

CHAPTER 1

The Loving Turn in ELT: An Introduction

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In today's world, English language teaching (ELT) grapples with dominant monolithic and monoepistemic ideologies that continue to perpetuate linguistic inequities and social, racial, and epistemic injustices. From the enduring 'wounds' of racialization (e.g. García et al., 2021; Subedi, 2008; Veliz et al., 2024) to processes of standardization (e.g., Dovchin, 2020; Dovchin & Dryden, 2022; Jenkins & Leung, 2019) and other inequitable practices (Meighan, 2022; Meighan & Veliz, 2026), ELT researchers, teachers, and educators confront challenges that shape both pedagogical practices and students' lived experiences. In this context, these challenges are deeply intertwined with issues of diversity, multilingualism, and multiculturalism, as English continues to function simultaneously as a global lingua franca and a gatekeeper of legitimacy within educational and social hierarchies (Gimenez et al., 2025; Tupas, 2019; Veliz, 2024). Yet, cultural and linguistic diversity is still frequently positioned as a problem to be erased in English-dominant settings rather than as an asset to be valued, reinforcing the ongoing invisibility of minoritized languages and epistemologies. In response, there is a growing recognition of the need for a

loving decolonial pedagogy – a transformative and inclusive approach that seeks to dismantle colonial hegemonies embedded within educational systems while foregrounding care, relationality, and lovingness in pedagogy (Mignolo, 2011; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Pirbhai-Illich et al., 2017).

Indeed, decolonial approaches in ELT have provided an avenue for broader discussions around de/recentering power dynamics along with methodological and epistemological ways of knowing, being and doing. Nonetheless, we posit that much of the effort to shift from Eurocentric to local decolonial perspectives has resulted in heightened awareness of inequities and inequalities and (c)overt divide between the Global North and Global South. Within this divide, the voices of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse teachers and learners are often marginalized or homogenized under Anglocentric impositions of English proficiency and native-like communicative competence. This reveals how monolingual and monocultural hegemonies persist even in ostensibly pluralistic spaces (Fielding & Harbon, 2022; Slaughter & Cross, 2021; Veliz & Chen, 2024; Veliz et al., 2025). While the inspiring spirit of critical pedagogy as a ‘decolonization’ approach has been that of liberating the oppressed from the oppressor (Freire, 1993), much of the ontological and epistemological scholarly work has geared more toward instilling a sense of confrontation through disrupting, contesting, and dismantling oppressive systems of knowledge and practice. To counter this seemingly negative approach, we call for postcritical pedagogy (Hodgson et al., 2017) that strives for a critical love for the world and humanity as mirrored in this volume.

In response to the enduring harms produced by dominant framings in English language education – such as native

speakerism, racialization, accentism, and broader forms of epistemic injustice – this volume seeks to champion a deeply humanizing approach grounded in (critical) love, healing, care, protection, and hope (Burke et al., 2008; Jain et al., 2026; Salazar, 2013). These framings have long positioned certain languages, accents, and ways of knowing as deficient or illegitimate, leaving profound and ongoing wounds for learners, teachers, and communities. Rather than remaining solely within projects of critique and deconstruction, this caring and loving approach moves toward more ecological pedagogies that nurture transformative and restorative thinking, practices, relationships, and collaborations between the Global North and South. Such rebalanced (healing) pedagogies affirm linguistic and cultural diversity, recognizing multilingualism not as a deviation from a monolingual norm but as an integral expression of human plurality. Within this paradigm, educators are able to cultivate classrooms that honor all linguistic repertoires, where students' home and heritage languages coexist with English in dialogic, relational, and equitable ways. Ultimately, this shift acknowledges the interconnectedness of all beings and underscores the importance of fostering inclusive, compassionate, and life-affirming environments in language education and beyond.

Drawing on Freire's conception of critical pedagogy as an act of love, this book foregrounds the transformative power of care, hope, empathy, and relationality in educational practice. Within this framing, *lovingness* is not understood as naïve or apolitical, but as a deliberate ethical and pedagogical stance – one that offers the necessary counterweight to deficit-oriented pedagogies grounded in native speakerism, proficiency, standardization, competitiveness, and other segregating practices

upheld by regimes of discrimination. In this sense, lovingness represents the generative side of the pedagogical coin, enabling educators to move beyond harm-focused critique toward practices that actively restore dignity, belonging, and humanity in language education.

This orientation is further informed by insights from Positive Psychology (PP) (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012), which we engage not as an individualistic or depoliticized framework, but as a transformative paradigm when situated within an ecological, critical, and socially just educational landscape. In line with Mercer and Gregersen's (2023, p. 1) articulation of PP, we embrace an understanding of wellbeing that is fundamentally relational and collective:

PP is concerned with ensuring the development of compassionate interpersonal relationships and a positive experience for all stakeholders, equipping individuals with skills and competences to flourish in the classroom and beyond... Everyone's wellbeing is interconnected. It is not just an individual trait, but it is also socially determined.

When read alongside decolonial and critical pedagogical traditions, this relational view of wellbeing reinforces the need for educational spaces that foreground care, mutual recognition, and collective flourishing, particularly for those historically marginalized by linguistic, racial, and epistemic hierarchies. Together, Freirean pedagogy and critically oriented PP provide a powerful lens for reimagining language education as a site of healing, resistance, and hope.

When Decoloniality and Positive Psychology Collocate

In recent years, educational research has increasingly brought together diverse theoretical traditions to open new conceptual and pedagogical pathways. Building on this dialogic orientation, this volume examines what becomes possible when decolonial perspectives are brought into conversation with PP to reimagine ELT, particularly in and from the Global South. Rather than treating these frameworks as epistemologically incompatible, we explore their productive synergies when PP is critically reoriented away from individualism and toward relational, ecological, and socially just pedagogies.

Decolonial projects extend beyond critique and deconstruction by actively affirming diversity, relationality, and interconnected ways of being, knowing, and doing (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) – many of which are deeply informed by Indigenous philosophies and worldviews (Meighan, 2023). Indigenous knowledges offer rich foundations for challenging dominant Eurocentric epistemologies, as their cultural codes resist systems of division, exclusion, racism, and injustice that sustain colonial and capitalist structures. Values such as love, hope, healing, resilience, and reciprocity function as powerful counter-hegemonic forces that disrupt the colonial matrix of power and its neoliberal extensions. When grounded in Indigenous worldviews and paired with a critical rethinking of psychological principles, PP can meaningfully align with decolonial projects, giving rise to what we conceptualize here as a *decolonial Positive Psychology*.

Indeed, decolonial approaches that move beyond exposing coloniality to embrace hope, resilience, love, and social justice as central to sustainable educational ecologies resonate strongly with the relational and affective dimensions of PP from its

inception. The integration of decoloniality and PP thus offers a promising conceptual framework for transformative and emancipatory pedagogies. Because language education is inherently embedded in linguistic, discursive, and semiotic practices, it occupies a particularly powerful position in advancing decolonial pedagogies grounded in care, hope, healing, and nurturing – pedagogical orientations that directly challenge colonial systems of racism, hatred, exclusion, and epistemic injustice.

As evidenced throughout this volume, decoloniality and PP can work hand in hand to advance both the political and socio-affective goals co-constructed within Global South communities. These synergies resist colonialism, dependency, oppression, and neoliberal logics, while opening space for alternative imaginaries of language education. The chapters included here engage with multiple layers of meaning emerging from these intersections. Through situated narratives and contextualized pedagogical praxes, contributors illuminate how decolonial PP frameworks become dynamic, intersectional, and responsive to diverse grassroots realities. In doing so, the volume moves beyond singular paradigms to offer a more holistic, plural, and relational account of ELT experiences across global contexts.

In curating this volume, we sought to amplify the voices of committed educators whose stories capture the tensions between political uncertainty, institutional constraints, and their enduring hope, critical love, and ethical commitment to more just and equitable futures. In the precarious and complex worlds in which we live, teach, and research, we invite readers to engage with these heartfelt narratives slowly and attentively, listening carefully to the textures and silences embedded in the voices represented. Decoloniality, hope, lovingness, and healing require

such pauses – moments of ethical listening that allow us to better understand the lived and felt experiences of those positioned at the margins.

In conclusion, we conceptualize positive emotions – such as hope, engagement, joy, and gratitude – not as ends in themselves, but as enablers that support the questioning of colonial ideologies, the resistance of hegemonic norms, and the creation of ethical, safe, and affirming educational spaces. These affective orientations open pathways for celebrating localized knowledges, languages, and cultures, while promoting Indigenous and community-based ways of thinking, doing, and knowledge sharing. In this sense, decolonial PP becomes both a pedagogical stance and a political commitment toward justice, equity, and collective flourishing.

From Epistemic Fatigue to Flourishing Praxis: A Post-Critical Vision for ELT

While the collocation of decoloniality and PP provides the epistemic scaffolding for a more hopeful, inclusive vision of ELT, its transformative potential ultimately lies in how these ideas are enacted in pedagogical, affective, and relational practices. It is precisely within this space of praxis that our collective commitments to love, care, and healing become most consequential. Drawing on calls for a post-critical turn in education, we advocate for reclaiming the affective, ethical, and relational dimensions of teaching and learning – dimensions that have often been sidelined by an exclusive focus on critique (Hodgson et al., 2017; Wortmann, 2019).

The notion of *epistemic fatigue* in ELT emerges from growing concern with the limits of the critical turn. While critical scholarship has been indispensable in exposing the political,

ideological, and colonial underpinnings of ELT – what some might describe as its “dark sides”—it has at times privileged critique over care, confrontation over compassion, and deconstruction over reconstruction. When critique becomes an end in itself, educators and learners may be left in a state of perpetual tension, exhaustion, or disillusionment. Moreover, an overreliance on critical binaries risks reproducing the very logics it seeks to unsettle – oppressor/oppressed, colonizer/colonized, English/non-English, native/non-native – thereby reinforcing separation rather than fostering solidarity, relationality, and healing.

In response, we call for the enactment of a post-critical pedagogy grounded in critical love, relationality, and healing. Such an approach does not abandon critique but rather focus on rehumanizing education through an explicit recognition of shared vulnerability, interdependence, and ethical responsibility. Post-critical pedagogy transcends prescriptive and normative models of teaching by embracing the social and emotional dimensions of human experience – empathy, trust, hope, forgiveness, and mutual recognition – as central to educational transformation. Love, in this framing, is neither sentimental nor apolitical; it is a radical and deliberate act of resistance against dehumanizing logics that fragment, hierarchize, and exclude forms of being, knowing and languaging. It is for this reason that we name it *critical love*. Healing, likewise, is understood as both a personal and collective process – an ethical commitment to repairing relationships fractured by linguistic hierarchies, racialized divisions, and enduring colonial wounds. Viewed through a decolonial PP lens, language education is reimagined as an ecological space of relationality and reciprocity, where knowledge, emotion, critique, and care coexist in productive and

generative tension. This shift from epistemic fatigue to flourishing praxis invites educators and learners alike to reenvision ELT not only as a site of resistance, but also as a space of renewal, restoration, and collective becoming.

Mission of the Book

This edited volume comes with a mission. It aims to explore the transformative potential of synergizing decolonial pedagogy and PP in ELT contexts, be it in Global North and/or South. It delves into how language educators can use decolonial frameworks to address systemic inequalities, question dominant narratives, and create inclusive and loving learning environments. By centering care, healing, and restorative practices, decolonial pedagogy and PP offer a viable pathway for educators to engage with students in ways that (re)affirm and celebrate their rich experiences, imagination, heritage languages, diversity, and plurilingual identities.

We have gathered initiatives designed by scholars, educators, teams, and communities engaged in the pursuit of nurturing, compassionate, and loving horizons that chart ELT territories of equality and restorative justice. Through an inclusive collection of insightful and heartfelt chapters, this book explores theoretical underpinnings, case studies, and best practices that highlight the efficacy of decolonial pedagogy and PP. It champions humanizing approaches to curriculum design, classroom practice, teacher education, and community engagement, all aimed at fostering critical consciousness, empathy, and agency among teachers and learners. We here share lived experiences in implementing some of these positive frames that include “flow, hope, courage, well-being, optimism, creativity, happiness, grit, resilience, strengths, and laughter with

the aim of enhancing learners' linguistic progress" (Dewaele et al., 2019, p. 1). We are hopeful that this book can inspire and empower educators to transform their teaching practices as a deeply humanizing and liberating endeavour, rooted in love and empathy for all learners.

Intended Readership

This volume is written for those who envision language education as a space of transformation, care, and justice. We hope it serves as both an inspiration and a catalyst for change, inviting readers to reimagine and enact nurturing, compassionate, and loving horizons in education. Our audience includes scholars, educators, research teams, schoolteachers, and community practitioners who are collectively engaged in redefining language learning and teaching as praxis of equality, hope, and restorative justice.

Through a collection of thought-provoking and knowledge-sharing chapters, the book offers theoretical reflections, case studies, and pedagogical illustrations that reveal how decolonial pedagogy and PP can join forces to humanize curriculum design, classroom practice, teacher education, and community engagement. Each contribution foregrounds relationality, empathy, love and agency as essential to fostering critical consciousness and sustainable forms of educational transformation across intersectionality in ELT.

Hence, this edited book will be of great interest to the disciplines in applied linguistics, second language studies, multilingualism, psycholinguistics, and TESOL. It is also appealing to undergraduate students in the Applied Linguistics programs who are keen to know more about different ways of affirming and celebrating language learners' colorful lived experiences, imaginations, heritage languages, and plurilingual

identities. Language educators will also find it beneficial to better understand the use of decolonial PP frameworks to address systemic inequalities, question dominant narratives, and create inclusive and loving learning environments. Postgraduate students and researchers alike will benefit from the inclusive research approaches and implications drawn from care, healing, and restorative practices that see diversity as an asset, not a deficit.

Structure of the Book

This edited volume is organized into Foreword, an Introductory Chapter by the editors, three interconnected parts that collectively advance a relational, and justice-oriented reimagining of ELT at the intersection of decoloniality and PP, and a final Afterword by the book editors. The Foreword, kindly and generously written by Tammy Gregersen, reimagines PP in ELT through a decolonial lens, arguing that flourishing cannot be separated from linguistic legitimacy, cultural dignity, and freedom from colonial hierarchies that privilege English and Western models of wellbeing. Drawing on lived pedagogical moments across diverse contexts, Tammy positions decolonial PP as a relational, justice-oriented praxis in which wellbeing is collectively enacted through care, voice, and the right to define one's emotional world in one's own language. This ties in well with some of the ideas we put forth in this Introduction, one of which is that decoloniality and PP can be productively integrated. Such integration is, however, no easy task. It starts with honest and profound recognition that ELT is deeply implicated in colonial, racialized and epistemic injustices, and that critique alone is no longer sufficient or effective. A humanizing turn with a focus on care, love, healing and hope is much needed.

Part I ‘Decolonial Frameworks and Critical Transformation in English Language Education’

comprises **five chapters** that establish the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the volume. These chapters critically interrogate dominant ideologies in ELT – including coloniality, native speakerism, epistemic injustice, and linguistic hierarchies – while offering decolonial lenses to rethink language, knowledge, and pedagogy. Together, they set the groundwork for transformative educational imaginaries that move beyond critique toward ethical, situated, and relational change. **Part II ‘Love, Empathy, and Care: Healing Practices in Language Education’** also brings together **five chapters** that foreground the affective, relational, and ethical dimensions of teaching and learning. Drawing on critical love, decolonial pedagogy, and relationally oriented PP, these contributions explore how practices of care, empathy, hope, and healing can disrupt deficit narratives and foster more humane and inclusive language education spaces. The chapters highlight pedagogical praxis that supports collective wellbeing, belonging, and restorative educational relationships. Finally, **Part III ‘Unsettling Normativity for Inclusion and Social Justice’** includes **four chapters** that challenge normalized assumptions and exclusionary practices in ELT. Focusing on issues of inclusion, equity, and social justice, these contributions unsettle hegemonic norms related to language, identity, race, and legitimacy, while showcasing pedagogical and institutional practices that resist marginalization. Together, the chapters offer critical yet hopeful pathways for advancing socially just, inclusive, and decolonial futures in language education.

Part I opens up with a thought-provoking chapter, Chapter 2, “**Küme mogen as Positive and Decolonial**

Intercultural Principle in the Mapuche Culture: A Conversation with Elisa Loncon", by Miguel Farías and Elisa Loncon. They challenge us to critically reexamine our ELT practices and what we can all learn from Indigenous knowledges, cultures, languages, and ways of life in response to the crisis of climate change, and Anglocentric raciolinguistics that still permeates the ELT landscape. Through a dynamic conversation Miguel and Elisa (a renowned Mapuche educator and activist) invite readers to critically reexamine conventional ELT practices by integrating Indigenous knowledge, languages, and ways of life. Central to their discussion is the Mapuche Flower of Knowledge, a visual and metaphorical representation of ten interconnected dimensions of well-being rooted in decolonial, healing, and caring values. (see Figure 1 in the chapter). The flower embodies balance and relationality among socio-affective, spiritual, ecological, and cognitive dimensions of life. Another integral element in Indigenous ancestral practice is 'storytelling' (similar to the 'yarning circle' practice in the First Nations of Australia), which can also be embodied in ELT practices to promote inclusivity, decoloniality, and empathy. Indeed, we as ELT educators can start to push the boundaries by bringing decolonial and ecological perspectives in our teaching and student learning, raising their awareness and equipping them with criticality and empathy to see the world through the lens of Indigenous knowledges, cultures and languages.

Chapter 3, "Decoloniality as a Conductive Thread to Love and Hope", by Gysele da Silva Colombo-Gomes, further illuminates how decolonial pedagogy nurtured by reimagined love and hope can be enacted in ELT practices in the Global South. Gysele presents findings drawn from a practitioner research project conducted at a public school in Rio de Janeiro

State, one of the low socioeconomic status areas in Brazil. Different from conventional ELT projects situated in Anglocentric models, this transformative project transports us to a pre-service ELT teacher (Pietra) journey where she incorporated decolonial teaching practices informed by Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy of love and hope in her teaching practicum working with those disadvantaged fifth graders in class. Gysele employs a critical analysis of the multimodal narratives of Pietra's critical reflections on her weekly teaching practices, visual narratives she created to express teacher emotions in class, and images created by her students to support their writing (see Figures 1-3 in the chapter). These fifth graders, despite their low English proficiency, were pedagogically, intellectually, and emotionally stimulated to articulate their career aspirations enhanced by drawings and reimagine the future using English as a lingua franca. Pietra was able to instill decoloniality, love and hope in her ELT practice whilst empowering these marginalized children to take agency as social actors in every aspect of their life and develop critical thinking to challenge and disrupt power structure of ELT in Brazil. For like-minded ELT teacher educators who are keen to explore this transformative approach, we trust that folks will find this chapter inspiring and applicable to your teaching setting.

In Chapter 4, **A Decolonial Approach to English Language Education in the Global South: Teachers' Voices for Critical Radical Love and Social Transformation**, Luz Ely González-Humanez, Luzkarime Calle-Díaz, and Luis Fernando Noriega examine decolonial approaches to English Language Education (ELE) in Colombia through a trio-ethnographic exploration of the lived and professional experiences of three public school English teachers.

Drawing on critical literacy, critical radical love, critical positive psychology, and the Indigenous-inspired principles of *Buen Vivir*, they illustrate how locally grounded pedagogical practices – such as translanguaging, multimodality, and the centering of student voice and agency – challenge neoliberal bilingualism policies shaped by Global North epistemologies. By foregrounding teachers’ reflexive narratives, the chapter demonstrates how decolonial pedagogies reframe wellbeing as a collective, relational, and community-oriented practice rather than an individualized or productivity-driven endeavor. The chapter offers situated insights for Global South contexts, highlighting the transformative potential of curricula rooted in local knowledge, communal flourishing, and social justice.

Similarly, Chapter 5, **A Decolonial Perspective in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Chile: Lessons from Brazil and the Teaching of Portuguese**, by Mila Araújo Fonseca and Patricio A. Pino Castillo, offers similar insights. In a cross-border contribution, the authors challenge the dominance of native-speaker and transmission-based practices that have long characterized language education in Chile. Through a comparative analysis, and drawing on insights from Brazil, the chapter repositions language teaching as a deeply cultural and political act, one that must move beyond technical skill-building to embrace the sociocultural realities, histories, and identities of learners. Mila and Patricio draw on decolonial theory and critical pedagogy frameworks to engage in a critical dialogue around the teaching of English as a foreign language in Chile and Brazil. They also highlight the concept of ‘sociogeny’, which refers to the ways in which colonial structures have shaped the subjectivities and identities of racialized people(s), and relate it to

‘decolonial pedagogy’ to suggest a relearning and dispossession of colonial powers.

Part I closes with Chapter 6, **“Transformative Decolonial Practice in English Teacher Education in Brazil: Lovingness and Resistance”** by Suellen Thomaz de Aquino Martins and Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos. Ana has been working on the topic of lovingness in ELT in Brazil, a theme that stems from the Freirean tradition and is now put under the light of decoloniality, with Suellen as the lead author. Their chapter reports on a study at a teacher education program in Northern Brazil that aimed at introducing reflections on decoloniality and lovingness in ELT practices. As part of a larger project, Suellen and Ana select a sample of data from four teachers to illustrate the discussions prompted by texts on how to introduce lovingness and decoloniality in language teaching in Brazil. The discussion and findings in the study are supported by ideas from Maturana and Varela, Freire, Walsh, and other (decolonial) authors. This chapter highlights the challenges and, more importantly, the transformative potential of love and hope as they engage in dialog in language teacher education.

Part II opens up with Chapter 7, **“What Palestine’s Context Teaches English Language Educators: Lessons for Healing during Times of Precarity”**, by Tina Jaber Rafidi, Nader Ayish, Theresa Austin, Rachel Grant and Shelley Wong. Motivated by Paulo Freire’s ‘combative love’ as a liberating critical pedagogy, the authors – who share experiences from Palestine, the UAE, the USA, and Canada – present heartfelt narratives that center the struggles and resilience of marginalized learners. This ‘combative love’ approach goes beyond passive, conflict avoiding, sentimental love but calls for action (or صمود *sumud*, ‘steadfastness’ or ‘resilience’) to stand

together with those being oppressed in Gaza and advocate for justice against violence, oppression, and genocide. Another powerful and humanizing pedagogy embodied in this chapter is collaborative storytelling using photography and digital tools to capture Palestinian students' moment-to-moment lived experiences, stories, and resistance to the erasure of their people's land, culture, and history. As Tina rightly put it, "No one is free unless everyone is free and can struggle for love." We invite you to travel with these inspiring ELT educators and 'listen deeply' through their powerful and heart-wrenching narratives currently taking place and connected to what disrupted education is like in war-torn Gaza.

In Chapter 8, **"Love, Passion, or Toxic Relationship? Decolonial Love and Resistance in the Experience of Public-school English Teachers in Brazil"**, Ana Maria F. Barcelos, Viviane Darc Silva Araújo and Raquel Pompéia Teixeira De Melo Oliveira explore the role of pedagogical love (PL) as an avenue to not only disrupt systemic oppression but also empower those whose voices and knowledge systems have been silenced and marginalized. Contextualized in Brazil and focusing on two English language teachers and one teacher educator, the authors draw on the participants' lived experiences to understand the nuanced ways in which they enact PL, and how it is reflected in their love of teaching and of their students. In this context, they advance the notion of 'PL as resistance' to disrupt deficit views and exclusionary narratives of English language students, particularly in public schools. Through vivid and emotionally charged narratives, the authors examine some practical ways of contesting neoliberal forms of oppression in public education and clear examples of how teachers center love and care in their teaching practices.

Similarly, in another emotionally charged narrative that also centers love, healing and care, we find that Andrea Lizasoain in Chapter 9 **“From Challenges to Opportunities: A Turn from Deficit Discourse on Disabilities to Discourse of Lovingness and Diversity in ELT Education”**, offers a deeply reflexive account of navigating the dual challenges of teaching and belonging as a hard-of-hearing ELT educator in Chile. This contribution powerfully disrupts deficit-oriented understandings of disability that remain pervasive in teacher education and language learning contexts. By situating personal experience within the wider structures of ableism and exclusion that shape neoliberal education systems, the chapter illuminates how institutional and attitudinal barriers can constrain both teacher well-being and inclusive practice. Yet, rather than focusing on deficit or struggle, the chapter reframes disability through an ethics of lovingness, empathy, care, and values that emerge from critical pedagogy and positive psychology. By moving from a narrative of limitation to one of possibility, this reflection aligns with the book’s broader call to reimagine language education through resistance, care, and rehumanization. It invites educators to dismantle deficit discourses and to recognize love, as a critical, ethical, and transformative force, as central to the work of decolonising language education.

Chapter 10, **“Empathy in English Language Teaching at a Public HEI in Pakistan: A Strategy for Healing and Transformation in Postcolonial Global South”**, by Kishwer Nazli, Nida Aftab and Sajida Zaki, engages us in a study to understand the meaning and scope of empathy in ELT and teacher education in post-colonial Pakistan. By reviewing the historical context behind the legacy of English and the

inequalities and differential access it brings, the authors set the stage to approach the data gathered from ELT teacher educators in various positions at Pakistani higher education institutions. They identify four themes in the data collected: empathy in language teaching, empathetic English language practices, developing awareness and skills about empathy, and transforming English language & English language teaching ideologies. In the analysis of these themes, Kishwer, Nida and Sajida reveal that empathy in ELT is an effective strategy for the healing of deep scars left by colonization and rigid pedagogy that sometimes overshadows the identity of learners in the Global South. Yet, the three authors recognize that while teachers and teacher educators acknowledged the transformative and healing impact of empathy on students' learning, they simultaneously identified hindrances caused by institutional constraints and colonial legacies. Undoubtedly, this is a chapter that showcases both the motivation for change and the hindrances that ELT undergoes in Pakistan these days, offering personalized insights into decolonial tensions of teachers and teacher educators.

Part II ends with Chapter 11, **“Language Learning and Forced Migration: Australian Educators on the Relational, Ethical, and Emotional Dimensions of ‘Journeying Alongside’”** by Rachel Burke. Rachel critically reflects on what it takes to work with displaced migrant language learners amidst the complex set of variables that frame the social practice of language learning and teaching migrants from diverse backgrounds. Under the conceptual umbrella of Ethics of Care, positive psychology and trauma-informed practice, she takes a political stance on understanding how 15 language educators navigate the personal and pedagogical waters of teaching forced migration learners. Through narrative analysis, four themes

emerged from the data gathered: educator preparedness for ‘journeying alongside’, learning from experience, being responsive to learner circumstances, and educator self-care. Indeed, Rachel sensibly and politically apprehends through the lens of her own experience and the meanings embedded in the teachers’ responses and comments in light of the implications that the practice of teaching forced migration learners may have for language teachers in contexts of (re) settlement. Specifically, a key phrase she uses to understand the scenario of teaching forced migrants is “journeying alongside” that encapsulates the caring and solidarious *acompañamiento* that teachers engage in the interaction with migrant learners and families.

The final theme of the book (Part III) brings together chapters that accentuate critical language awareness (CLA), recognition, and the pursuit of social justice in language education. In Chapter 12, “**Promoting Students’ Critical Consciousness, Agency, and Empathy Through Critical Language Awareness (CLA) Writing Pedagogy**”, Shawna Shapiro uses her ‘Writing and Power’ class as a case in point, demonstrating the potentiality of enacting students’ CLA in decolonization (Canagarajah, 2024) while building their sense of agency and empathy. This approach transforms a normative academic writing class into a humanizing milieu that uplifts students’ wellbeing and belonging. Shawna argues that academic writing programs should not only raise the CLA of multilingual and multidialectal writers, but further equip them with the skills and strategies needed to succeed academically. More important, a CLA approach to academic writing empowers students to see their heritage languages and cultures as assets and make informed decisions (critical consciousness) on whether to use those dominant norms and conventions by reclaiming agency as

capable multilingual and multidialectal writers. To help ELT educators and researchers better grasp this CLA approach to writing, Shawna generously shares her course curriculum, including teaching materials and assignments, which is framed by CLA with the goals of decolonization and positive psychology. We can see clearly how her students' voices are valued, agency established, CLA raised, and empathy built in their engagement with decolonizing course materials and assignments in a writing community, thus fostering positive psychology.

With a focus on critically analyzing textbooks in the Chilean context, Chapter 13 “**Recognizing the Unseen: An Analysis of Theory of Recognition and Positive Psychology in Decolonial ELT within Chilean Textbooks**” by Victor Birkner and Sebastián Mercado, reveals the extent to which a Chilean state-mandated textbook represents diversity, Indigenous knowledges, and affective dimensions of learning such as empathy, hope and resilience. Extensive research in this area (e.g. Goldstein, 2021; Keles & Yazan, 2020; Shah, 2023; Véliz-Campos et al., 2024) has shown the prevalence of underlying Eurocentric ideologies entrenched in English language textbooks. Not surprisingly, Victor and Sebastián uncovered tangential and superficial cultural references to diversity, Indigenous knowledges and affect. To respond to an increasing need of cultural embeddedness of diversity and emotional development of language learners, Victor and Sebastián call for action to engage in community-based pedagogies as an avenue to create a nexus between affective learning and social justice.

Chapter 14 “**Initial teacher education in English Language Teaching in Chile: Cultivating a Transformative and Sustainable Teaching and Learning**

Process” by Diego Alejandro Cabezas Bravo and Mauro Ramos, reveals the impacts of English imperialism and Eurocentric ideologies on the development of ELT in the Global South. As both teacher educators, Diego and Mauro provide insider perspectives on the historical background and tensions between the colonial and Anglocentric hegemonies permeating the Latin American educational systems, and the rich localized resources and heritages, such as Indigenous knowledge and English varieties, being suppressed by the former. Through the eyes and lived experience of a pre-service teacher, Constanza, we witnessed how the colonial legacies deeply rooted in Chilean society and educational system eroded her teacher agency professional identity, and emotions. These negative impacts led to teacher burnout, low self-esteem, and career despair before leaving the ELT industry, unfortunately. Despite the alarming challenges and hard truths exposed in the current landscapes of Chilean ELT and initial teacher education (ITE), Diego and Mauro shed light on how Eurocentric and Anglophone hegemonies can be contested through a decolonial and humanizing model by harnessing self-determination theory (SDT) and PP. The insights from SDT and PP pave the way for the six core elements in a model they propose to transform ITE practices and policies. These include foregrounding teacher wellbeing, resilience, empathy, marginalized voices and Indigenous experiences whilst empowering pre-service ELT teachers to critically reflect and resist the colonial power imposed on them, thus developing a decolonial mindset and restoring teacher agency and identity.

The last chapter in the volume, **“Beyond Silence: Queer Inclusion and Affirmation in Vietnamese ELT through Narrative Reflection”** by Mai Phuc Thinh, explores how

narrative inquiry can illuminate and humanize the lived experiences of queer students and teachers in Vietnam's ELT contexts. Mai committedly engages in compiling and reflecting on narratives from four participants: a closeted rural teacher, a nonbinary student finding voice through reflective writing, an urban educator embracing inclusive storytelling, and a trans learner reclaiming identity in a private center. Besides revealing the marginalization of these voices, the chapter shows participants' narratives lend themselves to be the basis for an inclusive pedagogy that embraces not only content modification or curriculum supplementation, but a robust relational practice rooted in empathy, affirmation, and ethical care. Against the adversity of institutional silence and moral conservatism, these narratives, as Mai notes at the end of the chapter, help in the "co-construction of supportive, courageous learning spaces where all identities are seen, valued, and allowed to flourish". The chapter opens our eyes to how gender diversity is dealt with in ELT, particularly in the context of Vietnam.

We wrap up this volume with an Afterword, which offers a dialogic and reflexive space for the editors to collectively envisage future pathways for ELT at the intersection of decoloniality and PP. Through a relational conversation grounded in our transnational and differently situated experiences, the Afterword moves beyond critique to foreground healing, care, critical love, and hope as necessary ethical and pedagogical orientations in times marked by epistemic fatigue, global precarity, and escalating conflict. In doing so, it reframes ELT not merely as a site of resistance to colonial and neoliberal structures, but as a healing space for collective repair, relational accountability, and the cultivation of more just, humane, and liveable educational futures.

Concluding remarks

All in all, the voices behind these narratives we have compiled tell of a field that is bursting with energies and optimism to put forth a humanizing agenda of lovingness, hope, healing, and epistemological revisions. In the interstices of the collocation of PP and decoloniality in ELT, we hear voices that look for reimagining the human interactions that emerge in language learning and teaching as happening in a loving, empathetic, and caring landscape of socio emotional justice. All these voices, we feel, reclaim a humanizing place for language teaching and learning, humanism that has also been recently proclaimed as one of the four pillars to advance second language acquisition and learning by Zheng et al (2025): “the human injustices of coloniality plague language learning and teaching. They structure language quite literally, and not just metaphorically. This is why we need a decolonial SLA/T” (p. 76).

As we move forward, it is essential to continue advocating for decolonial and humanizing approaches in ELT. This involves not only critiquing and deconstructing oppressive systems, but also actively working toward creating educational (and loving) spaces that are compassionate, inclusive, and just. By embracing the principles of love, hope, healing, and resilience, educators can contribute to the development of a more equitable and humane educational landscape.

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