

### English Teachers' Sites in the Diverse Lands of Peace

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La guerra como Única ruta para la construcción de paz desaparece otras

War, as the only path towards peace-building, makes alternative ones disappear

(Anonymous, 2019)

### Introduction

Peace-building and peace education: Each seems to respond to diverse ways of thinking about, feeling and resisting some phenomena in the world. Those phenomena in turn may also involve violent situations in a country like Colombia, where not only armed conflict but other types of violence (structural, indirect ones) may permeate society, including its educational environment. According to Hurie (2018), since 1948 Colombian schools have become scenarios for avoiding violence and working towards peace (Chaux et al., 2008), places where teachers respond to this challenge by finding many ways to shape their pedagogical initiatives on the basis of their experience of life. Personally, as a Colombian contributor to peace at schools who is also a woman, bilingual English teacher, *mestiza* and member of this doctoral program, I have found that *English language teachers contest peace-building frames (modern ones) through peace construction (local and alternative frames)*.

I will now elaborate on that statement by addressing its key and interconnected components. To do that, I explain how I used an *eclectic*

(Navarrete, 2009) and flexible path to *arrive at* that conclusion. In line with this metaphor of a journey, I divide what follows into sections which I call landscapes.

First, I discuss the phenomena of peace-building in ELT in relation to their frames. Then, I discuss the implicit violence of those frames. After that, I discuss how these teachers are contesting that violence, as they resist a modern, monolithic linear notion of peace-building. That leads to some potential possibilities for further research, followed by the general objective, shown on a consistency chart<sup>10</sup>.

## Landscape 1: The Dual Peace Town

Modern concepts of peace, as seen in the positions of the UNESCO, British Council (BC) and Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) suggest that there is a dichotomous view of peace-building in ELT, peace as the opposite of war. Yet, there are other notions of peace, a subject which is not new (Harris, 2004, 2007). That rigid definition is a constant concern in situations where violence is regarded as a way to relate to others (Parga, 2011). Indeed, some proposals by teachers which adhere to the modern discourse of peace think of it as an opposition between war and peace. (Gebregeorgis, 2017). Therefore, using the English class to build peace would resemble teaching a *given* way of being, opposite to warlike phenomena.

Peace-building which endorses the war/peace duality may help to attain a desirable state in a modern society when there are predetermined universal values that promote *living well* in a *globalized* world (Modern projects, according to Escobar. Cited in Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007). That society would do away with conflict and direct violence (UNESCO, 2000, 2013, 2018). This structural approach in peace-building and peace education may be included in the canon of ELT.



Throughout this journey I was able to perceive a frame for peace-building in the Dual Peace Town, together with another frame in the form of peace education. Within it, I found a standardized and constraining technical approach towards English

<sup>10</sup> The consistency chart was a tool that guided me in creating my Ph.D. dissertation. It included a statement of the problem, problematic situations and the objectives.

teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), which may be represented by a *factory*. It reminded me of what may occur when strategies for peace-building and peace education in ELT have a structural framework: that of the *good practice*.

There precisely seems to be a mechanical consistency to the factory metaphor– and an instrumental connection between peace-building and ELT. As technicians, English teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) might be the effective controllers of machines which produce over-generalized concepts of peace education. The *manufacturing* of an ideal rational peaceful subject as part of a *global “who”* seems to be the purpose of a sanitizing (Huergo, 2000) *project to create a global citizenship* (UNESCO, 2016). According to Huergo (2000), modernity undertakes this civilizing or cleansing effort to establish a certain way of life. Proposals, such as UNESCO’s activity cards for teachers, guide for a transformative pedagogy and framework for teacher education explicitly employ the notion of *progress* to shape the work of teachers and students.

This concern for placing various social phenomena, including peace-building, within the framework of progress may reach Colombia. This appears in the National Development Plan’s (2010-2014) initiative for *labs of peace*, which aim to promote social progress and a respect for human rights in line with the modernist concept.

In peace-building, it may take the form of a technical activity where the emphasis is on procedure, *good practice* and the *product*, as in Sun’s (2017) proposal to use graphic novels to improve reading skills. Even though Sun sees it as an extracurricular activity, it is regarded as a *good practice*. Another example is a study by Yousuf et al. (2010), who calls for future teachers to engage in “activities that develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to explore concepts of peace” (p. 53). Finally, the two editions of the UNESCO’s *framework of teacher education* (2005, 2017), and *others on global education*, have a similar stance: they define peace-building and peace education as a “response to direct violence” and a means to prevent “further violence” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 13) and propose that they be a compulsory part of the practical education of teachers. It seems that individual teachers share the same view of peace-building as hegemonic global institutions like the UNESCO. There are further examples of the structural approach to peace construction in the form of peace-building in ELT. Speaking in the language of *good practice*, Morton (2007) says that teachers need to effectively teach *essential skills* for peace education in the classroom.

These *essentializing* discourses about peace are linked to didactic materials or strategies based on what some teachers call a “common universal notion” (Ayşegül, 2017, p. 72). Drawing on the language of the market, peace-construction through *peace education* is described as an *effective must-be*. Parga (2011) has studied conflicts between students and ways to resolve them in a deprived area of Bogotá, and suggests it as another possibility for peace-building. Still, he focuses on improving EFL oral communication skills as a means to resolve conflicts. What Habermas (1972) calls instrumental rationality and marketing analogies may prevail over alternative methods of peace-building.

In fact, some teachers seem to acknowledge that playing the role of an instructor is part of their job and they must stress the importance of *social justice* (Ortega, 2019). Here, I notice a similarity to Parga’s study (2011), since both have extra-linguistic objectives (social justice), but they still adhere to the traditional, hegemonic methodology of ELT, which rests on the principles that: i. English is primarily a discipline and linguistic code, and ii. Teaching their students, a mastery of communicative skills is the priority. In both cases, teachers are placed in the position of instructors. Even in peace-building, positioning differently from an instructor role may have a hidden cost.

*English for peace* as a hegemonic version like peace-building (Hurie, 2018) may make English teachers perpetuate positivist, objectifying and instrumental interests (Habermas, 1972). That is why priority is given to language and communicative skills rather than extra-linguistic aims. This is the policy of powerful institutions like the Ministry of Education (MEN), which has established an alliance with the British Council (BC) to improve various aspects of the teaching of English.

Not only do they design and implement the guidelines for ELT (see the British Council’s *Peace and Beyond* conference or *Active Citizens* project), but also, they make peace-building and peace education an *obligation*<sup>11</sup>. This seems to turn peace construction in the form of peace-building and peace education into another means to exert their power over English teachers. Many teachers are afraid of what will happen to them if they do not follow those guidelines. I wondered about it myself when I heard the story of one teacher (Excerpt 1). Some teachers are reluctant to reject these canonical procedures, because of retaliations by those top-down forces. More attention

11 <https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-87806.html>

should be given to this imposition of peace-building on ELT in a country with diverse violent conflicts.

### Excerpt 1

After consulting the internet, I e-mailed and called the Ministry of Education office to discuss my project to construct peace with the children I teach. However, I felt kind of surprised and scared when they said that, with the change of administration, other agendas had become more important than peace. I then thought about the murders of social leaders in Colombia (JM, Personal communication, 2018)<sup>12</sup>.

In this journey, the Dual Lands of Peace also symbolize the emotional dilemmas and constraints to do with peace-building in ELT caused by the exercise of power (Benesch, 2018). Indeed, the imposition of such guidelines can be thought of as a strategy to silence or pressure the English teacher, which, with the formal discourses on peace-building and peace education, amounts to a kind of structural (Harris, 2004; Kruger, 2012) or nonlinguistic violence (Curtis & Gomes de Matos, 2018), with strong emotional effects (Benesch, 2018). The above excerpt is an example of an emotional reaction which may restrict that teacher's chance to use the teacher's knowledge of peace construction, beyond peace-building and peace education.

As we continue the journey through the Dual Peace Town, we come across the White Forest. This represents peace-building and peace education as yet another subject, shaped by Western values, that is placed on the curriculum students must learn (Ayşegül, 2017; Kruger & Evans, 2018). Some publications about peace-building posit a Westernized subject who is rational, peaceful and needs to become a global citizen (UNESCO, 2013). This makes peace-building look like recipes and list of contents, which both teachers and students must follow in the classroom. It rests on an over-generalized, Whitenized idea of peace rather than an attitude towards life adapted to different local contexts (Harris, 2004, 2007). Teachers' roles seem presented as monolithic and from a deficit approach to language where they need to be "models of peaceful and nonviolent behavior" (Kruger, 2012, p. 17). However, their voices seem to be unheard. Contrastively, there seems to be a tendency to privilege a Western conceptualization and practice of peace in educational settings.

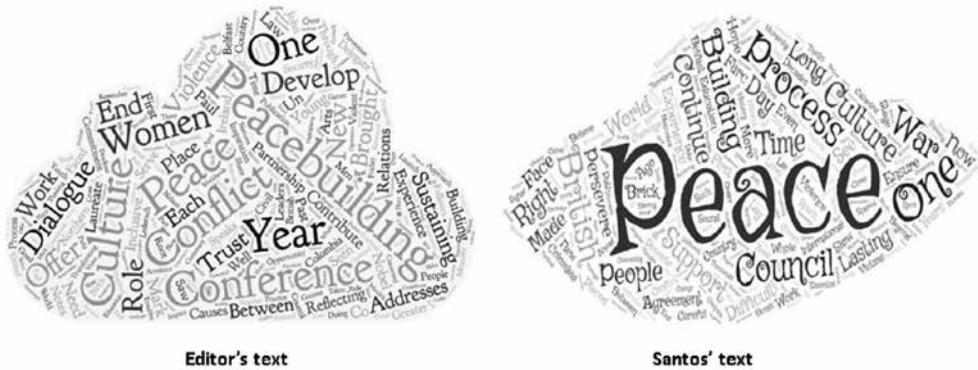
The participation of the British Council in peace-building and peace education in Colombia has been seen in such projects as "Peace and

<sup>12</sup> This is a translation of the original in Spanish

Beyond” (2018) or “Active Citizens” (2019). The United Nations and the BC as institutions with prestige and power in Colombia have led these projects and conferences. The “Peace and Beyond” conference brought “practitioners, academics, policymakers and young leaders” (2018, p. 3) together to discuss their proposals on *peace-building*. It took place on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of 2018 in Belfast.

What struck my attention about this conference was that the only Colombian speaker was not an English teacher or educator but the ex-president Juan Manuel Santos. His speech relied on the BC’s approach and discourse, as seen in his repeated use of the words *peace-building*, *one*, *culture*, *experience* and *violence* (Figure 1), a language which suggests a modern White man’s view of peace-building. The frequent use of the word *one* in both Santos’ speech and the editor’s texts is shown in the lexicometry graphic below (Figure 1). Is it possible to talk about the emergence in ELT of another colonial discourse on peace-building? Although there were references to peace-building in Colombia at the conference, there were no Colombian English language teachers there: the only Colombian teacher taught social science.

Figure 1. The words of the editor and former president Santos



(Source: Own)

There are different ways of interpreting the absence of English teachers at that event sponsored by two global organizations (the UN and the BC). One may be that it is a mode of objectification which turns students and teachers of English into the “desired” subjects of a defined area of study (Foucault, 1982) of post-conflict scenarios –the focus of my research. This

objectification resorts to dichotomies and individualizations which divide the field into separate disciplines in order to perpetuate monolithic understandings of reality, language teaching and language users (Guerrero-Nieto, 2008). This may provoke the stereotyped images people have of English teachers (Méndez, 2018) as persons who teach the language as a structure of their discipline (Baker, 2006), or “imperial people who do not care about the socio-cultural situations attached to their mother tongue” (Interview, English teacher, September 2018).

The White man’s canonical notion of peace seems to have become a universalizing discourse on the part of those who are chosen and legitimized by powerful economic and political institutions. English language teachers, particularly Colombian ones, seem to be placed on the periphery of peace-building and peace education. Does this represent a further attempt at a coloniality of power? Are certain economic interests responsible for peace-building in ELT, as shown by the focus on efficient methodologies (UNESCO, 2005, 2013)? Do certain approaches to peace-building imply that the establishment of hierarchical relationships between people in different parts of the world is yet another capitalist or neoliberal goal?

I would say that there does seem to be a colonial mechanism behind peace-building in ELT, promoted by powerful institutions and the teachers who are in thrall to them. I refer to a possible interest in recolonizing the school, in terms of what English teachers *should* or *must* understand and *do* when building peace. This discourse, which has an instrumentalizing approach to ELT, mainly emphasizes teaching practices, procedures and techniques. Guidelines like the UNESCO “Toolbox for education” (2013) set forth ideal conditions for solving conflicts through dialogue. Indeed, English imperialism (Philipson, 2000) may have a say in the employment of peace construction for this dominating purpose supported by hierarchical distributions of power. Castañeda-Peña (2018) asserts ELT has been the product of a power hierarchical system founded on linguistic difference, and I connect it to peace construction in ELT. Imperialism could be then present and constitute a dominating source of conceptualizations, teachers’ profiles, strategies, teaching and learning objectives, among other decisions related to peace construction in language education.

The premise of the UNESCO is that human rights and democracy are inseparable in teaching peace and teachers should impart the values of non-violence, tolerance, openness to others and sharing (UNESCO, 2005, 2017).

Its recommendations are not only a way to control teachers and divide them into those who educate for peace and those who do not, but they also reduce peace-building and peace education, done in the manner the UNESCO prescribes.

Thus, the approach of the UNESCO and the BC to peace-building represents the White Forest in this journey metaphor, which is based on the structural assumptions of a coloniality of power (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007; Walsh, 2003). It turns English teachers into deficit subjects (UNESCO, 2005; Nelson & Appleby, 2015; Morton, 2007; Vargas, 2018; Haddix & Price, 2013) who need to be guided by the knowledge of others, ideally from the “the inner circle”, which is the term Lund and Carr (2015) use for the dominant position of White men. When reviewing the literature on peace-building and other conferences like that of the UNESCO, I noticed that some statements about peace-building in ELT revealed the functional subjectivities (Duque et al., 2016) to the modern peace project. For example, some drew on the peace/war dichotomy (Sun, 2017; Arikan, 2009) which is one of the most prominent principles of universalizing modern peace and is found in formal documents too.

By contrast, I noticed several striking proposals that went beyond this concept of peace/war, in which war was one of the various types of violence (see Harris, 2004, 2007; Hurie, 2018; and Curtis and Gomes de Matos, 2018). My journey through a large area in the White Forest led me to a *bridge* towards another place: the *Multifaceted Lands of Peace*. This place had trees dressed in white, green, orange and brown all at once. They were of different sizes and some bore fruits. They symbolized emerging conditions which may allow teachers of English to resist the instrumental frameworks for peace-building and imply the possibility of alternative political positions and counter-conducts.

## Landscape 2: The Multifaceted Lands of Peace

When entering the Multifaceted Lands of Peace, there is a white cover over certain colorful areas of trees and land that may symbolize a *coloniality of power* –what Foucault (1970) would call a continuity – which is linked to a coloniality of knowing and being (Amador, 2019; de Sousa, 2010). The different colors of these lands represent the *rebel subjectivities* of English



teachers (Mejía, 2017) who resist the modern concept of peace-building. In other words, I refer to the other part of this problematization: English teachers who contest that concept. I will explain it as follows.

What do we know about peace-building in ELT? Could we know more? Certainly, everyday problems occur in people's lives and language plays an important role in overcoming them (Curtis & Gomes de Matos, 2018). Some investigators, like Nelson and Appleby (2015), believe that English language teachers also live in conflictive and difficult situations where violence is part of their realities. Indeed, teachers who make alternative proposals for peace-building are responding to the local violence and marginalization they have experienced (Nieto & Bickmore, 2016). One example was the 2017 ASOCOPI Congress, where the participants came up with proposals for peace-building that were not only based on the "how", but also the "what" and "why" of such initiatives. This suggests that their peace proposals are not just concerned with instructional strategies, but further dimensions which can hardly be understood from exclusively instrumental perspectives.

Yet, in my review of academic studies around this question, I found there was little research into such proposals and the few that there were only dealt with its technical or instrumental aspects. I heard one story which illustrates this from a teacher who attended a meeting organized by the school's coordinator, where he was asked to explain his proposal for peace-building but given no chance to talk about his personal experiences, including his emotional ones.

This means that only focusing on the *how* of these proposals may ignore the wealth of their "why" and "what". This problematic situation seems still ignored in the ELT field. For example, Vargas (2018) used a didactic unit on social justice for ninth graders which was meant to explore their identities. While its materials and activities may have thrown light on the methodology of ELT, what deserves our attention corresponds to students' identities and understandings about social justice in the English class.

If the present study only considered the procedures the teachers followed when drafting their proposals on peace-building, without going beyond the instructional aspects, I would be reproducing the logic of objectifying English teachers and instrumentalizing their pedagogical innovations. In other words, an instrumental assumption is perpetuated when teachers are considered only as instructors who transmit a structure or a linguistic system in a peace-building frame (peace as a reified content), according to organizations, such as

the UNESCO. As a key to attaining social justice, cognitive justice (de Sousa, 2009, 2011) may require teachers to be treated as something more than the passive exponents of pre-established theories in ELT. When I looked at the peace-related proposals in teachers in 2017 (when there were the most), I placed myself in an epistemological tension (de Sousa, 2018) between finding teachers who were overly obedient subjects and teachers who positioned themselves as resistant educators.

From a review of two academic events in Colombia and 55 speeches and published studies, I explored the different ways in which peace-building in ELT is re-defined and experienced, namely, as: conflict resolution (e.g. Higueta & López, 2015); environmental awareness (e.g. Lara & Carvajal, 2018); global citizenship (e.g. Ayşegül, 2017; Calle-Díaz, 2017); human rights (e.g. Zembylas, 2011); and social justice (e.g. Ortega, 2019; Sierra, 2016). I celebrate and share these diverse ways of understanding the connection between peace and ELT that coexist with peace-building (e.g. Bickmore, 2004) and peace education (e.g. Martínez, 2016), evidences of the social changes which reshape education (Murcia-Peña & Murcia, 2019). Nevertheless, I am still indebted to those English teachers who are not recognized as such when it comes to participating in academic events or publishing articles in academic journals. With their work, we could identify the polyphony of peace construction in the sense of Bakhtin (Stewart & McClure, 2013), as referring to multiple voices (of English teachers) in a monolithic imagined world (Modern ELT and peace-building).

What understanding of peace-building in ELT is heard in the small voices of these English teachers? What kinds of resistance are expressed in those small voices? Here, there is another “*Not-yet*” which needs to be explored, which indicates a type of *coloniality of knowing* (Lander, 2000) and is supported in turn by a *coloniality of power* (the Dual Lands of Peace phenomena), one that perpetuates a certain social and, especially, epistemological order which determines *who can talk* about peace-building in accordance with the orthodox versions. English teachers who may be interested in challenging those standards seem to be re-placed in the “nonbeing zone”, as proposed by Fanon (2010). This means they may disappear from the project towards the rethinking of colonial frames in peace-building.

## Excerpt 2

Interviewer: Why don't you share your pedagogical work in peace-building with the public at an academic event? It would be nice to have you there.

English teacher: Well... The point is that I don't see myself going there. Once, a colleague mentioned that possibility, but I think people like her are more welcome in those scenarios than me. I don't have big things to talk about (MP, Interview, 2018<sup>13</sup>).

As each sociocultural setting implies a particular way of peace-building, many local understandings of it emerge (Yousuf et al., 2010; Kruger & Evans, 2018). When defining what can be discussed about peace-building in ELT, English teachers appear as victims of an ongoing *epistemicide* (de Sousa, 2016) or *epistemic violence* (Camelo, 2017; Mignolo, 2000) which exemplifies a sort of *structural violence* (Harris, 2007). When taking teachers' epistemological positions and contributions away, the model of expert appears as represented by colonial institutions, such as UNESCO or the British Council these ones promote the type of knowledge teachers are expected. These ones acquire and apply as "good practices" for the XXI century teacher (Munter, McKinley & Sarabia, 2012).

In general, English teachers *have been demanded to accept* certain, usually instrumental, perspectives on the methodology of ELT (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), which may constrain extra-linguistic issues, like *peace-building* and alternative ways to connect peace and ELT. Thus, ELT revolves around the notion of good practice and frameworks of expertise, which place teachers in a peripheral role (the coloniality of power and being, see Castro-Gómez & Grosfoquel, 2007). That is why investigators like Kumaravadivelu (1991, 2001, 2003) react to this instrumentalization by reminding us that teachers are also the creators of alternative knowledge to peace-building, based on their political acts and critical thinking (Kruger, 2012; Vasilopoulos et al., 2018).

When the experiences and understandings of peace construction teachers have are suppressed, in order to legitimize its modern version, peace-building emerges and acquires its monolithic nature. It would seem that teachers are only "allowed" to think when they present the homogenous view of peace-building in the classroom, regardless of the many different approaches to it, ones which form a "plurality of peace(s)" (Kruger & Evans, 2018, p. 3)

13 This is the translation of the original in Spanish

that contests the canonical versions seen in the statements and proposals of the dominant institutions. As educators with a body of local knowledge and ways of being (even emotional ones), English teachers who address peace-building alternatively seem to be ignored. For those reasons, *resistance* makes sense and deserves attention, because in the face of the opposition to their proposals, teachers have to contest hegemonic versions of peace-building and *rebel* (Mejía, 2017). In fact, this resistance(s) may entail re-signified experiences in peace-building based on the stances and experiences of those teachers, whose positions and roles are more relational than rational as they reclaim their own identity (Mejía, 2017; Kruger & Evans, 2018). Therefore, the question is not only the *what or how behind peace construction* in ELT, but the *from where and by whom*.

In my metaphor, the resignification of peace-building and the teachers who do it in ELT are represented by trees of diverse colors, which are not completely hidden by *the white cover* (Lund & Carr, 2015). This is because English teachers permanently affirm their differences (*we are here*) to challenge and undermine that which weakens their professional standing (Méndez, 2016, 2018), in peace-building. One English teacher I interviewed spoke of a *constitutive tension* (Barros, 2018) between the orthodox and alternative versions of peace-building (Excerpt 3). Even when certain versions of it are prescribed, peace-building is re-signified and varied in those teachers' proposals.

### Excerpt 3

For me, peace depends on how you relate to Nature and your family. Sometimes, we think the school is the only place where people get educated, but it is not true. If we want to build or educate for peace, we need to think about projects which involve the community and children's parents. Peace is an interest of the whole community, and we need to work together for it. I feel like an educator who acknowledges everyday conflict, but I see myself as a co-constructor of peaceful solutions to them.

Along these lines, English teachers' experiences and derived understandings have not received much attention in studies of peace-building in ELT either. When I checked the articles published in national and international academic journals, and the speeches at events, 30% treated English teachers as research participants and even less as co-researchers, while the rest considered them as the implementers of pedagogical projects. When English teachers were the subject of these studies of peace-building, teachers participated from a

practical or instrumental orientation (Yousuf et al., 2010) as various sections of the UNESCO “Tool box” (2013) suggest. Besides, pre-service teachers receive more attention than in-service teachers in these studies. My review of this material confirms the existence of another problem, the neglect of in-service teachers’ experiences regarding peace-building. In my conversations with teachers about peace-building, I noticed they had complementary views of the alternative to the *absence of war* (Sun, 2017; Arikan, 2009). Thereby, we should “give credit” to those teachers’ “different ways of understanding and transforming society” (de Sousa, 2016, p. 22) with their diverse and underexplored selves.

Indeed, as they work on peace-building in ELT, teachers find that different understandings of it emerge, which are linked to their emotional (Benesch, 2018) and spiritual experiences (Westwood, 2014). Alternatives to peace-building in ELT, which contest the orthodox views of it, are not necessarily a matter of encyclopedic knowledge but, rather, a question of feeling, or spirituality, arising from an inner peace. However, the latter possibilities seem to be neglected in ELT, at least, when it comes to the possibility of peace-building and particularly, by teachers in Colombia (a *not yet*). Although “the intellectual and social-emotional nature of teachers’ work” (Bruce, 2013, p. 31) also underpins their proposals towards connecting peace and ELT, even in the form of peace-building and peace education, as Kruger and Evans point out (2018), studies of this subject seem to remove their emotional side. When it is discussed, this emotional dimension is related to students as an alternative to anxiety, stress and competition (Finch, 2004).

That imbalance between the cognitive and emotional sides of teachers (especially their feelings from their bodies) is the result of a rational modern discourse (de Sousa, 2009, 2011; Reagan, 2004; Mejía, 2017), which gives a higher status to cognitive processes than emotional ones, since the former is privileged by science. Emotions have traditionally been “considered as impediments to rational thought, and therefore need to be suppressed” (Benesch, 2018, p. 2). This may explain why there are few studies of these socio-affective dimensions of English teachers who build peace, even though they influence their experiences (Excerpts 1 and 4). A question thus emerges: what is the role of the coloniality of being in the English language teachers’ bodies who serve as the models for peace-building in a rational frame?

## Excerpt 4

One of the strongest reasons why I decided to think of a peace proposal in the English class was a deep feeling of sadness combined with a worry about a very difficult situation in the neighborhood of the school. We constantly heard terrible news about juvenile violence, drugs use and forced prostitution, especially by certain students and lay people in situations of forced internal displacement. I thought: I can't change the future, but I can educate those who will, as Freire said, I guess (PL, Interview, 2018<sup>14</sup>).

In this fashion, I would like to connect the previous *not-yet* situation to my metaphor. There is another site in the Multifaceted Lands of Peace: the Peaceful Garden, which has wonderful flowers of different colors and sizes, along with hyper-realistic humanlike statues who seem to be watering the plants. For me, the students and pedagogical innovations of English teachers represent the flowers whose colorfulness appeals to those who see them. By contrast, the statues, which are usually gray, and seem to be doing something do not have real emotions and even less, spirituality: this lack is an additional but neglected facet of peace-building (Westwood, 2014). This represents how English teachers may appear, according to canonical versions of peace construction, such as peace-building.

In the Multifaceted Lands of Peace, these statues represent a cognitive ability or skill linked to an emotional experience, even though the mainstream does not believe that they *feel*. Do English teachers have emotional and spiritual feelings when building peace? If so, which ones? An English teacher I interviewed told me that she felt *guilty* and *outraged* when talking about her proposal, because it was based on her spiritual beliefs. Do these feelings have a say in social justice? According to Bruce (2013), Cumming-Potvin (2010) and Benesch (2018), they imply a political stance which calls for social justice and may be a way to realize peace in ELT.

Neglecting the emotional side of English teachers who have a crucial role in alternatives to peace-building (Nelson & Appleby, 2015) causes a difficult situation, since inner peace is a condition of it (Oxford et al., 2014). Students receive more attention than in-service teachers in the studies of this problem I reviewed, which neglect the emotions of teachers devoted to re-signify peace-building and their interactions in the classroom. This gap needs to be filled and stands as another “not yet” in peace-building in ELT, since

14 Original in English

not only thoughts but feelings are also part of inner peace (Kruger & Evans, 2018). In the statements and talks under review (like those of the UNESCO or BC), the emotional side (e.g. Excerpt 1) of English teachers is imagined of as a counterpart of their rational side (Benesch, 2018). Their feelings may be related to their spiritual side as well (Westwood, 2014), The UNESCO's Framework for teacher education and Constitution often refer to "*the mind*". In the modern world, cognition is a privileged capacity: what about the others? An English teacher from a school in a deprived district told me that when he implemented his proposal, his stress, worry and fear were so acute that he had to draw on his spiritual resources to cope with the situation. In the interview, he called himself a *spiritual being* and said it was crucial for his work as (in his own words) a *plurilingual peace educator*. This makes me wonder about the role of spirituality when English teachers try to enact or resist peace-building in the face of hostile technical approaches.

It is clear that the canonical policies of peace-building in ELT (as set forth by the UNESCO, Colombian Ministry of Education and BC) do not acknowledge this inner dimension of the modern global citizen. Alternative ways of peace-building by English teachers, especially in areas of conflict or poverty (Nelson & Appleby, 2015), are excluded from the canon or remain on the periphery. They thus lie in the zone of *non-being* (Fanon, 2010) and do not have room for alternative ways of *being* or *becoming*. The teacher, just mentioned, who referred to himself as "pluri-lingual peace educator", acted as a *cultural mediator of conflict and violence* in his school by teaching skills in *citizenship*. Although some fine shades of meaning of this teacher's self-perception are similar to the approach of the *Peace Classrooms Project* of the Universidad de Los Andes, there is a difference. The latter acknowledges the teachers as such, but English language teachers are not directly involved in designing its policies, which has been left to the private sector (Ramos, Nieto & Chaux, 2007; Chaux et al., 2017).

Above all, as teachers reaffirm their practices (Méndez, 2018), and contest the canonical versions of peace-building based on colonialities of power, an opportunity arises to study the matter from a South-South standpoint. More precisely, the many rebellious subjectivities of teachers, based on the experiences of "an-other" (Mignolo, 2000) with emotions and spiritual experiences, can be analyzed with decolonial and poststructuralist lens. In contexts where contemporary colonial mechanisms dominate peace-building, re-inventing it through ELT seems like a valuable project to embark on. In line with Mejía (2017) and de Sousa (2009, 2011), the question is not only

instrumental, but geopolitical, epistemological, ethical and ontological, since English language teachers as human beings seem to be excluded in instrumental peace-building proposals. English language teachers' bodies where other phenomena than only cognitive ones, such as emotional or spiritual could also contribute to alternatives to peace-building. Who is the English teacher who has a different approach to peace-building? Where is it coming from? These, the questions I seek to answer, are the general subject of my research and represent another landscape considering this discussion metaphor: The Sea of Research Possibilities and the start of another journey.

**Main question:** What do English teachers experience behind peace-building through their ELT proposals?

**General objective:** To co-understand English teachers' experiences behind peace construction through their ELT proposals.



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