

AFTERWORD

Envisaging a Future Path for Positive Psychology and Decoloniality in ELT

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As clearly articulated in the introductory chapter, the aftermath of the legacies of material and symbolic colonization have inflicted long-lasting wounds that, over time, have become chronic diseases. Many of these wounds have naturalized into one-size-fits-all curricula, standardized pedagogies, and deficit-based discourses that frame learners and teachers – particularly those from racialized, Indigenous, migrant, and linguistically diverse backgrounds – as perpetually lacking. These inherited structures, often invisible to those who benefit from them, continue to shape the emotional experiences, identity possibilities, and wellbeing of learners and educators within English language education.

While we as editors recognize the importance of disrupting and dismantling the oppressive systems and structures in English language education, we are equally mindful that transformation requires more than critique alone. Dismantling inequitable systems must be accompanied by an intentional commitment to imagining and cultivating alternative ways of being, relating, and learning. This means not only identifying the colonial legacies

that continue to shape ELT, through monolingual ideologies, assimilationist language policies, market-driven internationalization, and the commodification of English, but also fostering pedagogical, emotional and ecological landscapes that enable educators and learners to flourish within and beyond these constraints. This, to a certain extent, relates to Andreotti's (2011) decolonial idea of 'global mindedness' that places emphasis on reading the world through 'other' eyes.

It is from this commitment to imagining otherwise that we turn to dialogue – not as an illustrative device, but as a decolonial and relational praxis in its own right (Jain et al., 2026a). Dialogue allows us to linger with uncertainty, to listen across difference, and to make visible the affective, ethical, and political labor that underpins scholarly work (Chen & McAlinden, 2026). What follows is a dialogic reflection among the three editors, grounded in our shared yet differently situated experiences across the Global South and the Global North, as we collectively reflect on healing, care, and hope as necessary conditions for reimagining ELT futures.

Miguel: As we look back into the work we have done in putting together this volume, I remember that the first salient idea that came up in our preparatory meeting was that of healing and care. Perhaps as remnants from the pandemics, we talked about these two concepts as opening avenues of meaning in English language education to counteract the oppression from standardization, both in terms of measurement and preferred dialectal variations of the language, and for the pervasive performativity of native speakerism in the Global South. As we reflected on these issues, other powerful concepts came to the fore, such as hope and lovingness. And we found the umbrella paradigm of positive

psychology, which had already been used in the field of SLA. However, we immediately realized that the dynamics of these concepts worked differently in the context of the Global South where decoloniality was reexamining the sociocultural and political scenario of ELT. So, we embarked in the search for communicating vessels between these two framings and the answers that we got to the call for chapters was rich in reassuring that these connections exist and that they are marking a new stage in the history of ELT in the Global South.

Yet, apparently because of the hegemonic influence and focus of these paradigms on the individual and people, the avenues these chapters travel do not include the natural environment so that, for example, care can encompass nature and other non-human beings.

Julian: You read my mind, Miguel. I also recall those ongoing virtual meetings with you (in Santiago, Chile), Leo (Sydney, New South Wales) and myself (Perth, Western Australia) throughout the book project. We chatted in real time via Teams and (a)synchronously via WhatsApp, emailing and shared OneDrive. Not only were they thought-provoking and engendering inspirations, this collegial editorship has also brought our transnational, translingual, and humanizing repertoires closer together (Jain et al., 2026b). We were not just talking about the book business as usual, but always checked everyone's emotional temperature, showing genuine care and love for each other. We situated our conversations in broader geo/sociopolitical, cultural, ideological, and affective dimensions given that the complex entanglements also impact the ELT landscape locally and globally. What matters is that ELT in the 21st century is no longer simply teaching the English language as is by following dominant

English norms (e.g. American/British), which are still entrenched in commercially ready textbooks, curricula, and national education reforms (e.g., English-medium instruction in the Global South). Rather, it challenges us to unravel and critically examine those ideological and emotional entanglements, shaping the way we teach, learn, and respond. Among all these uncertainties, messiness, and normativity surrounding us, we can't help but wonder how and where we can find solace and a beacon of hope in the current ELT landscape? Given what is actually happening in the world now, how can we bring hope, healing, and critical love to teaching and learning, particularly in those war-torn regions and vulnerable/marginalized communities? Having these hard conversations in our editorial meetings is a constant reminder of what propelled us to initiate this meaningful book project at the start and why it is important to shift from a confrontational lens (to defy English imperialism) to a healing approach that is most needed now.

Leo: Listening to both of you, I am struck by how much this project has been shaped not only by shared intellectual commitments, but also by a shared sense of exhaustion – what we briefly described in the introduction as epistemic and affective fatigue. After some years of naming coloniality, linguistic racism, native speakerism, and accentism in ELT, I found myself increasingly unsettled by a lingering question: *what comes after critique when critique alone no longer sustains us?* (Hodgson et al., 2017, 2020). This is not a rejection of criticality – far from it – but an acknowledgement that critique, when detached from care, can leave educators and learners emotionally depleted, relationally fragmented, and ethically adrift.

In my own work with racialized and migrant teachers (e.g. Abarzúa-Silva & Cabezas-Bravo, 2025; Veliz & Chen, 2024; Veliz, Gao, et al., 2024; Veliz, Heinrichs, et al., 2024; Veliz et al., 2026; Veliz et al., 2025), particularly in English-dominant contexts such as Australia, I have seen how deficit discourses are not only structural but deeply affective. Teachers are expected to be resilient, adaptable, and endlessly grateful, even as they navigate linguistic surveillance, accent discrimination, and institutional marginalization. Within such conditions, wellbeing is often framed as an individual responsibility, a matter of mindset or self-management, rather than as something shaped by histories of coloniality, racism, and exclusion. This is where I see a critical tension, but also a generative possibility, in bringing decoloniality into dialogue with PP.

For me, decolonial PP only becomes meaningful when it refuses depoliticized narratives of flourishing and instead sits with pain, anger, grief, and fatigue as legitimate responses to systemic injustice. Healing, in this sense, is not about returning to a prior state of wholeness – because for many, such wholeness never existed within colonial systems – but about creating conditions for collective repair, dignity, and recognition. Critical love, then, is not comfortable or benign; it is risky, unsettling, and often slow. It asks us to remain present with contradiction, to care without romanticizing, and to imagine otherwise while fully acknowledging the violence of what is.

What gives me hope in this volume is precisely this refusal of easy answers. Across the chapters, we see educators grappling with institutional constraints while still carving out spaces of relationality, solidarity, and ethical responsibility. These are not grand gestures of transformation, but small, situated acts of resistance and care, moments where language education becomes

a site of listening, healing, and collective becoming. In that sense, I see this dialogue, and this book, as an invitation: to pause, to breathe, and to ask how we might continue doing critical work *without losing our capacity to feel, to relate, and to hope together*.

Miguel: I totally agree with you, Julian and Leo, in that our conversations around this book have propitiated rich and often challenging discussions about political issues that extend well beyond the boundaries of ELT as a technical or methodological field. These dialogues have continually pushed us to confront how language education is entangled with broader structures of power, colonial legacies, neoliberal agendas, racialized hierarchies, and epistemic exclusions, that shape whose knowledge, voices, and languages are legitimized. What has been particularly meaningful for me is that these political conversations have never been abstract or detached; they have been grounded in our own situated experiences as educators working across different geopolitical, institutional, and affective contexts. In this sense, the book has become not only an academic project, but also a collective space for critical reflection, care, and ethical engagement, where questioning injustice and imagining alternatives have gone hand in hand.

Julian: Truthfully, before embarking on this book project, I had been engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning as well as researching through the feminist/radical lens, feeling supercharged to critique, disrupt and subvert those Anglocentric hegemonies, especially the long-held native-speakerism that reproduces linguistic discrimination, coloniallingualism, and accentism. I have worked with Leo (Veliz & Chen, 2025; Veliz et

al., 2025) and other colleagues (Dobinson et al., 2024; Dobinson et al., 2025; Steele et al., 2025) in this space and felt it's vital to keep 'fighting' till we restore social justice and equity. Despite the advocacy work, I had also experienced the syndrome that Leo brought up in our Introduction, the 'epistemic fatigue'. Editing this volume with you both has been a breath of fresh air, taking me to reimagine our current and future ELT with 'flourishing praxis' as in the case of decolonial PP. I feel privileged to learn from and work with not only you both, but our chapter authors who have generously, innovatively and heartfully shared their insights, lived experiences in the Global South, and genuine care given to their ELT profession, student learning, and a brighter future amidst the precarity. More important, I can see an imaginable and attainable future for ELT stakeholders to connect to the Indigenous knowledges and cultures, raise awareness of how the environment and education can come into play, and champion heritage languages, cultures, and intersectionality that manifest who we are as different individuals. Sending my gratitude to you both and our contributors for helping me feel inspired and hopeful.

Miguel: Yes, Julian. Let me keep one concept that you have mentioned to finish my turn in this reflection: hope. Even though in my academic career I have engaged with criticality both in English language teacher education and in discourse analysis, attempting to debunk the hegemonic discourses that fetter our practices in the Global South, I find that the category of hope is not passive waiting for such criticism to have its effects but when engaged along critique it opens avenues for reflexive and situated action. As we close, hope is a key concept in the face of the current escalation of confrontations worldwide.

Leo: I'd like to pick up on your last remark, Miguel – that “*hope is a key concept in the face of the current escalation of confrontations worldwide.*” For me, hope in this project has not been a naïve optimism or a denial of the violence, precarity, and exhaustion that currently shape our educational and political landscapes. Rather, it has emerged as a deeply political, affective, and ethical stance – one that insists on staying with discomfort while refusing resignation. In this sense, hope has functioned as a form of resistance: resistance to cynicism, to the normalization of inequity, and to the neoliberal demand that we detach ourselves emotionally from the consequences of our work.

What this book has allowed us to do collectively is to reframe hope, healing and love as something that is *practiced* rather than proclaimed or tangentially embraced (Norford & Veliz, 2026). It is enacted through listening, through slowing down, through centring voices that have historically been silenced, and through creating spaces where vulnerability, care, and intellectual risk-taking are not only permitted but valued. Hope here is inseparable from responsibility – it asks us to remain accountable to the communities we work with, to the knowledges we draw upon, and to the futures we help shape through our pedagogical and scholarly choices.

At a time when global conflicts, racialized violence, environmental devastation, and institutional retrenchment increasingly seep into our classrooms and professional lives, this form of critical hope becomes an ethical imperative. It reminds us that ELT is never neutral, and that our work, however constrained, can still open small but meaningful cracks in dominant structures. In coming together across differences, geographies, and epistemologies, this book has affirmed for me

that hope is sustained not individually, but collectively – through solidarity, relationality, and a shared commitment to imagining more just, caring, and liveable educational worlds.

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