivelu (2016) called them, that is, teachers who do not subvert the Western ways of knowing and language and thus belong to the colonial matrix of power.

For this study, I am going to take a decolonial position to denaturalize the hegemonic forces around TL, which consider it natural and logical to understand power from a top-down approach. I am going to problematize TL otherwise, exploring from denied ELT teachers, their TL practices, and the varied TL embodiments from a belongingness perspective.

As this is a decolonial study, there are tensions and fears around the corner: I am hesitant to unveil the concept of TL practices, and it may not be enough to explore TL embodiment. Also, I am not yet sure about how to tackle the fact that TL in ELT in Colombia has not been widely discussed before. Perhaps opening my mind to new conceptualizations of TL can include local knowledges that enrich this research attempt. I am aware that TL is a colonial term, which comes with a resistance to unpacking the idea of subverting canonical conceptualizations of leadership. However, I think this is an opportunity to reflect on personal and professional paths and learn more about ourselves as people and teachers and understand a little more about our own TL practices of belongingness.

Contributions

For this section, I am going to explain the contributions to problematizing TL practices of belongingness in ELT teachers, reflecting on my personal journey. These first ideas are far from my doctoral admission research proposal initial perceptions, as they have been highly influenced by seminar discussions and readings and are still evolving:

- Exploring TL from an ontological approach enlightens new paths to embrace reflexivity and shed light on ELT teachers leaders' actions aimed at supporting students acknowledging different TL embodiments.
- TL in ELT could be a new perspective to democratize school administrations, by opening discussion spaces for all school community members to have the chance to participate and make decisions.

- ELT teacher leaders in formal and informal positions recognize teachers' actions to overcome adversity for themselves and the communities they work with.
- TL and belongingness give space for leader teachers to take a breath and put themselves aside or share the power and inspire peers to exercise their own leadership practices.
- TL advocates for equity in the school community, facing, denouncing, and intervening inequities.

To conclude, TL and belongingness in ELT looks for creating new possibilities to recognize how our actions inside and outside of the classroom matter for ourselves and our students. We are all connected, and we are part of the school community; we have the power to denounce and mobilize for social justice. This research attempts to subvert the top-down approach TL has had, resignifying TL by bringing to the discussion elements such as belongingness and leadership embodiments as well as problematizing TL under a humane angle to unveil TL practices as they happen from the angle of teacher-to-teacher reflexivity.

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English Language Teachers' Lived Experiences on Social Class-ification*

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Abstract

The exploration of school English language (EL) teachers' experiences in their teaching workplaces has mainly revolved around beliefs on effective teaching, resistance to labels, burnout, resilience, and accountability. The research agenda described in this chapter aims to disrupt this status quaestionis by exploring from a decolonial stance how EL teachers have lively experienced classificatory, dispossessing, and marginalizing acts perpetuated by school administrators' internal colonial thinking, all of which put them in vulnerable or privileging social places resulting from power disputes over the control of their multiple existence areas. This exploration intends to provide a clearer understanding of coloniality-driven relations of exploitation, domination, and conflict in ELT settings from decolonial lenses.

Keywords: EL teachers; colonial thinking; lived experiences; social classification; teachers' workplaces.

* This chapter draws on my doctoral research project at Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (DIE-UD) and offers an overview of the locus of enunciation, description of emerging trends in a review of literature (profiling), and explanation of my research interest concerning English language teachers' lived experiences and subversive actions on social classification under a decolonial stance and its contributions to education and English language teaching in Colombia.

Introduction

Hearing the voices of private and public school English language (EL) teachers regarding their experiences in their teaching sites has mainly focused on aspects such as identity construction, beliefs on effective teaching, resistance to labels, burnout, resilience, and accountability (Armenta, 2023; Ghoreyshi & Tahriria, 2021; Méndez-Rivera, 2018; Rizqi, 2017; Roohani & Dayeri, 2019; Üney & Dikilitaş, 2022). These works unveil top-down unequal power relations, carelessness, and discursive practices that downplay EL teachers' subject positionings and agentic capacities coming from different entities such as policymakers, government laws and plans, and school administrators. Nonetheless, discussions rooted in social terms involving social classification and exclusionary acts to EL teachers such as stigma, stereotypes, and discrimination are not openly reviewed in these studies. Struggles of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) female low-income teachers of color in schools, for instance, can be widely and explicitly discussed.

As far as a deep revision of literature involving trends and history—i.e., my profiling on scholarly work on social classification experiences by EL teachers—is concerned (López-Páez, 2024), little research has been conducted to explore how EL teachers have experienced the aforementioned dispossessing and exclusionary acts of social classification based on the resulting power distribution over the control of their race, gender, work/class or subjectivity/epistemology in their workplaces (Garcia-Ponce, 2020; Mackenzie, 2021; Nascimento, 2019; Neupane, 2022; Nur *et al*., 2022). Such an exploration becomes relevant in current times pervaded by neoliberal ideologies adopted by school managers, EL teachers themselves, and even students. These phenomena entail thought and discourses geared towards a new spirit of global capitalism, marketization in the English teaching industry, global power of English, English-only bilingualism plans, linguistic instrumentalism, Western certifications to prove language proficiency, and the performance measurement of native English speaking teachers versus non-native English speaking teachers (Block, 2012; Hsu, 2015; Kramsch, 2014; Kubota, 2011; Lengeling *et al*., 2014; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Park & Lo, 2012; Pennycook, 1999).

Exploring EL teachers' lived experiences on social classification also has its importance in the context of modern/colonial ideologies that impinge on English language teaching (ELT) in Colombia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Structures, institutions, and systems of power such as bilingual policies, EL institutes, schools, EL pedagogy, and EL teaching and learning identities (Castañeda-Peña, 2018; Ubaque-Casallas, 2021) have all been pervaded by the modern/

colonial matrix of power in Colombia. This Euro-USA-centric global model of power has installed different mechanisms such as social classism, globalization, whiteness and racism, patriarchalism and misogyny, embodiment, and methods that are realized in the form of L2 urban centered, English-only policies and L2 standardization, native speakerism, de-gendering, normalized bodies, and "ef-fective" L2 teaching and learning respectively (Castañeda-Peña, 2018). Such colonial devices are intended to be set as single, total, and universal. They not only exclude but obliterate the existence of those EL teachers who do not comply with such an ideal imposed by hegemonic praxis, ontic, and episteme. This thus constitutes a dispossession and coloniality of their power, being, and knowledge (De Sousa Santos, 2018; Lugones, 2008; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Quijano, 2000b).

Examining social classification lived by EL teachers at their workplaces and their political actions towards it can serve as a mechanism to both spot and denounce colonial situations and heal colonial wounds. Said investigation can allow us to unveil how modern/colonial thinking and its architecture has long impinged on L2 education in the South, how the school as an institutional body has contributed to perpetuating hierarchies following this logic, and what political actions (Colombian) EL teachers employ to re-exist, resist, and subvert the status quo in such workplaces. Likewise, taking heed of EL teachers' lived experiences of social classification over their race, gender, work/class, and subjectivities/epistemologies is relevant when there is a space for analyses with scopes of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) among these areas of existence.

Research addressing said phenomenon must be framed within different geo and bodypolitics of location and knowledge, specifically from the Global South. According to De Sousa Santos (2016), the Global South does not only entail a geographical representation referring to people living in the southern hemisphere, but a metaphor depicting such people's resistance to overcome suffering caused by global capitalism and colonialism. This metaphorical south also exists in North America and Europe representing marginalized populations such as "undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia, sexism, and Islamophobia" (De Sousa Santos, 2016, p. 19). We as researchers can profit from this type of politics to understand situated phenomena related to social classification given our historical processes of power distribution are different from those of the Western and European world.

This chapter is organized into four sections. First, I start with a short background of me and my teaching experience, from which my locus of enunciation is made explicit, making salient the presence and effects of social class-ification in my personal, academic, and professional journey. I comment on socio-economic situations that both deprived me of and led me to start working at a

prestigious Catholic private school. I also state multiple situations related to conflict relations over nativeness, in which a native speaker teacher was privileged in terms of academic workload and pay. These situations also relate to practices of exploitation due to gender classification, specifically differential treatment of male primary teachers over female ones. Likewise, events of classification based on race, focusing on the failed recruitment process of a female teacher of color, as well as control over my being, domination from students' parents, and mandatory catholic gatherings are also commented on.

Subsequently, I describe my research interest while I make explicit the colonial situations and unpack initial conceptions underlying my topic of investigation. I assert that Quijano's (2000a) theory of social classification can inform and theoretically support social classification experiences of EL teachers in their workplaces based on their resulting roles and unequal power distribution after relations of domination and exploitation over the control of their race, work/class, gender, and epistemologies. Next, I talk about the dilemmas that I have faced throughout my research topic selection and delimitation path such as the changes from the Bourdieusian (1984, 1986) notion of social class framed within critical theory to a broader social classification theory (Quijano, 2000a) under the decolonial option paradigm. Then, I draw on my research profiling work of scholarly work on social classification. There, I account for the historization and conceptualizations of the category according to different geo and body-politics of knowledge such as Black feminism, critical theory, and the decolonial project paradigms. Similar concepts such as social stratification and social place are defined in this section before unveiling the research gap in the body of literature on social classification experiences lived by EL teachers. Afterwards, I detail my research agenda to address the research voids found in the previous section.

Among the various actions in my agenda, I comment that my research will be inscribed in the decolonial option and will be set forward through border thinking lenses framed in the Global South. Through this epistemological stance, I intend to explore the lived experiences of EL teachers regarding social classification and carry out with them political actions to resist, re-exist, and contest unequal power distribution over the control of their race, gender, class, subjectivities, and epistemologies in their workplaces. Finally, I conclude with the contributions that this research work can afford within the ELT field and general education. Some of those contributions state that ELT can profit from a clearer understanding of experience-based relations of exploitation, domination, and conflict in EFL settings under decolonial lenses. These teachers' lived experiences are those that are not only remembered but embodied and may well allow them to heal wounds that possibly come from modern/colonial situations. Also,

the ELT field can identify and reflect on the barriers that EFL teachers of different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, histories, epistemologies, colors, dissidence, affiliations, and inscriptions face when teaching English in Colombia in order to take political action to subvert such status quo from their locations.

Locus of Enunciation

I was born in Ibagué, Tolima, a relatively small city compared to Bogotá, the capital. After graduating from a 2-stratum (lower middle class) public school, I enrolled in a B.A. in English at Universidad del Tolima, a public university in my hometown. Almost by the end of the degree, I started working as a part-time teacher at a private English institute to help myself pay for the last semesters and transportation, as well as to start gaining some teaching experience. Once I graduated, some acquaintances asked why I would not start to work at private schools while I prepared and waited for the government to release calls for the teacher contest in order to work full-time for state schools. However, I remember that my answer was that I would rather not work in those schools because they asked for expensive Western international proficiency test certifications (Canagarajah, 2006), on top of a degree. Many colleagues had told me about the mistreatment of teachers by supervisors and school owners, as well as the dense work environment, and these things did not happen in the English institute. Thence, I continued working in that institute for another year, even when every so often I was not assigned courses due to low enrollment.

As I had enrolled in a master's degree that year and had to have an easy-access population for my seminar tasks and research work besides helping myself financially, I decided to pay for the international proficiency test and get all the required papers to apply for an English teacher position in an upper-middle-class private school and submitted my application.

In the multi-staged recruitment process, the school managers, consisting of full-time psychologists, an academic coordinator, and the principal, a sixty-something-year-old lady, gathered with all eight applicants and started interviewing us. As this was a catholic and conservative school, just like most of the private schools in Ibagué, one of the stages dealt with general questions about family background, neighborhood, marital status, certifications, and spare time. Somehow, I was selected, along with another teacher, and overcame that filter. She was a female teacher of color (Lugones, 2014; Nascimento, 2015) who I used to come across at the university where I studied. In one of our chats during the pre-hiring phases, she told me she was there because in the private school where she worked previously school administrators decided not to renew her

eleven-month teaching contract even though she had done things right throughout the school year.

The last stage was an EFL teaching skills test and a micro-class before the school managers and six students. The day after that, one of the managers called me to tell me I had passed, and I had to start the new staff entry processes. I worked at that school for a year and a half. Every morning, all students, teachers, and managers had to gather in the hall to pray, even if some students and teachers, like me, did not like it. Afterwards, I remember we would start classes using textbooks from a Spanish publishing house (Canagarajah, 1999; López-Gopar & Sughrua, 2023) and students had to buy two books in one bimester, sometimes causing me to be left behind in content coverage. The students were well-disciplined and smart. Besides the multiple projects and extracurricular activities, tenth and eleventh graders had to attend courses for IELTS and ICFES preparation as the school was the leader in that matter in the municipality and wanted to maintain that ranking.

I loved every class with my primary students and enjoyed collecting data for my seminar tasks and research work. However, one of the negative things I observed and still remember clearly in my mind is the differential treatment the school principal had with some teachers over others. For instance, she used to praise, give good schedules, and allow early exit to the English teacher for grades ninth to eleventh, a native white male English speaker from the USA (Kumaravadivelu, 2016), who had started to work there some years before me. His wife, a female English teacher from Colombia who had been working there long before, helped him to get into the school, according to her. He did not have to attend or engage in certain activities and responsibilities. For instance, he was not told to attend the daily gathering to pray at the beginning of the shift. Nor did he have to assist primary and secondary students in the lines at the end of the shift before they were picked up by their parents or school minivans. Despite the lack of obligations in his shift, this native speaker teacher was paid even more than the rest of the teachers. Usually, many of us nonnative speaker teachers criticized these privileges that the school administrators gave him. Unfortunately, we would just keep quiet as we knew the school administrators were the heads and bosses, and our job could be at risk if we denounced something related to this issue of native vs. non-native speaker teachers.

Another differential treatment I noticed by the principal, the academic coordinator, and even the psychologist was related to male vs. female teachers (Acker, 1988). On the one hand, female teachers, either from primary or secondary grades, had to assist students more often than male teachers. They were explicitly told to be with students during recess, help them with their meals, and organize

them in lines after recess was over. Ironically, though, they would be subjected to plenty of scolding and were told off over things related to students' behavior, and personal presentation. As for primary and preschool female teachers, they were given an even larger workload. It is worth noting that there were no male teachers in preschool. Female primary and preschool teachers were mandated to lead more projects than secondary male teachers, as well as take students to the restrooms and assist them in the dressing room after the swimming lessons, for instance.

Male teachers, on the other hand, were not told to do such tasks. We were not told off much and the sporadic scoldings we received were more related to academic issues such as content coverage and paperwork. In general, our tasks were limited to content teaching rather than caregiving work. These unequal power distributions and relations led me to reflect that the school principles of equality, justice, and an environment of nondiscrimination did not match the inner power dynamics that the teaching staff was faced with.

As for my direct case, I felt that two aspects made my work environment heavier and affected my being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). On the one hand, I was regularly told to cut my curly hair even though I did not consider it to be long (Fanon, 2008), as the school coordinator thought it was a bad example for primary and secondary students and would somehow influence their haircuts. Nonetheless, I started to cut it shorter as I considered it was a prestigious school that had to maintain its status, and I was part of it. On the other hand, in personalized parents' meetings, the parents seemed to want me to favor their children and tell me how to do things. Even though I was relatively new to the school, I started to think that they said these things to all teachers, taking advantage of their socioeconomic status and their positions as customers of the school (Nur *et al*., 2022).

I had to leave the school as I needed time to finish my thesis, and once I graduated from the master's degree, I started to work at the same university where I work now. However, I still carry in my memory and body the nice and not-very-nice experiences of my previous job (Alerby *et al*., 2014).

These moments in my life allowed me to figure out that (at least) in private schools not everything revolves around socioeconomic matters. The construction and negotiation of our identities is not solely related to social class, but our gender, race, and subjectivity positionings are also contested (Garcia-Ponce, 2020). Usually, the experiences that teachers have to tell have been silenced, and many teachers have been deprived of denouncing (Nascimento, 2019). In fact, there surely are many teachers like me who unfortunately did not do anything in the face of those actions.

These situations led me to pose my locus of enunciation, that is, to think, speak, and produce knowledge from the space where I am located (Mignolo, 2007). The actions in this politics of location allow me to speak from my body, which is marked by history, experience, and conflict (Menezes de Souza, 2019). Thence, my locus of enunciation is specifically that of a former private school teacher affected by the school administrators' modern/colonial thinking that classified (EL) teachers over different areas of their existence (Quijano, 2000a) such as race, gender, work/class, and subjectivities. Following this enunciation, I undertake the decolonial option to engage with teachers who have been socially classified in their teaching workplaces in Colombia over their aforementioned areas of existence.

As part of my pedagogizations involving praxis, reflection, relationality, and action (Castañeda-Peña & Méndez-Rivera, 2022; Walsh, 2015), my actional standpoint is to unveil and provide political actions to subvert differential treatment led by hierarchies and classifications based on exploitation and domination over the aforementioned areas of existence. These actions are not intended to empower them but to collaboratively work with them towards processes of reflection and discussions that allow them to re-exist and contest exclusionary acts based on a modern/colonial-driven unequal power distribution (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

While it is important to hear the voices and lived experiences of EL teachers, I consider it is also paramount to take heed of the counteracting political actions of teachers against hierarchization and unequal power distribution. This is done within relations of exploitation and domination intended to subvert and resist such domination. This endeavor entails an inquiry into the roles and places in the control of different areas of their existence, such as class, gender, race, and subjectivity. Finally, it is equally vital to reflect on the fact that we as EL teachers surely have many things to tell and show based on the experiences we have lived in our teaching work settings as well as to investigate on the aware or unaware identity transit they go through while being dominated and exploited in their workplaces.

Now, for the sake of itemizing my locus of enunciation as a researcher, I feel that, from now on, I must explicitly state the dilemmas I went through as an initial doctorate student with myriads of tensions and uncertainties (Méndez-Rivera, 2020). When I first entered this doctorate in education, majoring in ELT, my research proposal dealt with the aim of examining EFL students' negotiation of social class identities in the EFL classroom. My purpose was to unveil how hidden class-based inequalities and struggles are reproduced in the classroom considering Bourdieusian (1986) notions of class.

This initial research interest emerged after finding out how this socioeconomically stratified world is pervaded by globalization and neoliberal ideologies (Block, 2012; Norton & De Costa, 2018). I was interested in unveiling how these mindsets, practices, and discourses based on marketization and individual competitiveness affected ELT material as well as teachers' and students' subject positions. Thus, I conducted the abovementioned profiling exercise (i.e., a deep review of literature) aimed at determining how social class was conceptualized, how class identities were addressed in the ELT field, how EL students and educators negotiated their class identities, and, ultimately, how such class subject positions impacted EL teaching and learning.

Crucially, though, several events happened causing not only the scope and conceptualization of my research interest, but also the paradigm I was standing in, to shift. One element that influenced these changes was that over the course of the first and second semesters, after being exposed to my teachers' seminar talks and discussions, the reading materials based on decoloniality and postcoloniality, and the conclusions of my profiling work, I pondered that I was undertaking social class under Western epistemologies. I discovered that the social class theories, concepts, and research body I was drawing on were highly pervaded and put forward by Euro-USA-centric body-geopolitics of knowledge. Thence, I started to feel that embracing a decolonial turn would be appropriate and could afford my research work the shift in epistemological stance that was needed.

Another phenomenon that motivated my shift of paradigm and body-geopolitics of knowledge of my research topic was remembering my lived experiences back at the private school I mentioned in the section about my locus of enunciation. I realized that such events did not merely emerge out of discursive practices mediated by unequal power relations (oppression) due to hierarchical positions between school administrators and teachers; rather, they were colonial situations (Grosfoguel, 2011), as the characteristics of such administrators' treatment, ideologies, decisions, and discourses based on oppression/exploitation followed a modern logic and a global racialized Euro-USA-centric capitalist model of power (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000b).

These events in institutions such as schools have long been commonly researched under the critical theory paradigm. Studies of this kind usually link these phenomena to power structures, oppression, and social inequalities. They have not been undertaken by scratching the actual colonial racialized, genderized, and whitening roots and motivations underlying teachers' classification based on unequal power distributions which end up affecting their identities in ELT settings and the way they contest such domination (Walsh, 2015).

Scholars addressing unequal power relations, critical pedagogy, and social justice under critical theory lenses, for instance, have often failed to realize, acknowledge, and address hidden dynamics related to practices of racialization and genderization operating under a colonial matrix of power (Walsh, 2015). Said coloniality-driven actions can sometimes be the base and motive of often-visible issues related to inequality, power relations, and identity and should thus be examined in depth.

Bearing these situations in mind, my research agendas would make a big shift. I would not merely be exploring the social class identities negotiation of EL students or teachers. I realized that what I actually wanted to investigate was how colonial legacies impinge on ELT and what political actions agents undertake to subvert such hierarchies and social classifications based on their gender, race, work/class, and subjectivities/epistemologies (Quijano, 2000a). Specifically, I aim to investigate how we EL teachers have been classified based on different areas of our existence and what political actions we engage in to contest such classifications and unequal power distribution (roles) in the control of such areas within our teaching. All these processes are to be carried out from a decolonial and intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1991; Mignolo, 2011) since, as stated above, the critical theory paradigm cannot account for the racialized, gendered, classed, and epistemicidal practices of classification set forth by a modern/colonial logic and architecture.

These shifts in my research work were not without their costs. First, it is clear that we humans are sometimes reluctant and uncertain about leaving our comfort zone and certainties. I started the first semester with an already fixed and seemingly final idea of what I wanted to investigate, supported by critical theory, specifically Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) notion of class. But then I had moved to a different genealogy of knowledge—the decolonial turn. Furthermore, throughout the seminar encounters I used to see how my classmates were advancing in their concepts, categories, and objectives, whereas I was just starting to read and understand the discourses, epistemologies, and ontologies of decolonial thinkers; however, with my endeavor, along with the help and feedback of my teachers Pilar Méndez, Harold Castañeda, and Carmen Guerrero, I am strengthening the understanding, development, and scope of this research interest and problem.

Research Interest

Bearing in mind the aforementioned locus of enunciation based on my personal, working, and research experience, I draw on Aníbal Quijano's (2000a) theory of social classification under a decolonial stance and border thinking. On the one hand, the decolonial option is a framework developed by pioneer thinkers

such as María Lugones, Ramón Grosfoguel, Aníbal Quijano, Catherine Walsh, Walter Mignolo, Gloria Anzaldúa, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Arturo Escobar, and Enrique Dussel. This framework is geopolitically located in the Global South, specifically Latin America and the Caribbean, and emerged as an action-oriented option to the rhetoric of modernity (development, novelty, salvation, and progress), as well as to Marxist-dialectical materialism (Mignolo, 2011). In this sense, it seeks epistemological justice by acknowledging that just as there are different cosmologies, there are more ways of being and producing knowledge that can be embodied and representational—i.e., treating material symbols and land as part of humanity as well as prioritizing affect and practice over facts, positivism, rational cause/effect explanations, norms, systems, and separation of the known from the knower, of nature from society, and of reason from body (Canagarajah, 2023; Quijano, 2000b).

Decoloniality intends to confront and delink from hegemonic universalized Western and Eurocentric knowledge production, such as normative social sciences like anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and (applied) linguistics. These delinking actions ultimately aim to emancipate subalterns from the logic of modernity/coloniality in order to allow them to think as well as produce and distribute knowledge outside of the conditions set by its hegemonic forces.

Decoloniality thus exists because of coloniality since the sixteenth century when the colonial matrix of power was established (Quijano, 2000b). Coloniality refers to the long-standing patterns of control and domination by the modern world system, a new model of global power that developed after the colonization of America (Mignolo, 2009; Quijano, 2000b). This system brought about Eurocentric and Western capitalist models of subjectivity, economy, authority, and knowledge intended to be totalizing and universal. It depicted non-European (Amerindian, African, Asian) civilization, aesthetics, reason, and knowledge as past, inferior, and primitive knowledge that needed to be modernized and saved in order to bring about progress, novelty, and development. Coloniality and modernity are then inextricably interdependent.

This modern/colonial narrative classifies peoples into different places of value according to their "level" of ontology (existence; being) and epistemology (knowledge). According to this narrative, for instance, White European heterosexual Catholic individuals are placed on the top of a social class pyramid where Indigenous males, Black females, or African slaves are at the bottom. The space that exists between the former holding power and the latter with subaltern marginalized positioning is called *colonial difference* (Mignolo, 2009).

Mignolo (2011) insists that decoloniality is not to be taken as an alternative modernity but as an alternative to modernity and as one of several options that

can be embraced by "all those who find in the option(s) a response to his or her concern and who will actively engage, politically and epistemologically, to advance projects of epistemic and subjective decolonization and in building communal futures" (p. 28).

On the other hand, following decolonial research perspectives, border thinking is "an epistemology from a subaltern perspective" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 71). These epistemic processes emerge in the context of coloniality in order to resist and respond to Euro-USA-centric modern/colonial thinking, domination, and orientation to knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2011). Thus, by thinking from the outside of the modern world system, I intend to denounce how EL teachers are classified within ELT, specifically in teaching work settings that follow a modern/colonial logic. These denunciations are accompanied by political actions such as collaborative discussions and reflections geared towards resistance, re-existence, and contestation to hierarchies and classifications based on colonial relations of domination and conflict over their areas of existence.

According to Quijano (2000a), social classification refers to the historical conflicts for power relation distribution over the control of areas of social existence such as work, sex, subjectivity, and authority. Power distribution from this perspective is not pregiven by nature, but constituted by relations of exploitation, domination, and conflict. These relations are formed out of the victories or defeats in people's disputes over the control of the areas of social existence.

Under this perspective, I conceive of social classification as the resulting roles and power distribution bestowed to individuals (EL teachers, in this case) after disputes and relations of exploitation, dominance, and conflict over the control of their gender, race, work/class, and subjectivities/epistemologies at their workplaces. Within that power distribution, teachers end up being socially classified differently. These classifications construct social differences. The resulting roles of teachers in the control of their areas of existence based on relations of domination, exploitation, and conflict (disputes for power), though, are not static or ahistorical. Teachers can be socially classified, declassified, and reclassified. In other words, they can have different roles and places in the control of their areas of existence in particular historical times and spaces, such as, for example, ELT settings.

This theory was set out as a counterpart of the Eurocentric theory of social classes. The notion of social class outlined by Marx and historical materialism only accounted for one area of social existence (work and classes). This theory was based on eighteenth and nineteenth century capitalist European society's experience and thoughts about their only differences of power, that is, people's

roles in the control of modes of production and in the control of authority/the state, both of which served world capitalism.

Social class theory was thus reductionist, ahistorical, positivist, and naturalist (Quijano, 2000a). It was reductionist as it did not account for the other areas of social existence wherein power relations are conformed, i.e., the primacy status of relations of production was the base of all power relations. It was ahistorical as it did not take into account specific individuals' social classes in specific historical times, but rather static, totalized, and based on European thinking; it was positivist as it was merely based on empirical, scientific evidence and rational cause/effect explanations for power distribution processes; and it was naturalist given the fact that people were supposed to be classified according to innate characteristics and not as a result of disputes over the control of social areas.

The theory of social classification was developed after setting forth the analysis of colonial/modern Eurocentric capitalism. This theory intends to better conceptualize the classification of people around the idea of race within this new global Eurocentric capitalist model of power after the sixteenth century when America was constituted (Quijano, 2000b). However, one of my main arguments is that in present times, schools, and institutions that still follow the modern/colonial racialized capitalist model of power help perpetuate hierarchical power distribution among EL teachers, making them fulfill different roles and take different places based on conflicting relations of exploitation and domination over the control of gender (sex), class (work), and subjectivity (knowledge and race). It is this differential power distribution that socially classifies them.

It is worth noting at this point that I do not intend to adopt the theory as a whole but rather make a delinking move. I intend to re-semanticize the term *sex* since, as Lugones (2008) argues, "Quijano implies a patriarchal and heterosexual understanding of the disputes over control of sex, its resources, and products" (p. 78). In other words, Quijano addresses gender from a modern capitalist Eurocentric perspective which downplays the struggles and power of colonized women (of color) as well as sexually dissident women.

I also intend to employ intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) among the aforementioned areas of existence for which EL teachers dispute control. This action is carried out to avoid the homogeneity of a separate categorical analysis that fosters the invisibility of dominated victimized teachers and entails a dominant representation in the category, namely the hierarchy among groups.

Categorical logic, that is, the separate analysis of categories such as Black, low-income, Indigenous, or female, perpetuates homogeneity, selects as norm the privileged actor in the dichotomy of the category, and distorts the phenomena

that are in between and thus not clearly seen (Lugones, 2008). In other words, if I were to separately analyze, on the one hand, EL teachers' social classification based on the category of work/class—whose dominant actor entails the typical middle-class White heterosexual male—and, on the other hand, the classification based on the category of subjectivities/epistemologies—whose dominant actor entails modern/colonial thought—I would be missing how working poor Black homosexual female teachers who generate knowledge based on southern Indigenous thought are socially classified in their workplaces, which are ultimately the entities or phenomena that exist in the intersection.

Research Profiling

Considering all the shifting events depicted in the section about my locus of enunciation, I conducted a profiling exercise (López-Páez, 2024), that is, a deep revision of literature, taking into account these paradigm shifts. This examination of scholarly work on social classification allowed me to see that social classification has been conceptualized in different terms and under different geopolitics of knowledge. For instance, social classification is conceptualized under the critical theory paradigm as one of the foundational principles of social life and processes of naming the world in which language, law, and the state play a key role (Bourdieu, 1986). In this process, words and signs play a key role as social actors utilize them contemptuously as a device to construct other social objects. Thence, individuals have historically felt the necessity to classify themselves and others given the long-lasting labels assigned to them by top stakeholders such as law and nation-builders; in this sense, the state is the most powerful classifier. This desire to form social groups and classes leads to classification struggles for symbolic power comprising cultural, economic, and social capital in a determined field. Research studies under this Bourdieusian tradition in the ELT field are mostly qualitative and conducted in the USA and UK. This research body is framed through sociocultural approaches to examine the structure-agency dichotomy, students, and teachers' negotiation of class subject positions and struggles for symbolic capital (Hunt & Seiver, 2017; Kanno & Vandrick, 2014; Sommers, 2007; Oza *et al*., 2022; Vandrick, 2014).

Under this critical theory paradigm, a closely related—yet more ancient—term is that of social stratification. Marx (1972) argues that social stratification is created after the emergence of and struggle between two different economic groups of people with distinct relationships to the means of production. One class of people owns productive property (the bourgeoisie) and the other is comprised of those with non-ownership of capital who work for others (the proletariat). This unequal control over modes and forces of production (stratification)

leads to exploitation rather than a collective achievement of societal goals and results in class struggles and revolution. Not surprisingly, in my profiling exercise, I could not account for research studies examining how EL teachers are socially classified according to their relations of production.

Unlike Marx, Weber (1968) noted that the division of society was based on more than just people's ownership or non-ownership of capital. Instead, stratification comprised the existence of different communities that share distinct levels of the dimensions of class (a person's economic income), status (a person's prestige and honor), and political power (a person's accomplishment of goals despite oppositions) within the same community due to unequal power distribution. This entails that within the same community, small groups are formed according to the ranks they share in terms of class, status, and power. Interestingly, though, little to no research has been conducted to analyze EL teachers' social classification in their teaching work settings under a Weberian or Marxist perspective.

A term that may resemble and supplement the absence of the concept of social classification is that of "social place," which is greatly employed in Black feminist thought (flores, 2021; Lozano, 2010; Lugones, 2008; Kilomba, 2019; Ribeiro, 2017). Social place has been increasingly undertaken in the past two decades and has largely been conceptualized under decolonial and border thinking lenses as the place that women of color—or the other of the other—occupy in society. According to the modern/colonial White Catholic capitalist heteronormative patriarchal thinking, these others do not have a place of talk (locus of enunciation) and occupy an excluded social place from which the modern/colonial individual can profit. Collins (1986) refers to the Other as the "outsider within," and argues that in the social pyramid, White heterosexual men are on the top. Below them are White women, followed by Black men, and, finally, Black women at the bottom. This thus leaves Black lesbian women annulled and obliterated (Doctorado Institucional en Educación sede UPN, 2023). Although there is, to the best of my knowledge based on my profiling work, no research exploring EL teachers' experiences of social classification under this framework, scholarly work dealing with social place has been generally conducted in the Global South. It exhorts Black feminist analytic frameworks to contest racism and exclusionary practices as well as to disrupt whitening pedagogies while subverting modern/colonial capitalist heteronormative thinking (Kilomba, 2016; Ribeiro, 2017).

Finally, social classification under the decolonial paradigm is relatively more recent than under other paradigms. Since the beginning of this century, it has been conceptualized as unequal power distribution based on relations of exploitation/domination/conflict, leading to socially classifying peoples according

to their final roles in that power dispute (Quijano, 2000a). This resulting unequal distribution of population creates categories that in turn constitute hierarchies (De Sousa Santos, 2018). This colonial-driven, power-centered conception of social classification has lately been shared by Mignolo (2016), who adds a colonial difference component, arguing that such classifications are organized by the codification of differences between conquerors and the conquered and presuppose a naturalization and hierarchization of such differences.

Several studies in the Global South dealing with decoloniality have examined the modern/colonial architecture, ideologies, and tensions that still impinge on the ELT field, specifically affecting teacher education (Fandiño-Parra, 2021; Granados-Beltrán, 2016), ELT pedagogies (Carvajal-Medina *et al*., 2022; Castañeda-Peña & Méndez-Rivera, 2022; Ubaque-Casallas, 2021), and teachers' knowledge (Castañeda-Londoño, 2021;). Although it was not directly part of their agendas and purposes, none of these studies have delved into how EL teachers have experienced social classification due to their race, class, gender, and subjectivities, as well as their actions to subvert such colonial acts.

Figuring out EL teachers' lived experiences in terms of social classification in their teaching work settings seems like an overlooked and blurry research topic under different paradigms and traditions. Thence, as part of this study's research agenda, I intend to address such voids in research by exploring under a decolonial paradigm the lived experiences of EL teachers regarding social classification in their teaching labor settings and unveiling the political actions they utilize to subvert that status quo. The working question guiding my research is: *How do EL teachers navigate day-to-day social class-ification in their workplaces?*

According to Alerby *et al*. (2014), a lived experience deals with more than merely bringing back memories; it deals with showing, recalling, and enacting what we have ingrained in our body. These experiences are more deeply marked both in our memories and our bodies as a result of dispute and resistance to power. In this sense, the types of teachers' experiences that I wish to delve into are those that are not only remembered but embodied. Such practices may well allow them to heal wounds that possibly come from a modern/colonial situation. It is worth noting that I will employ storytelling in order to carry out the aforementioned healing actions.

As explained earlier, this research work will be set forward through border thinking lenses as it intends to generate knowledge opposing modern/colonial thought and is geopolitically located in the Global South (Mignolo, 2002). One of the border thinking actions is conducting research stages and establishing objectives from the perspective of the subject-teachers. In other words, rather than inquiring about the teachers, I will explore with and from their lived experiences

aspects related to how they have been socially classified due to their gender, race, class, and subjectivities, including their epistemologies. Moreover, as noted earlier, I will employ intersectionality to avoid the homogeneity of separate categorical analysis that invisibilizes the struggles of dominated teachers and entails the dominant representation of the category. With this intersectional work, I will also unveil the ways in which teachers are differentially classified socially in more than one area of existence.

This research also intends to perform delinking (Mignolo, 2007) in two ways. The first entails delinking from modern/colonial ways of doing research and moving towards a geo- and body-politics of knowledge representing a decolonial epistemic shift when approaching a decolonial social classification theory, instead of Eurocentric theories of social class. Secondly, within the same epistemological paradigm shift, I intend to sub-delink from Quijano's theory of social classification, as explained earlier, by rehumanizing and replacing Quijano's (2000a) original terms with people's areas of social existence, such as the preference of the term *gender* over *sex*.

Contributions

This study has the potential to contribute to not only the ELT field along with teacher education programs, but also education in Colombia in general. To begin with, ELT can benefit from this work by obtaining a clearer understanding of relations of exploitation, domination, and conflict in EFL settings under decolonial lenses. Furthermore, the delinking from social class theories undertaken by Eurocentric modern/colonial thinking in which one category such as social class is solely examined, for instance, disrupts the Western and Eurocentric body-geo-politics of knowledge. This can add to the research body on L2 education and decoloniality, intersectionality, and border thinking.

In the same fashion, this work contributes to the field adopting a decolonial stance by unveiling the legacies of a colonial matrix of power that identifies differences with inequalities and naturalizes hierarchization of such differences. It can help identify the barriers that EFL teachers of different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, histories, epistemologies, colors, dissidence, affiliations, inscriptions face in teaching English. It also helps to identify how these barriers can be overcome in order to strive for more inclusive and equitable pedagogical strategies for teaching English. Furthermore, this work informs school managers on how teachers are classified and how hierarchies operate within institutions wherein modern/colonial organization and architecture are still present.

Finally, this work can contribute to shedding light on how EFL teachers' subjectivity is manufactured within Colombian EFL. It can unveil teachers' political actions to subvert, negotiate, and resist relations of exploitation and domination. It can also unveil the identity transition the teachers went through, perception of their selves, and subject positions in their EFL teaching setting.

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Feeling Emotions in English Language Teacher Education: Towards the Recognition of the Emotional Approach*

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Abstract

This chapter advances an emotional turn in English Language Teacher Education from a Global South perspective. Through "Amelia's" narrative, it argues that emotions shape teacher identity and should not be merely managed. A decolonial lens reveals how institutional norms silence emotions, while Latin American research often overlooks teachers' emotional experiences. A selective review contrasts dominant cognitive/emotional-labor models with sociocultural and critical approaches, exposing gaps in embodiment, power, and mentoring. The chapter introduces "Emotionland": a mentoring framework and inclusive pedagogy that validates emotions, fosters empathy and resilience, and repositions emotions as central, embodied, and political elements in teacher education.

Keywords: decoloniality; ELT; mentoring; student-teachers; teacher emotions.

* This chapter draws on my doctoral research that looks into the relationship between emotions and language teacher education at undergraduate level. This research proposal was approved by the Consejo Académico del Doctorado en Educación (CADE) at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

There is no Wonderland... Just Land

Once upon a time, in a land filled with bustling schools and eager young minds, there lived a student-teacher named Amelia. She embarked on her pedagogical practicum, with dreams of making a difference in the lives of her students (she was born to teach). However, within the depths of her being, a storm of emotions raged, seeking support and understanding.

Amelia's heart beat incessantly, its rhythm a constant reminder of the weight she carried. Each day, as she entered the classroom, the expectations and challenges weighed heavily upon her shoulders. Sometimes, the joy she felt while witnessing her students' growth and curiosity provided a respite from the confusion within.

But there were moments when the burden seemed overwhelming, threatening to engulf her entirely. Behind her shy smile, Amelia concealed the hidden struggles that plagued her soul (she was raped, but no one knew). She longed for her mentors to see beyond the facade, to recognize the silent cries for validation and support that echoed in her heart.

The demands of her role seemed to drown out Amelia's voice, leaving her feeling unheard and unseen. She yearned for her mentor teachers to look beyond her ability to take charge of the classroom and understand the depths of her emotions. Then, she spoke and exposed her pain, but she was ignored, rejected, and silenced. What she needed was not just guidance on lesson plans and teaching techniques, but a compassionate hand to guide her through the labyrinth of her own feelings.

If only her mentors had taken the time to truly see her, to acknowledge the battles she fought within, everything could have been different. A simple act of validation could have lifted the weight from her shoulders, enabling her to embrace her vulnerabilities and grow from her experiences.

Amelia often wondered what it would be like if her mentor teachers had acknowledged her emotions, if they had created an environment where her struggles were welcomed and supported. In that alternate reality, her journey would have been filled with open conversations, shared wisdom, and a sense of camaraderie.

It was in the absence of this validation that Amelia found solace in the innocent gazes of her students. Their genuine curiosity and unspoken empathy provided a sanctuary where she felt understood, even without the words to express her inner concern. In their eyes, she saw the potential for a different kind of education—one that nurtured emotional recognition and validation alongside academic growth.

Amelia's story serves as a poignant reminder that a teacher's journey is not just about imparting knowledge, but also about fostering an environment of empathy and understanding. It is in acknowledging and recognizing the emotions and struggles of student-teachers that teachers can thrive, creating a nurturing space where educators can grow, heal, and flourish.

And so, as Amelia continued her path, she made a promise to herself: to be the mentor she had yearned for, the advocate of emotional recognition and validation that she had needed. In her own classroom, she would foster an environment where her students' emotions would be embraced, where their struggles would be seen and supported.

Amelia's journey became a catalyst for change, a reminder to all that validation and understanding can transform the lives of those who walk the path of education.

Introduction: When I Saw the Land...

After reading Amelia's story it is relevant to point out that it is the main source of inspiration to start researching student-teachers' emotions mainly in the English Language Teaching field. Hence, this chapter aims to critically examine the role of emotions in English Language Teaching (ELT) and emphasizes the need for a decolonization of emotions within the Latin American and Global South contexts.

The motivation behind this research interest arises from three distinct sources. Firstly, drawing upon my previous research experiences, I have come to recognize that the preparation of student-teachers often tends to overlook their authentic identities, such as their race, gender, and emotions, what they think about their own processes of becoming teachers (Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre-Hernández, 2018), among other essential aspects. This dispossession of their genuine identities highlights the need to delve into the intricate relationship between emotions and identity formation in language teacher education.

Secondly, as part of my doctoral studies, I aspire to contribute to the ELT community by emphasizing the crucial role of emotions as a significant dimension of language student-teachers' beings. By shedding light on the emotional aspects of their professional development, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of language teacher education and contribute to the enhancement of teacher training programs.

Lastly, through a thorough research profiling exercise, it has become evident that there is a notable gap in recognizing emotions as a fundamental component that shapes the identities of student-teachers as well as how those emotions have been dispossessed of the student-teacher's bodies.

Existing literature in the field of language teacher identity studies predominantly focuses on emotions from a social-cognitive perspective (Goetz *et al*., 2006; Spackman & Miller, 2008; Sutton, 2004), emphasizing the regulation, treatment, or management of emotions (Jiang *et al*., 2016; Lavy & Eshet, 2018) to ensure positive student responses. However, there is a growing body of research that advocates for the inclusion of the emotional turn within the realm of applied linguistics, thereby acknowledging emotions as sociocultural constructions that significantly influence teacher identity formation (Benesch, 2016).

In the passages presented in this chapter, a blend of narrative and academic discourse will illustrate my personal journey as a mentor-teacher and the growing importance I place on recognizing and embracing emotions in the field of ELT. It highlights the need to move beyond existing literature and advocates for a new perspective that acknowledges the fundamental role of emotions in ELT, enabling us to see the essence of the individual behind the teacher.

Subtitles are used throughout this text, employing metaphors that depict an ideal land to inhabit (where emotions are conceived as a whole). These metaphors serve to illustrate the personal journey of myself and some student-teachers, as well as the role of ELT in shaping our teaching methods and identities.

This chapter is divided into several sections, beginning with "There is no wonderland… just land." This section delves into my fascination with exploring emotions and recognizing the individual behind the teacher. Here, I share my perspective and discuss the connection between teachers and their emotions under the lenses of my own experience.

Continuing along this theme, the next section, titled "And that land becomes mine," acknowledges how my locus of enunciation has influenced my development as a teacher and the responsibility I bear towards those who are also aspiring to become teachers. It is more than just a personal narrative; it represents the stories of those who have struggled to enter the teaching profession and whose voices have been unheard. Additionally, this section delves into theories concerning emotions and the role they play in education.

The subsequent section is named "But the land belongs to the ones who conquered it; how do we release it?" This part aims to highlight how emotions have been rendered invisible or misplaced, exposing how the perception of emotions as either negative or positive has been perpetuated through coloniality, as well as the need to address emotions in order to foster well-being in others. Emotions have become normalized and taken for granted, while theories often separate the mind and body, neglecting the interconnectedness of these aspects.

In the section titled "The explorations the land has passed through," a concise literature review on research about emotions is presented, particularly focusing on how the ELT community has approached this topic. It serves as a precursor to the subsequent section.

Finally, as part of my agenda, I propose the title "But I want a different land; *E*motionland." This section delves into specific concerns, tensions, and contributions that have arisen from a decolonial perspective, where emotions play a fundamental role in the process of being and becoming an English language teacher.

And that Land becomes mine...

Amelia's tale was mine and surely the story behind many student-teachers. I lived it by myself, since the only support I had at the time was my family. However, thanks to that experience I became aware of the importance of recognizing and accepting emotions on this path to becoming an English language teacher.

As a teacher educator, I have had the privilege of being deeply involved in various situations and contexts that have allowed me to grow and develop a keen awareness of the circumstances faced by student-teachers on a daily basis. When reflecting on my own experiences, I am reminded of Amelia, a student-teacher whose pain of being ignored resonated with me. This particular life story served as a catalyst for my own personal and professional growth, and it reinforced the need for me to recognize the intricate landscape of emotions that student-teachers often face as they embark on their journey to becoming English language teachers.

Amelia's experience of being ignored brought to light the underlying emotional challenges that many student-teachers encounter. It made me realize that these individuals grapple with a myriad of emotions such as pain, distress, concern, joy, and happiness throughout their journey.

However, these emotions are often hidden away, particularly the negative ones, as there is a prevailing notion that teachers should project an image of stoicism and emotional neutrality (De Ruiter *et al*., 2021). Consequently, this emotional suppression (in my view) can lead to frustration, disagreement, laziness, and a poor perception of oneself and the teaching profession.

To understand the role of emotions in the field of education, it is crucial to delve into the complex nature of human emotional experiences. Emotion is a multifaceted phenomenon that has been extensively studied by researchers and scholars (LeDoux, 2012). However, due to the vast range of emotions and their diverse manifestations, arriving at a single comprehensive definition is challenging.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the different perspectives and research interests within the study of emotions, it is important to establish clear definitions. Campos-Flores & Takwani (2022) have proposed several theories of emotion that provide valuable insights into this area of study. For example, sociocultural theories suggest that emotions are shaped by cultural norms, which influence how they are expressed and interpreted (Tsai, 2019). Cognitive theories, on the other hand, emphasize the role of thoughts and beliefs in shaping emotional experiences (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 2014). Physiological theories focus on bodily responses as the cause of emotional experiences (Olson *et al*., 2020), while neurological theories suggest that brain activity plays a significant role in generating emotional responses (Zatarain-Cabada *et al*., 2023). Finally, emotional geographies are presented as a bridge that connects an individual's subjective experiences to the external world, shaping their perception of space, time, and place (Gordon *et al*., 2010).

This chapter draws on the idea that while these theories contribute to our understanding of emotions, there is a notable gap in recognizing and acknowledging emotions within the context of ELT. The human aspect of emotions and their connection to student-teachers' personal identities and their being should be central in their teacher preparation programs. Student-teachers are more than just vessels of knowledge; they are complex human beings with a wide range of emotions. Then, being aware of this gap, I may say that this land becomes mine. This is something I would like to explore deeply. The next lines are some thoughts that come to my mind when portraying the idea of this ideal land, the one that I have been following for the last few years.

Integrating emotions into the preparation of future English language teachers has numerous benefits. First and foremost, it allows student-teachers to develop a deeper self-awareness and emotional intelligence, which are crucial for effective teaching and student engagement (Richards, 2020). By acknowledging and exploring their own emotions, student-teachers can better understand the emotions experienced by their students, fostering a more empathetic and supportive learning environment.

I believe that recognizing the emotional landscape of student-teachers is crucial for understanding the complexities they navigate throughout their educational journey. Emotions can significantly impact their engagement in the learning process, classroom dynamics, and ultimately their effectiveness as future educators. By acknowledging and valuing their emotional experiences, we can create a supportive and empathetic environment that nurtures their personal growth and professional development.

Understanding the emotional dimensions of student-teachers requires delving into the depths of their individual stories, aspirations, and struggles. Each student-teacher carries their unique emotional baggage, influenced by personal backgrounds, cultural contexts, and previous educational experiences. By acknowledging and embracing this emotional richness, we can empower student-teachers to harness their emotions as a catalyst for positive change in their classrooms and communities (López, 2020).

In essence, recognizing student-teachers as complex human beings with a wide range of emotions is pivotal in fostering their holistic development. By appreciating their emotional experiences and providing spaces for reflection and support, we enable them to cultivate emotional intelligence, empathy, and resilience; qualities that will not only benefit them as individuals but also enhance their effectiveness as compassionate and empathetic educators.

Furthermore, incorporating emotions into teacher education can help student-teachers develop strategies to cope with the emotional challenges they may encounter in their teaching careers. This includes addressing issues such as burnout, stress, and the emotional demands of working with diverse student populations. By equipping student-teachers with the necessary tools to navigate their own emotions, they are better prepared to handle the emotional complexities inherent in the teaching profession (Ji *et al.*, 2022).

Recognizing and addressing the emotional realities of student-teachers is essential in teacher education programs. By acknowledging the complex and multifaceted nature of emotions, we can better support student-teachers in their journey to becoming English language teachers. Integrating emotions into teacher education not only enhances the emotional being of student-teachers but also equips them with the necessary skills to create nurturing and inclusive learning environments for their future students and acceptance of who they are as teachers and human beings. As teacher educators, it is our responsibility to foster a holistic approach that values the emotional being of student-teachers, empowering them to embrace their emotions and become compassionate and effective educators.

But the Land Belongs to the Ones who Conquered It; How Do We Release It?

In the realm of ELT, the colonial legacy has left an indelible mark on the understanding and treatment of emotions. The role of emotions has been reduced to a fragmented and limited one, confined to being merely the effect of knowledge transmission and what it conveys (Richards, 2020). However, it is crucial to

challenge and dismantle this colonial mindset and, instead, raise awareness, acceptance, and adoption of emotions as an integral part of what we do as English language teachers, particularly in the preparation of student-teachers. I dare to say that emotions, since they became a subject of study, have been subjected to colonization, subjugation, and the exercise of power and control.

Regarding the idea of the colonial mindset that I mentioned before, I refer to a perspective that in my point of view is influenced by historical colonial legacies, power dynamics, and cultural hierarchies which impact the understanding, expression, and validation of emotions in language teaching-learning contexts. Here are a few characteristics that, for me, can be associated with a colonial mindset related to emotions in ELT focused on student-teachers:

- Imposition of emotional norms: A colonial mindset may enforce Western emotional norms and expectations as the standard, disregarding or devaluing the emotional experiences and expressions of student-teachers from non-Western cultures. This can lead to the suppression or dismissal of emotions that do not align with the dominant cultural standards.
- Erasure of diverse emotional expressions: A colonial mindset may overlook or erase the rich and varied emotional expressions and experiences that learners from diverse cultural backgrounds bring to the language learning process. This can limit the exploration and understanding of emotions beyond the narrow confines of dominant cultural paradigms.
- Power imbalances: A colonial mindset may perpetuate power imbalances between dominant and marginalized groups in ELT. It can result in the subjugation of emotions, where student-teachers from marginalized backgrounds may feel pressured to conform to the emotional expectations set by the dominant culture, suppressing their authentic emotional experiences.
- Language hegemony: A colonial mindset may prioritize the mastery of English language proficiency as the primary goal, often overlooking the emotional dimensions of language teaching. This can reinforce the notion that emotions are secondary or irrelevant in ELT, neglecting the affective aspects that play a crucial role in language development.
- Lack of a culturally responsive pedagogy: A colonial mindset may neglect the incorporation of culturally responsive pedagogical approaches that validate and value the diverse emotional experiences and expressions of student-teachers and learners. This can result in a disconnect between student-teachers' emotions and identities and the language learning process.

The colonial[1] history of ELT has perpetuated a view of emotions as secondary and inconsequential to the primary goal of transmitting knowledge (White, 2018). Emotions have been marginalized, deemed irrelevant, and often neglected in pedagogical discourse. This neglect has resulted in a dichotomy where emotions are viewed as a mere consequence of the learning process. In this colonial context, emotions have been subjugated, stripped of their agency, and relegated to the periphery of ELT practices. That is why Amelia's voice was ignored and almost silenced. However, numerous circumstances confront student-teachers on a daily basis, including instances of theft, familial issues, economic hardships, depression, and other challenging situations. Despite facing such adversity, they often choose to remain silent, primarily due to apprehensions of being judged or unheard (at least this has been my experience as well as the experience of some of my student-teachers in the pedagogical practicum). Consequently, their emotions are cast aside, leading them to become mere specters along their journey.

To bring about a transformative change in the field of ELT, it is imperative to challenge the status quo and recognize the historical colonization of emotions. The acknowledgement of this colonial legacy empowers us to reclaim emotions as an essential aspect of a teacher's being. By doing so, we can create a more inclusive, empowering, and holistic educational experience for both teachers and learners.

In the preparation of student-teachers, there is a pressing need to disrupt the colonial mindset that views emotions as inconsequential or unworthy of attention. Student-teachers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools to understand, recognize, and embrace the emotional dimensions of the teaching and learning process. This involves raising awareness about the impact of emotions on language teaching, motivation, and the human being overall (Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019).

By fostering awareness, acceptance, and adoption of emotions, student-teachers can become agents of change in dismantling the colonial constructs that have marginalized emotions. They can be empowered to create learning environments that value and respect the emotional experiences of their students (Chen *et al.*, 2022). Through their pedagogical practices, they can promote emotional intelligence, empathy, and inclusivity, ensuring that emotions are integrated into the very fabric of what they do as English language teachers, but first they have to recognize and accept that they are emotional beings and that having emotions must be allowed.

1 According to Walsh & Mignolo (2018), "coloniality is constitutive, not derivative, of modernity. That is to say, there is no modernity without coloniality" (p. 4).

Moreover, it is crucial to examine the historical power dynamics that have colonized emotions. Emotions have been subjected to the influence and control of those in positions of authority and dominance, namely the Global North, which has shaped the discourse on emotions the most. By acknowledging this colonization, we can work towards decolonizing emotions, giving student-teachers the agency and freedom they deserve. This involves challenging existing power structures, questioning traditional hierarchies, and creating spaces where emotions can flourish and thrive.

In conclusion, the role of emotions in ELT has been fragmented and limited, largely due to the colonial legacy that has marginalized and colonized them. To bring about a transformative change, it is essential to raise awareness, acceptance, and adoption of emotions as integral to what we do as English language teachers. This shift requires the recognition and understanding of the historical colonization of emotions and the power dynamics that are at play. By embracing emotions, both as educators and in the preparation of student-teachers, we can create inclusive and empowering learning environments that nurture the emotional being and growth of all learners. It is through this decolonization of emotions that we can truly transform ELT and create a more equitable and compassionate educational landscape so that we may say that the land that belongs to the ones with the power has been freed after years of dominance.

The Explorations the Land Has Passed through

Bearing in mind some explorations on literature that I have been doing, emotions play a vital role in shaping human experiences and interactions (Benesch, 2016), yet I could see that the significance emotions have within the context of ELT has often been overlooked or naturalized. On one hand, between 2001 and 2022, there has been a growing interest in emotions in the field of English ELT. This interest has primarily been observed in the United States, China, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom, where there has been a notable increase in exploring and recognizing the significance of emotions in the context of ELT.

On the other hand, Latin America has been relatively underrepresented in the study of emotions in ELT. While there have been a few contributions from Mexico and Brazil, the region, including Colombia, has not prioritized emotions as a central research topic in the field. As a result, the perspectives on emotions presented in this context mainly reflect the perspectives and research conducted in North America and other northern regions. This emphasizes the necessity for additional theoretical and empirical research to explore the complex

interplay between emotions and the English language student-teacher in the Global South.[2]

In the exploration of the understanding of emotions, different authors' perspectives were taken into account, and two prominent trends were identified: cognitive view of emotions and emotion labor (Benesch, 2019; Gkonou & Miller, 2019; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013; Song, 2021, among others), and the critical perspective of emotions (Lantolf & Swain, 2019; Shi, 2021; White, 2018; Xue, 2022; Zembylas & Schutz, 2009, among others). By considering these divergent viewpoints, I aim to present a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of emotions in ELT. Furthermore, this exploration uncovers a disconcerting reality: Emotions have often been sidelined or neglected in the ELT field, particularly in relation to student-teachers' constitution (body, mind, and being). Consequently, it becomes imperative to conduct further research that reflects upon how emotions manifest themselves in pedagogical practicums, as they form an integral component of student-teachers' personal and professional development.

The research article entitled "Cognitive Emotions and Emotional Labor: Research" by Gkonou & Miller (2019) suggests that teachers often suppress their own negative emotions to promote their students' well-being. This cognitive aspect of emotions reflects teachers' ability to regulate their emotions to create a positive classroom environment. Emotion labor, a dominant topic in ELT, refers to the emotional effort and management that teachers invest in their work. Nazari & Karimpour (2022) elaborate on how institutional factors act as regulatory mechanisms for teachers' emotion labor and influence the development of their multifaceted identities. Through data analysis, the authors identify three dimensions: 1) Emotion labor of managing conflicts in subjectivity and adopted identities, 2) emotion labor of dealing with tensions in caring for students and assigned identities, and 3) emotion labor of aligning agency with resisted identities. These dimensions shape emotional labor and teacher identity construction within the institutional context. These findings highlight the complex emotional landscape

2 Authors define the "Global South" as a term that represents countries and regions primarily located in the southern hemisphere, often characterized by factors such as economic and social challenges, postcolonial legacies, and a history of marginalization within the global geopolitical context. The definition of the Global South varies among authors, but it generally encompasses countries from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, as well as parts of Asia and Oceania. Some authors may also consider factors like political power dynamics, cultural diversity, and shared socio-economic experiences when defining the Global South. It is important to note that the term is a construct that aims to draw attention to the unique challenges and perspectives of countries and regions outside the traditional power centers of the Global North (Kloß, 2017; Ndofirepi & Gwaravanda 2020; Wyse, 2015).

that teachers navigate and the impact of institutional factors on their emotional experiences.

Taking a critical perspective, researchers like Benesch (2017), White (2018), and Barcelos & Aragão (2018) provide alternative frameworks for understanding emotions in ELT. Benesch (2017, p. 14) defines emotions as "complex psychological states that involve a subjective experience, physiological arousal, and a behavioral expression," and classifies studies into the cognitive, poststructuralist/discursive, and biological approaches. White (2018, p. 11) offers a broader definition of emotions as "complex, multi-dimensional, and dynamic phenomena" and distinguishes five approaches: psychological, socio-constructionist, interactive, neuropsychological, and dialogical. Barcelos *et al*. (2022) argue that these approaches can be combined, proposing a classification that includes a psychological approach, a sociocultural approach, a critical approach, and a systems approach.

The psychological approach encompasses elements from Benesch's cognitive and biological approaches, as well as White's psychological approach. It focuses on the relationship between emotions and learning, emphasizing their role in improving educational outcomes. Teachers' cognitive emotions, such as motivation, interest, and empathy, can have a significant impact on students' engagement and language acquisition.

Hence, this suggests that by understanding and regulating their own emotions, teachers can create a positive and supportive learning environment.

The sociocultural approach draws from sociocultural theory and Vygotsky's work, highlighting the influence of social and cultural factors on emotions. Emotions are seen as socially constructed and shaped by the interactions, norms, and values within a particular cultural context. Teachers' emotional experiences are influenced by societal expectations, cultural norms, and the diverse backgrounds of their students. Understanding the sociocultural aspects of emotions allows teachers to recognize and validate their students' emotional experiences and create an inclusive and culturally responsive classroom.

The critical approach aligns with Benesch's poststructuralist/discursive approach and White's interactive and dialogical approaches, viewing emotions as political and power-related phenomena. Emotions are seen as interconnected with issues of identity, power dynamics, and social justice. Teachers' emotional experiences and expressions are influenced by societal structures, institutional practices, and discourses surrounding ELT. By critically examining these factors, teachers can challenge dominant narratives and promote a more equitable and empowering educational environment.

Finally, the systems approach explores the interplay of biological, cognitive, and social systems in understanding emotions. Emotions are seen as complex phenomena that emerge from the dynamic interactions between these systems. This approach recognizes the interconnectedness of various factors, such as neurobiology, cognitive processes, social interactions, and cultural contexts, in shaping emotional experiences. Teachers can benefit from a holistic understanding of emotions and consider the interrelated factors that contribute to their own and their students' emotional well-being.

In conclusion, cognitive emotions and emotional labor play a significant role in the complex landscape of ELT. As in Amelia's case, teachers often suppress their own negative emotions to support their students' well-being, ignoring their self and their humanity behind their teacher's role. Additionally, critical perspectives on emotions offer alternative frameworks for studying emotions in ELT, emphasizing the interconnectedness of cognitive, social, cultural, and biological aspects. By considering these diverse perspectives, we can gain a deeper understanding of the cognitive dimension of emotions, the complexities of emotional labor, and the critical lenses through which emotions can be examined in the ELT context.

Notwithstanding the informative nature of these trends, which have provided me with a substantial foundation regarding the definition and incorporation of emotions within the domain of ELT, I believe that these conceptualizations of emotions suggest a requirement that emotions be managed rather than comprehended, controlled rather than embraced, and normalized instead of acknowledged as an intrinsic aspect of the student-teacher persona. This assertion underlines my main idea that emotions have been subjugated by those in positions of authority who dictate the manner, timing, and permissible range of emotional experiences for educators.

But I Want a Different Land: Emotionland

While existing research on emotions in ELT has primarily focused on students' well-being and teachers' emotional management, there is a noticeable absence of exploration on the topic in Latin America. Instead, research in the Global South has predominantly centered around Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, which prioritize the development of socioemotional competencies in students (Fernández-Martín *et al*., 2021). However, these approaches often overlook the significance of emotions for the being of teachers themselves.

Considering the preceding discussion, it is important to address certain aspects that have emerged as significant concerns, tensions, and contributions within

this decolonial exploration. In the following lines I will present these ideas using the following subtitles: Embracing the fullness of emotions; Dispossession of student-teacher identity; Recognizing emotions as fundamental to student-teacher identities; Decolonizing emotions through inclusive pedagogies.

Embracing the Fullness of Emotions

It is essential to recognize emotions as more than mere cognitive knowledge residing within the bodies of student-teachers. Emotions should be embodied, felt, lived, and accepted as an integral part of individuals' holistic experiences. Regarding the previous idea, De la Torre (2008, para. 4.) states:

> Thinking and feeling have been so separated in the educational tradition that by striving to promote forms of reflection, of analysis and synthesis, of logical deduction, of interpretation, of making critical judgements, we have relegated the emotional dimension to the realm of the personal and intimate.[3]

As happened to Amelia, this disconnection has hindered our understanding of ourselves and others, denying us (teachers and student-teachers) the opportunity to authentically connect with students and explore emotions as essential aspects of our identities.

Dispossession of Student-Teacher Identity

The preparation of student-teachers often fails to acknowledge their real-life identities encompassing race, gender, and emotions, among other dimensions. This dispossesses them of their multifaceted identities, reinforcing power imbalances within the educational system. Emotions, as an integral part of identity, are disregarded or suppressed in the process of becoming a teacher. This contradiction lies in the fact that emotions belong to us and cannot be compartmentalized, yet expressing emotions is often discouraged or even prohibited for student-teachers who are expected to serve as exemplars and conform to predetermined molds.

Recognizing Emotions as Fundamental to Student-Teacher Identities

To address this gap, it is imperative to recognize emotions as fundamental components shaping the identities and practices of student-teachers within ELT. By

3 Original text in Spanish: "Pensar y sentir se han separado tanto en la tradición educativa que mientras nos hemos esforzado en promover formas de reflexión, de análisis y síntesis, de deducción lógica, de interpretación, de elaborar juicios críticos, hemos relegado la dimensión emocional al terreno de lo personal e íntimo."

acknowledging the centrality of emotions, educators can create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that nurtures emotional well-being and facilitates effective communication. Moreover, by embracing emotions as valuable sources of knowledge and personal growth, student-teachers can develop deeper self-awareness, empathy, and the ability to authentically engage with their students.

Decolonizing Emotions Through Inclusive Pedagogies

The decolonization of emotions in ELT necessitates the adoption of inclusive pedagogies that challenge prevailing power structures and prioritize the emotional well-being and agency of student-teachers. Inclusive pedagogies consider the interplay between emotions, identity, and learning, promoting a more equitable educational environment. They encourage critical engagement with dominant narratives, promote diverse perspectives, and validate the emotional experiences of both students and teachers. By incorporating inclusive pedagogies, ELT programs can foster transformative educational experiences that empower student-teachers to develop a comprehensive understanding of their own emotions and those of their students.

Conclusion

This chapter has shed light on the existing gap in the literature concerning the recognition and exploration of emotions in ELT, particularly within the Latin American and Global South contexts. It has highlighted the predominant focus on students' well-being and the need to extend this focus to encompass the emotional experiences of student-teachers. By recognizing emotions as integral to teacher identity and being, embracing their fullness, and adopting inclusive pedagogies, ELT programs can contribute to a more equitable and transformative educational landscape. The decolonization of emotions calls for a shift in perspective and the recognition of emotions as valuable and valid aspects of being, enabling student-teachers to cultivate self-awareness, empathy, and authentic connections with their beings and then with the academic community.

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Trans-Pedagogies: A Decolonial Response to Silences and Absences in Teacher Education*

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Abstract

This chapter introduces trans-pedagogies as a decolonial response to the neo-colonial imperatives shaping Colombian English Language Teaching and teacher education. Beyond canonical pedagogy, trans-pedagogies function as praxes that delegitimize epistemic violence and the marginalization of dissident subjectivities. Informed by border thinking and Ubuntu philosophy, I argue that dominant pedagogical constructs silence alternative ways of knowing and being. Drawing on autoethnographic encounters with dissident students and teachers, trans-pedagogies are proposed as relational, embodied, and collective practices of knowing, sensing, and doing. They are not emancipatory methods but decolonial praxes that seek to delink from coloniality, affirm pluriversality, and foster healing, mutual care, and epistemic justice.

Keywords: decoloniality; English language teaching; relationality; teacher education; trans-pedagogies.

* This chapter draws on my doctoral research project at Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación (DIE-UD) and it investigates trans-pedagogies as possibilities to liberate the already entrapped pedagogy from disciplinary knowledge-making frames. These are, in a nutshell, an alternative to the hegemonic frames and narratives that have wounded being/becoming in teaching education.

Opening Thoughts

In the Colombian context, English Language Teaching (ELT) and teacher education are subjected to neo-colonial principles in which the English language is a mere resource due to its economic value (Sánchez-Jabba, 2013). This stems from English's global reach as a discourse and semiotic technology that enables participation in capitalism (Pennycook, 2008). As a result, the English language has moved beyond conformity to native-speaker norms (Jenkins, 2003). However, research has shown that teachers and learners are still interested in modeling specific standards from the inner circle Englishes (Kang, 2015), including not only representations of the "native" language but their knowledge systems and practices. Framed by this economic and colonial landscape, English language pedagogy has accentuated "the acquisition of linguistics and procedural knowledge of the language" (Ubaque-Casallas, 2021a, p. 47). This has been installed by *a*) constructing a pure-valid-measurable disciplinary-based pedagogy through which attention has only been given to knowledge rather than to ways of knowing (De Sousa Santos, 2018), and *b*) assembling ontological deficiencies (e.g., Black, gay, transgender, immigrants, peasants, non-native, women, and their intersections) that reinforce exteriority over bodies and subjectivities. As a result, English language pedagogy has legitimized dehumanization practices (e.g., dispossession of race, body, and sex-gender).

In this context, it is not surprising that teachers, teacher educators, and institutions have equated pedagogy to the instruction and application of teaching methodologies. Consequently, the result has been an intentional marginalization of pedagogical doings in which we (i.e., educators and students) have been denied—and have denied others, too—the possibility of existing through others (Ngomane, 2019).[1] Hence, I argue that for English language pedagogy to delink from the discipline and its modern representation, it must embrace, explore, and emerge from ways of knowing that dwell in the borders (see Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2005)—borders that, in fact, are "not only geographic; they are racial and sexual, epistemic and ontological, religious and aesthetic, linguistic and national" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 112) and, therefore, borders that become possibilities for embracing, living, and making sense of the exteriority we (educators and students) occupy.

I advocate for a pedagogy that dialogues with silenced voices but simultaneously builds from what has been denied, disposed, and disavowed. In what the reader is about to encounter, I draw on my own experience and reflexivity as a

1 This is a pillar of Ubuntu, an African philosophy in which we are because you are, and since you are, I definitely am.

human being, an English language teacher, a teacher educator, and an academic activist.[2] I write about pedagogy without being inscribed and reproduced in what I contest here. That is, I use my body-political location to problematize *a*) my locus of enunciation, *b*) the decolonial situation where I locate the problematization of my doctoral dissertation, and *c*) some tensions, aspirations, and fears I have encountered in dismantling my own obedience to a colonial representation of pedagogy.

My Thinking and Sensing as an English Language Teacher and Teacher Educator

I feel strange when I tell people that I am an English language teacher and teacher educator who currently works at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas (Bogotá, Colombia) as someone who holds an M. A. degree in Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language and who is currently teaching at the B. A. in Modern Languages at the same university. Although all that is accurate, I feel the categories above place me in an essentialist dimension regarding my identity. However, this biodata is what, for years, has represented me in academic events. Paradoxically, such a description seems insufficient to convey a sense of who I am [being]. For years, since I graduated from my B. A. studies, I stood out for my ability to carry out practical English language lessons. I had consistent teaching knowledge and practical procedural skills. For some time, I was pleased to write about the importance of argumentation in developing learners' communicative competence (see Ubaque-Casallas & Pinilla Castellanos, 2016). I also used to speak about the best approaches to teaching grammar, either deductively or inductively. However, all this changed as of 2014.

My thinking about pedagogy began to be *unstable* in 2014. This was the year I met Daniel, a gay English teacher who was my colleague and, years later, my friend. I learned from Daniel's powerful political activism that intended to gain rights and recognition for non-binary English teachers at the private institution I was working for. He taught me about love for others.

In 2015, I met Ammarantha Wass at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional in Bogotá, Colombia. I must confess our encounter was not pleasant. I misread her. I was not used to having a transgender person in my classes. Nor was I used to dwelling inside the same space occupied by dissident bodies. However, my curiosity to comprehend her living, being, and becoming as a blind/trans-student-teacher led me to invite her to converse with me. I gained great insight

2 This is a decision to re-constitute my individual political subjectivity (see Lamas, 2019).

into her experiences as a blind/trans student-teacher and political activist. I also learned about her *pedagogizations*[3] and political attempts to re-exist inside and outside of violent scenarios.

In 2017, I met Omer (not his real name), a gay student-teacher at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional who lived in a dissident body like Ammarantha. However, he was not blind but had brain paralysis. With Omer, I experienced a lovely teacher-student relationship. Still, in 2025, we are in contact and collaborating academically. From Omer, I learned that people with disabilities or diverse functional bodies belong to the abnormal category. Yet this is a label imposed on them.

In 2020, I met a non-binary student-teacher, Marlé, who attended the modern languages programs at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. I worked with him at the theoretical and praxiological levels as he was invited to participate in the student research group I directed. After long hours of conversing, some disagreements, and tensions, I learned about his histories, stories, and life struggles. I also learned about his pedagogizations in their dissident corpo-real-ities/*corpo-real-idades* (Castañeda-Peña & Ubaque-Casallas, 2023). From Marlé, I learned about the power of resistance, perseverance, and hope that are embodied in one's existence. I must say that, from the previous encounters, I took responsibility for my academic privilege and added a bit of reflexivity upon histories, like theirs, to help others engage in conversations about gender-sex realities (see Castañeda-Peña *et al*., 2022; Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2020; Ubaque-Casallas & Castañeda-Peña, 2021).

Within the same timeframe, I met Karla, a Black female student-teacher. Karla has taught me that having Black skin is different from being *negra*. I also learned that race is a racist concept (Mignolo, 2021) and that gender and race are interrelated and indissociable dimensions of her persona (Crenshaw, 1991). Thanks to Karla, I have questioned my biases (e.g., thinking of myself as neither a Black nor White educator) and seen my colonial wound (e.g., I am positioned as a non-native but *mestizo* educator and speaker) more clearly. This wound has led me to think in, from, and within the silences and absences that I have enacted. However, these silences and absences are not due to my intentional complicity in devaluing the possibility of *being-becoming* of my students; rather, they are

3 "Pedagogization makes reference to the possibility of mobilizing actions through contextualized processes, it is not a functional instance for the effectiveness of teaching-learning, or the concern to legitimize an object and a method that accounts for its scientific status. This endeavor is about seeing pedagogy actuated and triggering of political, cultural and situational processes, managing to overcome the conceptions of education and school as a microspace or microcosm isolated from contextual reality" (Villa & Villa, 2010, p. 79, own translation).

explained by my incapacity to call into question the apparent control of knowledge that, for years, I have maintained as a self-appointed teacher-educator.

Whether I was aware of it or not, all these fantastic people opened cracks in my colonial rationality: "The cracks, in this sense, enunciate[d], reflect[ed], and construct[ed] another place[s] and postulate[s] of decoloniality in/as praxis" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 83). They made me question my knowledge foundations, and the mere ontological formulations I had about myself. They made me challenge my own idea of education. In fact, I could say that they inspired me to reflect on the idea of a humanizing education and to consider how I might engage politically to challenge and disrupt the epistemic othering (Keet, 2014) present in the academic institutions I have been part of and continue to inhabit. I must also acknowledge that it has been in this tension that I have identified specific colonial strategies through which human beings like Daniel, Omer, Ammarantha, Marlé, Karla, and many others, including myself, have been constructed as deficient. Among some of these strategies is the notion of *pedagogy*.

My Research Interest

I have witnessed how the "discipline" has constructed language pedagogy as a universal that encapsulates instrumental representations of teaching. Once installed in the imaginary of teachers, teacher educators, and institutions, these representations have incorporated notions such as methods, methodologies, approaches, and so on and so forth as the mechanisms to regulate and control teaching and learning. In other words, it is the architecture that has perpetuated epistemological control (Méndez & Clavijo-Olarte, 2017) and that for scholars like Granados-Beltrán (2018) is supported by the inventory of some B. A. graduate projects in education programs. It is then in these programs that "featured causality, technicality, and language instrumentality" (p. 189) are the most common research approaches. Pedagogy, then, has been a colonial construct of marginality.

Although there are attempts to move within the cracks of disciplinary English language pedagogy (e.g., Aguirre *et al*., 2022; Avella Alvarado & León Lozada, 2017; Fandiño-Parra, 2021; Shah, 2021), I feel there is still something missing. English language pedagogy keeps on being oriented toward lexis, morphology, syntax, and text structure (Christie & Martin, 2008). It is still a pedagogy that is gender-neutral, de-racialized, disembodied, and desexualized. In this line of thought, I want to acknowledge that to comprehend other pedagogical possibilities, I must begin by locating my inquiry into those different pedagogies that emerge, enact, and enunciate struggles, conflicts, alliances, and power exercises, many of which are hidden nowadays. Pedagogies that not only re-build "the

link between the subject of enunciation and [their] ethnic/racial/sexual/gender/epistemic place" (Grosfoguel, 2010, p. 387) but that also open space for a "relationality [that] emphasizes that all entities are always involved in a constant process of becoming" (Canagarajah, 2023, p. 5).

I also think of pedagogization practices (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) that rebel against the humiliation, displacement, disembodiment, and degradation of those who have been subjected to the margins and borders (e.g., Black, gay, transgender, immigrants, peasants, non-native, women, etc.). With this I refer to those practices of enunciation that question the humanity of the human (Wynter, 2003) and that attempt to pursue decoloniality and liberation. The core of these pedagogies makes me think about the African philosophy of the Ubuntu, in which it is necessary to recognize "the inner worth of every human being starting with [my] yourself" (Ngomane, 2019, p. 19).

The Colonial Situation under Examination

To make sense of the pedagogies mentioned above, I consider it relevant to begin by inspecting academic production around the notion of pedagogy. Therefore, since pedagogy is universal in English Language Teaching (ELT) and initial teacher education (ITE), it presupposes principles that guide teaching and provides onto-epistemological representations of those participating in teaching and learning. In this sense, "I am not interested in understanding what it is but how it became what it is and the political consequences of its contents" (Mignolo, 2021, p. 300). To reach this understanding, I want to briefly refer to a literature review and research profile I conducted to identify the state of the art of my doctoral dissertation and to make sense of enunciations that support pedagogy as a colonial category.

In the literature revision I conducted, I resorted to three primary databases (Scopus, ProQuest, and Academic Search Complete) and academic journals to inspect the levels of enunciation that have constituted the domination over pedagogy. The revision brought to light that, at least in these databases and journals, there is no account of pedagogy before 2010. This made me think that the notion of pedagogy was then constructed from instrumental and instructional principles. Before 2010, pedagogy was not mentioned as a naming category since it had been mainly mixed with other terms (i.e., methods, methodologies). For example, before 2010, most articles revolved around applying methods developed in *inner circle countries* (e.g., Task-Based Learning) (Kachru, 1990). This absence revealed the colonial rationality in which what has been said about pedagogy has had little or no contestation.

Through the revision, I mainly identified two strong trends concerning academic production. In what I recovered, for example, significant production related to critical pedagogy (e.g., Aguirre Morales & Ramos Holguín, 2011; Barros-del Río, 2019; Gutiérrez, 2022, among others); and decolonial pedagogies (De Lissovoy, 2010; López-Gopar, 2013; Pereira, 2021, among others). As for academic production on critical pedagogy, I noticed that these studies resorted to Giroux's, Shor's, Freire's, Pennycook's, and McLaren's postulates to emphasize the role of critical pedagogy. It was common to find similar postulates, including challenging hegemonic ideas and roles in education, working for emancipation, developing critical consciousness, creating non-alienating classrooms, and challenging the status quo and oppressive power relations among teachers and students. Regarding decolonial pedagogies, I could also spot some conceptual similarities. Academic work also made evident the theoretical roots that emerged from authors like Freire, Mignolo, Ofelia García, Grosfoguel, Walsh, Maldonado, Quijano, Veronelli, Spivak, and Braidotti.

Whether the academic production claimed to be decolonial or critical, they were interested in challenging specific patterns of oppression (critical perspective) and dispossession (decolonial perspective) present in ELT and teacher education. However, in both trends, very few developed a consistent discussion around the relationalities that are enacted and come from deep within human beings. Relationalities structure possibilities of entering into a relationship with others and acquiring knowledge that requires a relationship(s) with the other(s) to exist. This absence is probably the main distinction I am interested in exploring and advancing in my doctoral dissertation.

In fact, since I believe relationality is vital to shedding light on some gnoseological orientations regarding my own thinking/doing/feeling as an English language teacher and teacher educator, I intend to move into a notion of pedagogy *otherwise* (i.e., trans-pedagogies) that I perceive as "an intersubjective methodology that recognizes the historicity and resistance of the subjects in their social, cultural, political and ideological contexts" (Méndez Reyes, 2021, p. 157). I am well aware that I cannot just claim to be building my own arguments from decolonial academic referents. This is why I want to engage in what the Ubuntu philosophy invites us to engage in. That is, "no person exists in isolation" (Ngomane, 2019, p. 33); *I am only because you are*. I believe that it is in this way of sensing and relating that I can begin thinking differently, given that "thinking differently decolonially is not the same as thinking differently modernly" (Mignolo, 2021, p. 273).

Moreover, I think it is not enough for me to say that I am speaking from the South or that I am speaking with those others whose humanity and ways of

knowing have been leveled down to the humiliation and displacement (e.g., Black, gay, transgender, immigrants, peasants, non-native, women, and their intersections). Instead, I would like to engage in pedagogy as doing since it, on the one hand, aligns with "the term 'praxis' [that] corrects the marginalization of 'practice' in the Global North" and, on the other hand, allows me to open "interstitial spaces between action, policies, reflection, and relearning" (Canagarajah, 2023, p. 4). This sort of perspective is what I have termed *trans-pedagogies*.

To clarify what I consider trans-pedagogies to be, I must say what they are *not*. Trans-pedagogies are not pedagogies of emancipation (critical pedagogies are). Emancipation seeks freedom. However, freedom cannot be achieved by the individual or the communal, and it is only achievable through rationality and investment granted by the state, as Hegel (1999) proposed. Emancipation occurs outside the being: One needs to be emancipated; one cannot liberate oneself. Emancipation has served as a gate for neoliberal approaches to education. However, this strategy means re-engineering modernity/coloniality framed under and within the global label. Trans-pedagogies are not androcentric either; they avoid being inscribed in patriarchy, racism, sexuality, war, and extractivism as colonizing narratives. Yet it is from these narratives that trans-pedagogies emerge. Lastly, trans-pedagogies are not critical pedagogies either, not because they lack a critical dimension but simply because they do not enunciate from the principles of modern pedagogies. Instead, trans-pedagogies are practices of knowing, thinking, and doing. They are cognitive and emotional, embodied and situated in time and space. Therefore, they are acts of enunciation that emerge from "the resistance itself, incarnated, that is, in those fleeting or longer-winded moments where we are confronted with the hegemonic relations of production, hierarchical classification of beings and command" (Olvera, 2017, p. 196).

Having made that necessary clarification, trans-pedagogies pursue decoloniality and liberation. They want to break the chains from feelings or conditions that make life unhappy or difficult (*mal vivir*). They are the right to say and think differently, re-exist, and be (*ser-estar*). Likewise, they are, aligned with Ubuntu's philosophy, an opening to "standing shoulder to shoulder with others physically and spiritually [to send] a powerful message. [They say] I am sad because you are sad. I am suffering because you are suffering" (Ngomane, 2019, p. 39). It may be true for some that trans-pedagogies may align with other pedagogies—such as *contra-pedagogies of cruelty* (Segato, 2018), *pedagogías insumisas* (Medina-Melgarejo, 2015), etc.—. They align but are not the same. Therefore, trans-pedagogies cannot be subsumed within a universal frame. They are to be seen from and within their pluriversality from where they are enacted.

Trans-pedagogies have a decolonial orientation. They are decolonial because they are originated and enacted by the *anthropos*, not by the *humanitas*, that is, they are not enacted by those who regard themselves as an exceptional kind of humanity capable of theory, but by those who, in contrast, are referred to as lesser and deficient (Sakai, 2010). In this sense, trans-pedagogies are decolonial because, by being situated in the exteriority of the ontological and the epistemic difference, "they crack the system and the anthropocentric and heteropatriarchal matrix of capitalist/modern/colonial power; pedagogies that enable and build very other ways of being, thinking, knowing, feeling, existing and living-with" (Walsh, 2017, p. 14). I also make this clarification due to the apparent vagueness I have perceived around the term when I have had the chance to converse about it. Due to its prefix, "trans-", people limit its comprehension to gender/sex. Although I am inspired by Bello Ramírez (2018), I do not anchor my rationale in a transgender-dissident experience. Still, I do agree that there is an evident need to cross borders so that rigid identities (e.g., White male English speakers) can be contested. I then take this further and claim that we must also live and dwell in other possibilities of being (e.g., Black gender-fluid English speaker and educator) that anchor other opportunities to heal individually and collectively. These possibilities can fissure the dispossessed ontologies and construct the *trans* as crossing and going through (*cruzar/atravesar*) complex colonial architectures in ELT and teacher education. From this perspective, trans-pedagogies cross the border set by modern/colonial epistemology and go through the immovable ontological but fictional representations maintained in ELT and teacher education.

Openings and Contributions

Thinking of trans-pedagogies is my response to the colonial frame I have been inserted into and have reproduced for years. It is my own strategy to "think from the silences and absences produced by imperial modern epistemology" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 206). However, it is a strategy that is not *mine* but *ours*—Daniel's, Ammarantha's, Omer's, Karla's, and Marle's. It is a strategy that is built collectively by sensing and feeling together. Consequently, it is a strategy that can liberate the already entrapped pedagogy from the walls of competence, instrumentality, and efficiency and, in so doing, free those trapped by it. Although it is not my first attempt —I have already engaged in academic reflexivity regarding the notion of pedagogy (see Ubaque-Casallas, 2021a; Ubaque-Casallas, 2021b)— it is my first effort to dismantle the epistemological machinery that has maintained disciplinary knowledge-making. This attempt distances itself from critical pedagogies, as its genealogy is different. However, it is also linked to them as I am interested in undoing and rethinking the mechanisms by which coercion, subjugation,

oppression, and epistemic acts of violence are mobilized, ontologically and epistemically, in ELT and teacher education.

However, since speaking about trans-pedagogies might not be enough, I am also determined to feel (border sensing) and do (border doing) with the *other*. In so doing, being, thinking, and doing will be a possibility, not a mechanism, to *queer, blacken*, and *indigenize* the material space where I work. I am also determined to create bonds, share joys, and sense pain, resentment, hope, and pride (among ourselves, the others) to make sense of the localized histories we embody. I am determined to overcome and help others to heal from the wounds inflicted by education. In this line of thought, "healing as praxis challenges dominant, Western notions of education as cognitive activity (…) [and fosters] a (re)connectedness with each other" (Zabala, 2016, p. 4). In a nutshell, I am resolved to give up the idea of domination I have constructed for years. Instead, I choose to build relationalities from which I take care of the other, but I am also taken care of. *I am because you are*.

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