

8. Towards A Decolonial Project: A Quest between ELT Colonial Ideologies in the ELTP³¹ and the Interrelations among Its Subjects

Yolanda Samacá Bohórquez
ysamacab@udistrital.edu.co
Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

Introduction

In this chapter, I intend to describe and reflect upon the colonial mechanisms that are reflected in some ELT colonial ideologies and practices, which are also extended to the ELTP. I will also portray some of the tensions that arise when framing a decolonial research methodology as a result of the Western research practices where we have been immersed. Finally, I will advocate for a research path to collectively³² understand and analyze the senses of the ELTP under a decolonial perspective and methodology. Such purpose might be accomplished through decolonial hybrid narratives (Díaz, 2015; Walsh, 2013); identifying the locus of enunciation of those who live the reality of the teaching practicum, finding contradictions, walking, dialoguing, and historicizing *possibles and plurals* of the pedagogical experience where I recognize myself as a teacher-researcher, all form part of what I seek to better understand.

After I attended some key graduate seminars offered by the Doctorate Program³³, including *Taking Stock on Decolonial Options* (Professor Castañeda), *Critical Pedagogy* (Professor Guerrero), and *Subjects in Education* (Professor Méndez), and have listened to some of the most prominent decolonial thinkers nowadays, such as Linda Alcoff, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Ramón Grosfoguel, Oyebumi Oyeronke, and Sabelo, at the *Decolonizing Knowledge and Power* summer school last year in Barcelona, I found myself shaken by

31 In this chapter, ELTP stands for English Language Teaching Practicum

32 In this research study, pre-service teachers, school teachers and university mentors are my companion travelers.

33 Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación, DIE.

deep emotions, insights and tensions. Some of my most pressing questions at the moment were: who I have become; who I am; and, who I will be as an English teacher educator-researcher³⁴ who goes through a continuous path to becoming more sensitive to the reality of our contexts, while at the same time faces those challenges related to critically seek for deeper understandings and reconceptualization of ELT from a more situated perspective, along with our students and colleagues and within our educational communities.

Constructing a decolonial project in the ELTP has become an arduous but valuable research endeavor. To me, as a teacher, research is a learning experience that has impacted our educational views and has provoked transformative actions which have transcended the mere academic exercises. It also nourishes and informs our educational, social, cultural, and political practices, as it embraces different forms to enrich our understanding of situations or events that take place in our daily encounters with students and colleagues in our local communities.

As a teacher-researcher who loves her work, I feel passionate about contributing to the formation process of both pre-service & in-service English teachers in our Colombian public universities. However, more importantly than that, is to contribute to my academic, personal, and familiar growth; such growth should be reflected not only in the alternative ways that I already have envisioned for language pedagogy, research, and challenges overcoming, but also on the person I am becoming, which according to Maldonado-Torres (2017) is the one of three major areas of decoloniality, *the who I am*: a person still working on my own constructing and reconstructing, which has taken me to self-reflect on what is implicated for an ELT arena that has been conformed and is still normalized based on Western practices. The remaining two key areas of decoloniality, i.e. executing scholarship and theorizing; and, community activism, are the areas that, from a Global South perspective, need to be put into relation to address thoughts, spirits, and practices, thus leading to understanding decoloniality as an attitude and as a project (Maldonado-Torres, 2017).

Based on the above, being a teacher-researcher becomes an enlightening and enjoyable process that at the same time is highly challenging because of

34 I use the term educator to claim that we are language educators, because our profession goes beyond teaching a language. It embraces the holistic formation provided to our students along their academic processes at school and university levels.

the coloniality present today in our educational system³⁵. To a great extent, coloniality contrives and develops an instrumental relationship between theory and practice, thus becoming something that we need to resist and react against. In this regard, Grosfoguel (2007, cited in Lamus, 2007) claims that the dominant ideologies did not disappear but remained subalternized, and that now, with the crisis of eurocentrism, are the source from which the subjects who have suffered the colonial wound are epistemically mobilized against the system. (p. 329). The above entails that a *research* coloniality that prevents us from the confrontation between the Westernized ideologies and our realities are startled by the contingencies that hang around our societies (Walsh, 2013).

As already mentioned, in this paper I intend to: describe and reflect upon the colonial mechanisms that reflect dominant ideologies and practices³⁶ in ELT, extended to the ELTP; portraying how these colonial situations could be addressed from a decolonial research perspective will form part of the discussion; also, throughout this chapter, I will share my views regarding some epistemological and emotional tensions within the process, the influence of critical pedagogy, and the decolonial turn in the construction and deconstruction of my research project.

35 For Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (2007), “we attend to a global coloniality, a process that certainly has transformed the forms of domination deployed by modernity, but not the structure of center-periphery relations at a global scale that maintains the periphery in a subordinate position” (p. 13). Such coloniality is portrayed in the neoliberal framework in Colombia through the institution called COL-CIENCIAS. It apparently supports research through the strengthening of a scientific, technological, and innovative capacity and competitiveness, while providing training to researchers in our country. However, it focuses its attention mainly on measuring research groups, their academic production and researchers while denying diverse formation processes that take place in our universities.

36 *Practices* dominated by a technocratic approach that emphasizes “mastering subject areas and methods of teaching well documented... that conceives the standardization of school knowledge in the interest of managing and controlling it ... and which devalues the teacher work reducing him/her as an ‘executor’ of the laws and principles of effective teaching (Giroux, p. 123).

Towards a Decolonial Horizon: Recognizing ELTP Colonial Ideologies and Practices

Decoloniality is not a project of returning back to the past, but a present project looking towards the future. So when you try to think from 'traditions', what is happening is that you are using that 'Other' epistemology or cosmology to resignify the present in that 'Other' direction. There is no return to a pure pas"³⁷. (Grosfoguel, 2007)

A decolonial horizon embraces the recognition of the coloniality expressed through the only valid knowledge recognized by Western thinking, thus abating those other ways of knowing pertaining to the local people and their contexts. It encompasses the deconstruction of our understandings of Modernity, which has been a historical expression of Western rationality. (Zavala, 2016). This entails that the research program Modernity/coloniality (Escobar, 2003; Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007) as described by Díaz (2010), is therefore “a critical interest in understanding and questioning the historical processes that resulted in, and that still maintain coloniality as a logic of domination, exclusion, hierarchy, imposition and legitimization of certain subjects, practices and knowledges, on *others* whose nature has been historically segregated, and minimized”³⁸ (p. 219).

Coloniality³⁹ is a matter of power that controls individuals or groups in their own territories and over other individuals; it seems to be constant in Western practices. Such coloniality, as stated by Mignolo (2007), refers to the manner how some Western knowledge systems are privileged over some others. Western knowledge, thus, cannot be assumed as something good or bad; I would say that it should be seen as valid to some extent, but potentially

37 My own translation from Spanish.

38 Ibid.

39 The term coloniality refers to the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administration (Grosfoguel 2007, Maldonado-Torres, 2007). As an example, for Quijano (2005, cited in De Sousa, 2018), “coloniality of knowledge (as of power) continues to be fundamentally instrumental in expanding and reinforcing the oppressions caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy” (p.23).

restrictive, constituting blindness to the other forms of seeing, being and knowing in this Global South.

An implication of the above for our field, is the need to recognize the presence of coloniality as ideological foundation that is evident, as Phillipson (2003) highlights, in the pillars upon which ELT was built. It also expresses the colonial dynamics of the English language, specifically the unanalyzed experience of teaching it, and the theoretical disciplines that were considered relevant to language teaching in the endeavor of spreading out English language. This may represent a subalternity underlined on the neoliberal practices that are now ruling educational and —therefore— language policies in our context⁴⁰; such, according to Jauretche (2008), are produced in conjunction with a legal statute of imperialist colonialism.

It can be said that English-language coloniality has manifested its presence in several ways: a) accepting that the language to teach and to learn is English over other majority and minority languages in our country as above mentioned; b) accepting only one English-language with the belief that there are few valid varieties of the language that are coming from the core English speaking countries⁴¹; and, c) understanding, from a cognitive viewpoint, that English learning (and teaching) is merely related to English proficiency, certifying a language level⁴² and ignoring the sociocultural and political dimensions embedded when learning a second language. Coloniality also

40 As an example, in our country these policies have imposed, since 2004, a bilingual program restricted to Spanish and English, with an only-foreign language certification focus, thus marketing standardized tests to demonstrate quality in the desired growth discourse; such practice mostly has been promoted by the neoliberal framework, associated to English as the language in, and for, a globalized world. This certification process is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (2001), which was adopted outside of critical and situated views of our contexts and has also been promulgated through the 2006 National Standards or “Estándares básicos de competencias en lenguas extranjeras: inglés. Formar en lenguas extranjeras: ¡el reto!” (Basic Standards for Competences in Foreign Languages: English. Teaching in Foreign Languages: The Challenge!). These national standards have been called as of 2016, “Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje de Inglés” (Basic English Learning Rights of English).

41 These countries correspond to what Kachru, (1985, cited in Phillipson, 2003, p. 17) has called ‘the inner circle’ countries where English is the native language: Britain, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), the outer circle (countries where English is a second language), and the expanding circle (countries where English is learned as a foreign language). However, in the illustration Mackay (2009) makes of Kachru’s model, our country Colombia is not considered yet in the expanding circle; in fact, just a few Latin American countries are.

42 This coloniality is present when ELT is reduced only to an instrumental practice that seems to be normalized in this contemporary age of “standardized” education (Magrini, 2014). What matters is English Certification, and curriculums and pedagogical practices rely on it. This is precisely what happens with the Basic English Learning Rights and suggested curriculum launched by the Ministry of Education. This has to do with the form through which the government (I refer to Colombia) demonstrates and controls results.

includes following the teaching methods and textbooks that have intended to homogenize ELT classroom practices, learnings and interactions; such methods have been widely theorized and reproduced, and are still perpetuated as if all territories and their peoples were the same, had the same experiences, expectations and concerns⁴³; it also entails believing in language certification as the only form to demonstrate that people speak a second language, expecting them to have a near-native like control. These situations have definitely maintained the limited and naturalized practices expanded by *Western* thinking.

In this context, the teaching practicum has also inherited a colonial legacy that regards it as a period for transferring knowledge and skills from the school context, hence reducing and normalizing the encounters with students and teachers within the didactic process in the ELT classrooms⁴⁴; that is because such colonial legacy is mostly rooted on the theories that have been constructed by *experts* in the inner circle of the Global North. I would say that colonialist theories have had an excessive contribution to a profession that most of the time is taken for granted, while have clearly influenced second language teaching and learning policies, thus turning them into the technical discourses to which teachers in the field have been exposed.

Some questions that emerge when identifying the colonial legacy in ELT and ELTP, are: Are we controlling ELT? What are we controlling? Are we being controlled? How does it happen? Are we just marketing English and English teaching practices? Can we think about different ways of interpretation? While planning my research project, I came to identify some colonial mechanisms that need to be revealed when attempting to address these questions.

First, pre-service teachers' objectification in the ELTP relates to the ways how sometimes they are seen during this stage, when a monolithic conception of the ELTP and the school structures does not allow learning and teaching reflectively; the same can be said about school and university mentors who tell pre-service teachers what to do, how, when, and where to do it. ELT's voices are heard only to report on what they have been requested to do: lesson planning, materials design, assessment and evaluation practices in the classroom, report of classes, and reflections on these instructional practices.

43 It is not my intention to deny the contributions of Western thinking. However, these contributions have been universalized without considering the particularities of our contexts. That has transformed those contributions into the creation of standard processes and actions that originate ineffective visions of what ELT should be and determine an only- method-perspective.

44 When addressing the didactic dimension, I value its contributions and the need to reposition it within pedagogy. However, in our field it seems to restrict the whole holistic process.

This objectification suggests the ELTP as a place devoted to didactic skills and operative aspects of ELT, inhabiting a space that restricts them from moving to alternative options, thus revealing a homogenizing purpose of learning and teaching English in the ELTP. Once again, coloniality is present to instruct us to be submissive, conformist and passive technicians (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Crandall, 2000).

Second, teaching and learning, in and for a globalized world, deal with how the ELT field might be reduced to the instrumental practice of language certification. This instrumental rationality is also a concern in initial language teacher education programs, for which the educational policy⁴⁵ requires pre-service English teachers to demonstrate a C1 level in accordance with the Common European Council of Europe; that is extended to student-teachers in other areas, who will have to evidence an A2 level within a two-year timeframe, followed by demonstrating a B1 or higher level from the third year after implementing the Licensure Programs Restructuring Process. In addition to it, the technocratic conception of the pedagogical experience⁴⁶ imbued in this educational policy, clearly illustrates, as mentioned previously, the development of standardizations of knowledge⁴⁷ and practices with the purpose of controlling teachers' work, values and actions, i.e. how people in general think in the particular case of ELT.

A third key colonial mechanism are the contradictions that we, teachers, face on a daily basis, mainly because mentors claim to be involved in transformations that challenge these colonial practices; yet, sometimes the ELTP remains the same, maintaining a single focus on the instructional dimension of English-language teaching due to the demands of language policies in our context such as those already mentioned.

Fourth, Western textbooks, and Western practices included on those textbooks rely mainly on acknowledging their geographical contexts and

45 *Resolución 18583 de 2017* emanated by the Ministry of Education.

46 On my view, the conception of the pedagogical experience in this educational policy relies only on the technical expertise (knowing only the what and how to teach). It denies the socio critical and cultural perspectives of education and pedagogy that public Faculties of Education in Colombia, such as the one at Universidad Distrital, have historically and contextually been constructing. This has taken place through the research, pedagogical, disciplinary, and ethical-political holistic fields of formation at Universidad Distrital, in the need to prepare future teachers to examine the real school contexts, going beyond the language of management and efficiency. This is what Giroux (1988) calls *management pedagogies*.

47 Standardized has to do with what Magrini (2014) calls *social efficiency*: learning as something to be reproduced, demonstrated, and/or controlled, objectifying language, language teaching and our profession as stated in the global tendencies in education.

people idiosyncracies, thus featuring only a possible way of being as an English speaker, including how to look like, how to sound like⁴⁸, and most importantly depicting only few ways of living that hardly portray the reality of our contexts, our people, and our life practices. Unfortunately, such industry of textbooks dislocate our practices to perpetuate their use, forgetting that our country, our ways of transportation, our schools, our homes, and our ways of speaking are also valuable and give us meaning as Colombians.

Fifth, pre-service teachers are not alone in their teaching practicum. Both their school and university mentors influence the forms how the ELTP has been conceived and developed within the school context. For Medina (2015), the school is situated at a space where the educator plays out his/her dynamism and multiplicity of options, which are configured as part of the projects to educate the new generations. In this sense, school is a place of resistances and disputes, of articulations and differences, of cultural and identity transformation mediated by the word of the *other*. Henceforth, there are some individual and collective subjectivities⁴⁹ that often are trapped or denied because of the instrumental rationality assumed to educate pre-service teachers. Interpreting the senses of the ELTP and the intersubjective relationship between its subjects and its institutions has become my major concern. It is important to recognize how the coloniality of knowing, being and power in ELT has been reflected in the ELTP, so that to break the enduring structure of the Western thinking model that has been integrated into the neoliberal contexts we live in; yet, we also need to challenge that.

Based on the above, we cannot deny that to some extent, ELT has been reduced to a very technical and colonial field, where the purpose is to teach and/or learn English because of the socio-economic demands of neoliberalism⁵⁰. This is evident in Tollefson's analyzes of the hegemony of English by means of introducing a paradox: "At a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-

48 Although it is not my intention to discuss racial issues in English-language teaching yet, I think that we need to reconceptualize the role and relationship of language, race, and coloniality.

49 On my viewpoint, subjectivities are intertwined in what the decolonial turn calls *different ways of being and doing* to understand the self, the lived experience and the world, while intersubjectivities are those interrelations between people to interpret the meaning of social situations. In this regard, Mignolo (2005) challenges the coloniality of being when claiming that "nothing else than producing the idea that certain people do not belong to history—that they are non-beings. Thus, lurking beneath the European story of discovery are the histories, experiences, and silenced conceptual narratives of those who were disqualified as human beings, as historical actors, and as capable of thinking and understanding." (p.4)

50 A neoliberalism that has focused on three fundamental aspects: Political economy of educational financing; links between education and work, and standards of academic excellence. (Mayo, 2015)

being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities” ((2000, cited in Pennycook, 2007 p. 17). This implies that, even though English has been seen as a language of global communication in several areas, the obstacle, most of the time, relies only on English proficiency and has serious implications for its teaching and learning process.

Identifying these issues leads me to affirm that we, English teachers, have been denied being ourselves, because the nature of our profession has been conceived by Western thought. We have forgotten about ourselves as we have been subjected to Westernized theories. We have not thought about English-language teaching from our local perspectives. Therefore, the ELTP replicates these models where the possibility for subjectivities and intersubjectivities of the actors of the ELTP has not been given the chance to be voiced⁵¹. In this regard, Alcoff (2007), suggests a White ignorance that undermines who we are in order to serve the Global North. This author also questions how ignorance⁵², as an epistemic practice in itself, is present when it does not recognize: a) that the knowers in *subalternity* are situated in time and space, with specific social locations, specific practices that are consistent with their contexts, and the specific features of groups of knowers; and, b) that oppressive systems do not acknowledge themselves as oppressive. From these ideas, I would ask some other questions to be reflected upon in the ELT field: Who has the sovereignty over English and English-language teaching? Can we think about critical movements thinking of the subjects of the teaching practicum in a different perspective?

To dismantle these issues, we might start with the *possibles and plurals*⁵³ of the pedagogical experiences, where language is: a) a means for students and teachers to locate their understandings about the world; b) a pedagogical practice oriented more towards the recognition of diversity and aspects influencing students’ lives and relationships, as we all feel, think and act differently; and, c) a pedagogical pluralism that empowers teachers to trust in what they do as new understandings, new ways of being, knowing and doing. There is not only one way, but multiple ones (Samacá, 2018).

51 Voicing is not simply about giving voice to those who are invisible; it’s about talking about me, us, them, and with them, because we have a meeting point and several partial connections.

52 This epistemic practice is called by Mills (2007) *White ignorance* and declares that it implies the possibility of a contrasting *knowledge*, a contrast that would be lost if all claims to truth were equally spurious, or just a matter of competing discourses. It is a White ignorance that is not confined to white people but is used by “No-Whites to a greater or lesser extent because of the power relations and patterns of ideological hegemony involved” (p. 22).

53 I use this term to refer to one’s own pedagogies as different from the universal ones.

Thus, decolonizing knowledge, as the epistemological stance underpinning my research interest on interpreting the senses of the ELTP and the interrelations among its subjects, implies that the diversity of the world is infinite, and that there are multiple ways of knowing, being and doing both in our world or worlds that are not visible to Western thinking; it also states that coloniality of power, being and knowing, has been assumed as dynamics of the social oppression present in subtle ways; such oppression is not easy to recognize and should be resisted against while in the processes of teaching and learning that play out in the lives of these *other*⁵⁴ students. (Kumashiro, 2000).

Devising alternative ways of knowing, being and doing⁵⁵ is something that implies dialogue and confrontation between the Global North and Global South, which bring us back to the possibilities of those *other* perspectives that remain subalternized; these *other* perspectives might become the inspiring source for those, including myself, who have suffered that colonial wound and mobilize epistemically against the system (Grosfoguel, p. 329). In the same line of thought, decoloniality for Mignolo (2012) “relates to the processes through which those who do not accept to be dominated and controlled do not only work to get rid of coloniality, but also to construct social, local and world organizations that are not submissive and controlled” (p. 148).

Then, the ELTP can not only be viewed as a period to transfer knowledge and skills acquired within the school context, but also as a process of understanding, teaching and learning; a time of formation; yet also a time of transformation. Pre-service teachers come to this stage with several expectations, where they make connections with their previous experiences as English language learners, the relations they engage in while attending university courses, as well as the kind of teachers they would like to become. Literature has placed attention on these processes; however, from my experience, understanding that the ELTP is co-constructed among its subjects, their subjectivities and intersubjectivities, is something that needs deep analyses and reflections in order to give meaning to their locations, relationships, and actions towards the ELTP. The process of dismantling power matrices of coloniality necessarily embodies a decolonial attitude that considers emotions, feelings, and our senses to decolonize our minds and practices.

54 Kumashiro (2000) explains that “the term *other* refers to those groups that are traditionally marginalized in society” (p. 26).

55 For Restrepo & Rojas (2010), ways of knowing, being and power connect with the decolonial inflection, understood in broad terms as the critical thoughts that seek to transform the conditions in which Eurocentrism and the coloniality in the world system undermine human beings (*coloniality of being*), marginalize and invisibilize the plurality of knowledge (*coloniality of knowledge*) and hierarchize human groups and places in a global power pattern for their exploitation for the sake of the expanded accumulation of capital (*coloniality of power*).

Towards a Decolonial Research Path: Mapping Hybrid Narratives

*It is necessary to 'deconstruct' what has been thought,
to think what to think, to unravel the most endearing of our knowledge
and to give course to the unprecedented,
risking derailing our latests certainties
and to question the building of Science.
Enrique Leff (2006)⁵⁶*

In this second part of this chapter, I will describe and reflect upon some tensions in the Western research visions that I detected when attempting to locate and map out a methodology for my research journey. As an advocate of the decolonial perspective, I will also describe my initial conceptualization to develop decolonial hybrid narratives as a research path to collectively⁵⁷ understand and analyze the senses of the ETLP.

Noticing that sometimes our language-teaching practices have been limited to the discipline, i.e. to the linguistic dimensions of the language along with its didactic dimension, and consequently have responded to the standards of globalization that come from the outside, thus imposing Western ways of knowing and researching in ELT, I have come to identify what has become an emotional and epistemological tension when situating my research interest and the roles of those who would intervene in it. The quote from Leff (2006) at the beginning of this section made me engage in self-reflections about the qualitative research development in the last 20 years: it has moved from instructional aspects of teaching, to situated teaching and learning practices and social, cultural, critical, and political issues that emerge in our educational contexts. It has also moved from positivist to critical forms of conducting research studies, considering diverse frameworks that have been widely discussed and implemented across multiple research experiences in international and local contexts.

A handful of viewpoints have been developed within the qualitative research mindframe, so the actual tension sits on how to conceive a research path that could support the purpose of the decolonial project when we were and

⁵⁶ The translation is mine from the original text in Spanish titled "Más allá de la interdisciplinariedad, Racionalidad ambiental y diálogo de saberes" (p.2).

⁵⁷ In this research study, pre-service teachers, school teachers and university mentors are my companion travelers.

still are questioning the Western paradigms. The apparent contradiction here is necessary to find common grounds for what the research literature has proposed and what decolonial perspective intends to unveil. This has been not a personal, but a collective concern shared by my PhD partners and professors at the Doctorate Program. We have held long and interesting dialogues, which might have fallen into controversies at times, regarding research, its purpose in education, the relationality between teacher researchers and those who will be involved in our projects, etc. Our field, a place for struggle and options, has a potential to become quicksand; yet, we did not want to get pulled under. Instead, this quicksand has timidly pushed us to unravel the great extend to which we had been submissive to the images of researcher/researched that Western tradition imposed, the rigor of its methodological protocols, and the linear times and neutrality to follow (De Sousa, 2018).

When I began working on this research project, I assumed that I would conduct a poststructuralist study. This meant that I had the expectation that the existing research frameworks pertaining to this perspective would be helpful to my study. Indeed, I devoted some time to document my research concerns, and spent long time conceptualizing and establishing theoretical relationships between such epistemological stance and research methodologies focused mostly on the complexities of the particular people, places, events and processes under the framework. However, since I had struggled to define the purpose of my research interest, I had not been able to establish the categories I wanted to analyze in my project. Therefore, unexpectedly I found myself moving more and more towards the purposeful insightful search for decoloniality. Through it, I started finding a deeper comprehension of what happened in the ELTP. I must say that as a language teacher educator I have been involved in teaching practicum processes in different universities and schools. I feel passionate about contributing to the personal and professional formation of pre-service teachers. Likewise, being at the school with English teachers and their students is what has provoked and nurture my views on the significance of understanding the senses of the ELTP through the experiences we live at the school contexts so that to start thinking about possibilities for an ELTP *other*.

The above is not to say that interesting and useful contributions could not have been achieved by focusing more exclusively and in greater depth on the poststructuralist framework, but tensions within this view remained unresolved. On an occasion when my partners, my professor, and I, were debating research issues in our research seminars, one of them made me realize that I was facing an emotional tension because I was closer to the

critical decolonial perspective than to the poststructuralist. I regarded her comment insightful. Along with the ideas of my research professors and my mentor, such insights led me to decide situating my study under the decolonial view, within a more relational, human and collective praxis that is dynamic and developmental, and should portray modes of being, doing and knowing that would remain undisclosed otherwise.

My inner voice advised me to continue my readings to guide my reflections about how the Global North invisibilizes and dehumanizes the possibility to be (for example) a decolonial English teacher in my own project. Such, because within Global North rationality, the relationality amongst ELTP subjects is often times regarded as no relevant in the process of learning, teaching and becoming a teacher, while its monolithic discourses around the ELTP objectify the voices and limit the practices of pre-service teachers, school and university mentors. Following Mignolo (2009), “a decolonial project should be participative, interactive and emancipatory, and of course, ethical.”

As discussed, thinking about *research ways* from a decolonial perspective has been a struggle, as well as challenge to understand, from a local perspective “the possibility to dialogue about the Western epistemic traditions localized within their canons, with the local ones thought from a pluriversal epistemology that dialogues with the diverse ways how knowledge is constructed and co-constructed in extra academic and extra-scientific spaces” (Walsh, 2013, p. 449). Thus, the idea of conducting a qualitative research study with different lenses, entails an epistemological detachment from traditional to critical perspectives, confronting the intersections and tensions between the Global North and the decolonial alternatives; that should bridge a research path leading towards understanding the senses of the ELTP through the interrelations constructed in the experiences and practices of pre-service teachers, school teachers and university mentors.

Giving to ourselves (within my research study) the possibility to think about our own selves under broader and new perspectives, is something that would produce resonances to problematize the coloniality of the teaching practicum. Indeed, multiple frameworks should come from our locus of enunciation to retrieve the silenced, the denied, the trapped, thus re-envisioning the ELTP from its margins, and dialogically constructing decolonial ways to being, knowing, and doing within the ELTP. It should help us out of the system that has been imposed on us (Mignolo 2019), by the Western framed knowledge that has limited us to fixed categories.

I intend to use a decolonizing research methodology that is rooted on hybrid narratives. A collective participatory qualitative path will be developed through *relatos* as dialogical and reflective way to understand and analyze the senses of the ELTP. To approach decolonial narratives, I will start by asserting that I respect and value the contributions and reflections constructed through Narrative Inquiry so far. This perspective admits that through narratives we give accounts of the ways we experience and perceive our worlds. As Brunner (2000) has contended, “It is through our own stories that we mainly build a version of ourselves in the world” (p.15). Understanding that we construct meaning through language, Connelly & Clandinin (1990) assert that “human beings are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (p.2). In this regard, Ricoeur (2001) affirms that “the narrative structures the experience”; therefore, it allows us to share both the lived experience and the meaning we give to what we have lived.

It is necessary to envision ways to mobilize the field, and to think of a more situated perspective of narratives (hybrid narratives as described by Díaz, 2015 and Walsh, 2013), “to decolonize our stories, situating our objectivity in a network of delocalized relationships and fragmented identities” (Balash & Montenegro, 2003, cited in Díaz, 2015, p. 57). This approach should lead us to expressing from a locus of enunciation where we recognize ourselves as a part of all what we intend to understand (“I am where I think”, Mignolo, 2005). Narratives can be memories⁵⁸ to denounce the ELTP totalizing content; they can give an account of a territory, which in this particular case would be the school context. Some narratives may be referred to as silenced narratives, where identities and subjectivities are trapped or denied; some other narratives might historicize the intergenerational dialogue to experience the teaching practicum, the school, the subjects and subjectivities in these territories; yet, some others might be narratives of accuracy, exclusion, and marginalization that denounce silences. Rather than becoming a voice to make visible what is invisible, (Walsh, 2013) *relatos* are about listening to co-construct alternative ways of thinking the ELTP based on all the subjects that interact in this scenario. In the same line of thought, Haraway (1995) suggests *situated knowledge* to transcend the homogenizing vision of the Western hegemonic sciences, and to locate narratives as the possibilities to

58 For Gómez (2015) “the memory of the community incorporated in the tasks of everyday life and thinking about it, opens the exercise of transmission to the reception of the legacy and the reinvention of inheritance without undermining the desire to be someone different, without ignoring or denying the other’s demand” (p. 15). This enfolds the space for pre-service teachers, school and university mentors to subvert the coloniality of ELT represented in the ELTP.

build on the experiences constructing a memory that dialogues in silence with other memories.

It is through dialogues that *relatos* in my research study will be constructed. They should allow us, my companion travelers and me, to enter in a participative dialogue that would intend to compose a multidimensional narrative going and coming back from the individual to the collective. Thus, the partialities of our views indeed will be acknowledging the need to interact with other partialities (Haraway, 1995). Hence, our *relatos* will be not only giving voice to those who are invisible, but will also talk about me, about us, about them, and with them, because we shall have found a meeting point and several partial connections, i.e. we all shall have been *knowing subjects* (Vasilachis, 2009). Accordingly, these *relatos* would have a *responsive* character; they will not speak to us *about* the subjects themselves but should speak to us *through* a network of stories arising from the relationships and partial connections of those who write them.

Relatos give an account of complex realities in a language that experiences *other* grammars to recognize the coloniality in daily encounters with the ELTP, as well as the power relations between who asks and who responds in a way that prevents relationships from domination. Narratives are a collective construction of mutual and distinct understandings, where the texts are rewritten and modified by their authors. As mentioned above, *relatos* articulate memory, with entries into the past as well as into the present and the future; they are stories that constitute us as subjects of our own stories, and lead us to understand our practices, knowledge, and uncertainties. (Guzmán, Delgadillo & Pérez, 2015).

For Balash and Montenegro (2003, cited in Díaz, 2015), “the narrative productions are a tool that allows us to decolonize our stories, situating our objectivity in a network of de-localized relationships and fragmented identities” (p. 57). Hence, narratives can be memories that denounce their totalizing content, rather than becoming the voice itself to make visible what is invisible; narratives are about listening to create alternative ways of thinking, which in the case of my research project, the ELTP, means creating such alternative thinking *from* all the subjects that interact in this scenario. For Vega (2001, cited in Walsh, 2013), the voice, the experience, the identity, and the history of the subaltern in the narratives is significant to vindicate the peripheral localities.

Decolonial Remarks

Hemos sido colonizados por las narrativas de la exactitud, por la linealidad de la existencia que se va desarrollando por etapas que deben ser superadas a toda costa para poder llegar a ser. En esta medida, el error es un sacrilegio que se paga a costos sociales elevados, bajo la mirada ampliada por la lupa de la censura y el estigma que no escatiman nada para adjetivar a quien falta a la norma. Los miedos nos rondan a cada instante, desenvainando sin recato su daga de lo prohibido, es decir, de la imposibilidad de faltarle a la certeza y a la estabilidad, de cumplirle a lo previsible en desmedro de lo misterioso, de lo fantástico, de lo irremediabilmente desconocido...

We have been colonized by the narratives of accuracy, by the linearity of existence that is to be phased and should be overcome at all costs in order to become. To this extent, the error is a sacrilege that is paid at high social costs, under the gaze expanded by the magnifying glass of censorship and stigma that do not skimp on nothing to adjectivize to those who break the norm. Fears haunt us at every instant, unscrupulously drawing his dagger from the forbidden, that is to say, from the impossibility of lacking certainty and stability, from fulfilling the predictable at the expense of the mysterious, of the fantastic, of the hopelessly unknown ...
(Katherine Walsh, 2013)

Conclusion

As mentioned in the first part of this paper, engaging in the project of decoloniality entails both an attitude and a project. It implicates two basic premises: colonialism as a fundamental problem, and the decolonial as an imperative task. The decolonial attitude is an orientation that promotes reformation of decolonial understanding, including decolonial critique in the relations with others. Attitude and a collective project encompass a change in the way we ask questions, an attitude to let us be involved in work towards the others, to encounter others, to start with the individual but to continue with the collective (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Thus, it is significant to think of hybrid narratives as options to address the multidimensionality of the subjectivities and intersubjectivities of the ELTPC.

I intend to construct an understanding of ELTP narratives, from the *possibles and plurals* of the cultural, social, linguistic experiences, and within those *possible other* methodologies that we cannot recognize but might reinterpret hybrid narratives as alternatives to comprehend the visions of the world in a way that co-constructs and reconstructs subjectivities and intersubjectivities. This decision should clearly reflect my research position and my commitment as a teacher–researcher and university mentor who intends to deconstruct critically ELTP *from and within* all ELTP subjects. This research path should enable us to transform knowledge in an attempt to break with the generalizing patterns that, ignoring our particularities, we might have used to refer to the English language teacher and English language learner as a kind of drawer where we all should fit. It also constitutes an insightful way to uncover teachers' subjectivities constructed from their experiences and practices and how they might transform their views and practices in the ELT profession. Using Professor Castaneda's words, convergences and divergences can bring complexity and richness to the construction of new forms of meaning regarding our realities as English language educators. I am starting a journey I believe in, and I will defend my right to be myself as well as to believe in who I am as a Colombian English teacher educator and researcher who advocates for a professional yet sensitive view towards language education praxis.

References

Alcoff, L. (2007). Epistemologies of Ignorance. In: Sullivan, S., Tuana, N. (eds). *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Bruner, J. (2000). *La educación puerta de la cultura*. Madrid: Aprendizaje Visor.

Castro-Gómez, S., Grosfoguel, R. (2007). Prólogo. Giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico. En: Castro-Gómez, S., Grosfoguel, R. (eds). *El giro decolonial. Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*. Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores.

Crandall, J. (2000). Language Teacher Education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (20), pp. 34-55. Cambridge University Press.

Connelly, M., Clandinin, J. (1995). Relatos de experiencias e investigación narrativa. En: Larrosa et al. *Déjame que te cuente. Ensayos sobre narrativa y educación*. Barcelona: Laertes.

De Sousa Santos, B. (2018). *The end of the cognitive empire: the coming of age of epistemologies of the South*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Díaz, C. (2010). Hacia una pedagogía en clave decolonial: entre aperturas, búsquedas y posibilidades. *Tabula Rasa* (13), pp. 217-233.

Giroux, H. (1988). *Teachers as Intellectuals. Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

Gómez, S. (2015). Prólogo. *Pedagogías insumisas Movimientos político-pedagógicos y memorias colectivas de 'educaciones otras' en América Latina*. México: Juan Pablos Editor.

Grosfoguel, R. (2006). La descolonización de la economía política y los estudios postcoloniales: transmodernidad, pensamiento fronterizo y colonialidad global. *Tabula Rasa* (4), pp. 17-48.

Haraway, D. (1995) *Conocimientos situados: La cuestión científica en el feminismo y el privilegio de la perspectiva parcial*. En: Haraway, D. (ed). *Ciencia, cyborgs y mujeres. La reinención de la naturaleza*. Madrid, España: Cátedra.

Jauretche, A. (2008). La yapa. La colonización pedagógica. En: Jauretche, A. *Los profetas del odio y la yapa*. Buenos Aires: Corregidor.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). Conceptualizing Teaching Acts. In: *Beyond methods. Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lamus, D. (2007). Decolonial Dialogues with Ramón Grosfoguel: Transmodernizing Feminisms. *Tabula Rasa* (7), pp. 323-340.

Leff, E. (2006). *Más allá de la interdisciplinariedad, racionalidad ambiental y diálogo de saberes*. Ponencia I Congreso internacional interdisciplinar de participación, animación e intervención socioeducativa. Barcelona.

Magrini, J. (2014). The Destruction of the Language of Learning in Social Efficiency. In: *Social Efficiency and Instrumentalism in Education. Critical Essays in Ontology, Phenomenology, and Philosophical Hermeneutics*. New York: Routledge.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2017). *Introduction to the Decolonial Turn and Decoloniality*. Course on Decolonizing Knowledge and Power: Postcolonial Studies, Decolonizing Horizons. Centro de Estudios de Diálogo Global y la Fundación Universitaria Autónoma de Barcelona.

Mayo, P. (2015). *Hegemony and Education Under Neoliberalism. Insights from Gramsci*. New York: Routledge.

Mignolo, W. (2005). *The Idea of Latin America*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Mignolo, W. (2007). Introduction. Coloniality of Power and Decolonial Thinking. *Cultural Studies* (21)2-3, pp. 155-167.

Mignolo, W. (2012). Estéticas decoloniales. En: Cortés, L. (eds). *Arte + Política. Pensamientos críticos en época de crisis*. Bogotá: Editorial Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

Mignolo, W. (2019). *El encuentro de la reconstitución epistemológica con la reconstitución estética*. Doctorado en estudios artísticos, Casa abierta 2019. Facultad de Artes ASAB. Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas.

Mills, C. (2007). White Ignorance. In: Sullivan, S., Tuana, N. (eds). *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN). (2017). *Resolución 18583 de 2017*. Bogotá.

Phillipson, R. (2003). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Restrepo, E., Rojas, A. (2010). *Inflexión decolonial: fuentes, conceptos y cuestionamientos*. Popayán: Editorial Universidad del Cauca

Ricoeur, P. (2001). *Del texto a la acción. Ensayos de hermenéutica II*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

Samacá (2018). Delving into Pre--Service Teachers', Cooperating Teachers' and University Mentors' Positionings in the Initial English Teaching Practicum. In: *ELT Local Research Agendas*. Doctorado Interinstitucional en Educación. Bogotá: Editorial UD

Vasilachis, I. (2009). Los fundamentos ontológicos y epistemológicos de la investigación cualitativa. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(2), Art. 30. Retrieved from: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0902307>

Walsh, C. (2013). *Pedagogías decoloniales: prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir*. Tomo I. Quito: Abya Yala.

Zavala M. (2016) Decolonial Methodologies in Education. In: Peters, M. (eds). *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Springer, Singapore.