

Coloniality of English Teaching in the Global South: Interculturality, Power Relations and Identity

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Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due references and acknowledgements are made in the text. It contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution.

Thesis by Publication

I hereby certify that this thesis is in the form of a series of published papers of which I am the sole author. It includes four peer-reviewed journal articles. They are in peer-reviewed scientific journals which are either in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) or in the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR). This thesis is presented in the form of a compendium of publications with the express authorization of my supervisor, Dr M^a Camino Bueno-Alastuey.

Publications included in this Thesis

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Dedication

To my mother,

for her prayers, never-ending support and immeasurable love.

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Abstract

The global spread of English has been critically examined under the lenses of linguistic imperialism, coloniality and interculturality. In particular, intercultural relations have been shaped by power imbalances that have resulted in colonial-like relations between the Global North and South. One manifestation of these power inequalities is the supremacy of Anglophone cultures and their possible hegemony over local languages and cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how English language teaching (ELT) may be promoting hegemonic understandings of English and its associated cultures, especially considering the domination of Anglophone countries on ELT theory and practice. Current scholarship on the cultural politics of English language teaching often argues that non-native English language teachers may contribute to the marginalization of their own languages and culture through presenting Anglophone cultures as superior. Students may perceive the attempt to achieve a native-like competency as conditioned by their adoption of native speakers' ways of languaging and culture.

This research has been conducted in Morocco, where English is increasingly spreading and, thus, gradually used as a lingua franca to mediate intercultural and international contacts. A lingua franca refers to a language that is used as a common language between speakers of different native languages. The rationale for conducting this doctoral research in Morocco comes from its sociolinguistic situation which is marked by the linguistic dependency of foreign languages and the rapid spread of English. Morocco is a postcolonial space that has been characterized by linguistic dependency, which started with the French and it seems it could be perpetuated by the supremacy of English. That is why this research would allow for a

better understanding of how English is influencing the cultural identity of both teachers and students.

My thesis explores the intersection of language, power, culture and identity through the combination of four articles. These studies have sought to examine various ways in which the global spread of English and its teaching may be contributing to the maintenance of power imbalances between the Global North and South. This thesis will discuss (a) how the global spread of English is both a manifestation and a mechanism in perpetuating power imbalances, (b) the impact of the supremacy of Anglophone cultures on Southern cultures and identities and (c) how colonial-like intercultural relations should be adequately addressed in English teaching classrooms. This thesis will argue for the necessity of reimagining the traditional understandings of the global spread of English and ELT through more critical engagement with intercultural communication dialectics and power imbalances between the Global North and South.

My PhD recognizes the colonial-like relations between the Global North and South; it specifically examines the hegemonic understandings of English language teaching in the Global South by critically interpreting the influence of power relations and imbalanced intercultural communication. The key contribution of my doctoral research is its combination of different studies that investigate several aspects of the intersection of interculturality, power imbalances and English language education in the Global South. While the majority of my research has been conducted in Morocco, the linguistic dependency that characterizes the country's sociolinguistic situation, as well as its postcolonial positionality renders this research's findings pertinent and applicable to other Southern contexts.

My PhD comprises four journal papers (three theoretical articles and one empirical study). The objective will be to offer a critical synthesis of the literature on the cultural politics of English teaching along with the contribution of my PhD in furthering our understanding of the pedagogical, social and political implications of English teaching in the Global South. The ability to generate various insights from different angles will allow for more nuance and depth. Therefore, the aims are to (a) situate the discussion on English teaching in the Global South within the larger global structures, (b) empirically showcase the type of influence that the Global spread of English may exert on southern individuals given their readiness to embrace Anglophone knowledge, perspectives and ontologies and (c) call for more critical engagements with interculturality in English teaching that consider power relations and colonial structures.

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1. Introduction

1.1. What prompted this research: Rationale and a Personal Reflection

Throughout my studies, I have noticed teachers and professors showing a sense of preference for Anglophone perspectives, cultures and lifestyles over local perceptions, cultures and ways of living. Although these beliefs are often unconscious, they permeate teaching and constitute an important dimension of how the spread of English in Southern contexts might influence the perceived status of local languages and cultures. Furthermore, my exposure to different traditions of intellectual engagement, especially the geopolitics of knowledge and postcolonial studies have made me reflect on the impact of the global spread of English and how English language education functions in Morocco, which is my native country.

Morocco has been struggling with its postcolonial legacy as it has not been able to move beyond the conditions that colonialism created. Due to the country's postcolonial positionality, the Moroccan sociolinguistic situation has been characterized by linguistic dependency evidenced by the reliance on foreign languages, mainly French as the colonial code. In recent years, English has reached a greater status, increasingly gaining more momentum and its presence has permeated various vital sectors. During my secondary and university studies, I felt that English represented a cultural and sociopolitical capital that was quite alluring to both students and teachers. Throughout my teaching career, I have noticed how the cultural identity of students has undergone some changes as they were immersed in English learning. A particular observation I have made is that, more often than not, when someone speaks English, it tends to be reflected in their views, attitudes, personality, culture and lifestyle.

This thesis's rationale resides in the assumption that language serves as a means for producing and maintaining epistemic and social inequalities (Heller & McElhinny, 2017). It is, thus, necessary to examine how imbalanced intercultural relations and English language education may have further entangled the linguistic dependency of Morocco as a southern context. The focus here is mainly on students' language ontology as well as teachers and professors' beliefs about the supremacy of English and the dominance of Anglophone cultures. The articles that constitute this thesis offer insights on different aspects of the interplay between interculturality and English language education including intercultural relations between Global North and South, the significance of interculturality and culture in English language education, speakers' language ontology, intercultural communication dialectics in English language education, students' attitudes and professors' beliefs about the global spread of English.

Based on the intersection between applied linguistics and critical sociolinguistics, the research I present in this thesis engages in a politically thoughtful and socioculturally-conscious discussion of how the global spread of English not only reflects the skewed power relations among Northern and Southern spaces but also contributes to the maintenance of colonial-like relations between those spaces (Kubota, 2020; Macedo, 2019; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). Moreover, current literature on intercultural communication has discussed how interculturality and sociopolitical conditions are manifested within education (Dervin & Simpson, 2021). The initial thought of conducting critical research on interculturality and English language education emanated from the impression that, as Moroccans, we are situated within the margins of modernity and we play a marginal role in mandating and influencing global matters. That is why an important element of this thesis is to showcase how critical applied linguistics can

contribute to a nuanced understanding of the interrelation among the supremacy of English, interculturality and English language education.

An essential concept in this thesis's arguments and discussion is the 'Global South'. This conception is used throughout the various sections to signal the power imbalances among powerful and postcolonial countries, i.e., the Global South and the Global North. This thesis defines the Global South as "people, places and ideas that have been left out of the grand narrative of modernity... [It] refers to histories of exclusion and disenfranchisement" (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020, p. 1). Therefore, the Global South is conceptualized as "not just a place (although it is also that), but a condition (of dispossession)" (Shome, 2019, p. 203). The Global South is not a homogenous entity as it is portrayed in the colonial perspective of modernity (R'boul, 2020a). The relevance of this term to the thesis' arguments comes particularly from the fact that Morocco is perceived as a Southern postcolonial space.

1.2. The Global Spread of English and Modernity: Coloniality through English Language Education

Historical legacies of coloniality continue to exist as the underside of modernity (Mignolo, 2018; Sousa Santos, 2018). This is an assumption that aggravates the Global South's need to keep abreast of the self-ascribed universality of western perspectives. Within the conditions of globalized territories, ELT can be argued to have been grounded in multiple trajectories that are not limited to teaching linguistic forms (Motha, 2014; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). Mainstream trends of ELT are predominantly constructed within the epistemological sensibilities of the West, specifically, the US and the UK, evidenced by the widespread of their theories, practices and materials (Cambridge, Oxford and Michigan Universities are emblematic).

An important classification in this thesis's framework is the three-circle model of World Englishes (Kachru, 2005). The inner-circle denotes the countries where English is used as the primary language including the USA, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Therefore, its speakers are the ones providing the norms to the other circles. The outer circle refers to those countries where English usage has been a consequence of colonial history. These include countries such as India, Ghana, Malaysia, etc. The expanding circle refers to the countries where English is used as a foreign language. These are the contexts where English does not necessarily have a colonial legacy. This includes countries such as China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Codification, acceptance of varieties of English and prestige is still controlled by those countries associated with Kachru's "inner circle" (2005, p. 14) (i.e. North America, the UK and Australia). This is more apparent in ELT, where inner circle regions continue to dominate the production of theory, teaching materials, methodology and expertise. These regions significantly exert their dominance in providing the models and norms that are taught (Baker, 2012). Therefore, ELT may be serving a homogenizing process that reflects how languages can be used for political interventions and for building global communities. Claims for TESOL dynamics being sedimented in the western narrative of modernity do exist in scholarship, including the engagement with English as a neoliberal endeavour (Shin & Park, 2016; Tajima, 2020), the traces of neoliberalism in English teaching materials (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018) and postcolonial approaches in TESOL (Lin & Luke, 2006).

Critiques of TESOL's neo-colonial role remain underrepresented in the field although "colonial constructions of [superior] Self and [inferior] Other, combined with factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, class, language and others, have been constantly re/produced in TESOL" (Shin, 2006, p. 147). Coloniality may arguably be advanced by ELT through three

main trajectories: (a) the history of ELT within the British and American Empires, (b) ELT teaching methods and materials as a recapitulation or intensification of (neo-)colonial relations and (c) by reproducing cultural constructs of colonialism (Pennycook, 2007). Assuming the neutrality of ELT has provoked a lack of serious examinations of ideology in mainstream theory and research. This has “arguably prevented the problematization of many taken-for-granted perceptions and practices in the field” (Mirhosseini, 2018, p. 19). It is, thus, important to question the traditional understandings of ELT as being neutral, objective and benevolent. Also, it is required to reconsider the assumptions that ELT is only about and promotes exclusively language when, in fact, it may be imbued with political, racial and imperialistic implications (Motha, 2014).

The current politics of global English should be examined (Ives, 2009) in order to analyze whether ELT may not only be reinforcing neoliberal social transformations but also might be used to create hierarchies of cultural privilege. The themes of structural power inequalities (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) and the coloniality of power, knowledge and being (Quijano, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007) are important to this discussion as they illuminate how the coloniality of the English language further entangles contemporary manifestations of coloniality. In reference to power relations, an essential element here is the linguistic othering of the Global South and how this narrative perpetuates imbalances and the superiority of the Anglophone World as it is situated within the centre of the Global North. ELT inevitably engages with discourses of the east and the west and their implications for intercultural relations. This includes determining what is considered to be legitimate knowledge that is worthy of attention and what is marginal and unworthy of exploration.

This is particularly reflected in how modernity seems to be the underlying foundational structure of ELT theory, research and practice, which induces people to believe that one should be a speaker of English in order to be modern. Similar practices contribute to the projection of English as a prerequisite for non-western individuals to situate themselves along with their discourses and narratives within the western logic of modernity. Also, non-western people perceive English as a way of living the first world in the third world and of enjoying the perks of North America and Great Britain (R'boul, 2020b). This is hardly surprising given the general orientation of ELT towards serving the Global North since students are sometimes encouraged to embrace the cultural substance of English and imitate the behavioural features of native speakers (Holliday, 2006).

Since English is often associated with modernity, the idea that coloniality is its underside (Mignolo, 2007) further illuminates the implications of establishing a global shared linguistic code that privileges native speakers. That is why the awareness of modernity's underside (coloniality) legitimizes a decolonial understanding of ELT which allows for thinking situated in the exteriority and the margins of modernity. This thesis makes a case for (a) how ELT can be perceived as colonial linguistic governmentality that projects particular performative dimensions of language use, (b) the necessity of promoting ELT's sensibility towards global exploitation including the history of post-imperialism either for the global North or South, (c) the need to take into account questions of coloniality and decoloniality that might have been either blurred or masked through teaching English worldwide, and (d) the ideological landscape of ELT, which should be problematized and discussed within the current circumstances and postcolonial narratives. This thesis aims to look at how ELT might be making English the only linguistic possibility to represent modernity, interrogate ELT as the encasement of expansionary

colonial tendencies in the global North and examine how ELT's institutional features, cultural policies, professional practices, ethical and political commitments either perpetuate or stymie the inequalities that have been furthered by globalization. Recovering non-western discourses in ELT necessitates recognizing the global designs from colonial histories questioning dominant ideologies and calling for the inclusion of alternative ideological orientations that are inspired by non-western logics. If one is keen on exploring how language is possibly used for political purposes including global community formation and attending to geopolitical configurations, postcolonial critiques should acquire greater legitimacy in ELT discourses, which often seem to be apolitical.

1.3. Power Imbalances, Colonial Differences and English Language

The global spread of English was made possible due to the historic colonial inequalities and the current unequal dimensions of imperial power. The domination of English during the contemporary period of neoliberalism evidences coloniality, since "it continues a colonial pattern of language and power beyond the period of formal colonial administration" (Hsu, 2015, p. 125). The borders between the personal, the social, the political and the pedagogic domains are not rigid. Instead, intersections among them are omnipresent and substantial. That is why locating the global growth of English within the framework of coloniality is useful in understanding how power relations are maintained. The intersections of language, education and political power offer some important reflections on north-south relationships.

ELT emerged as an imperial pedagogy that sought to saddle colonial subjects and non-Northern-Atlantic contexts with particular epistemologies, ontologies and lifestyles that efface their locality and control their resources and minds (Pennycook, 2007). A quotation from the

International House brochure (1979) succinctly describes post-colonial imperialism: “Once we used to send gunboats and diplomats abroad; now we are sending English teachers” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 8). The assumption that English is a key to material success and social inclusion justifies its global dominance and rationalizes broader social inequalities. Therefore, it is useful to base our analysis on the intersections of modernity, coloniality, globalization, linguistic and cultural imperialism and their relation to language and culture (Coluzzi, 2012). Since historical colonial inequalities have established the current status of global English, English teaching might be self-producing a colonized spirit. The colonial ideologies of ELT continue to ‘other’ non-white learners as inferior, which subsequently renders the knowledge traditions from these communities as marginalized (Hsu, 2017). In ELT, the attempt of reproducing coloniality is not always visible. It is concealed through particular notions. For example, idealized nativeness “served as a gatekeeping mechanism within these colonial powers” (Rudolph et al., 2019, p. 349).

1.4. On ELT and the Coloniality of Language

Coloniality and colonialism are two different concepts with dissimilar perspectives to the enduring colonial structures. While colonialism means the actual presence of the colonizer on the colonized’s land, coloniality refers to the subtle processes by which power imbalances are maintained between the Global North and South while not entailing sovereignty over the lands of the colonized. This latter is more relevant to the context of the thesis since English does not have a colonial past in Morocco.

ELT started to emerge as an influential industry and discipline in the 20th century as a reflection of the increasing importance of the English language. The ELT tradition has been

subject to several phases of change, especially throughout the twentieth century. The history of ELT's theory and methodology shows the development of different types of approaches and methods as a response to the changing demands of each period and the instrumental needs of learners. In the last years, there has been a growing interest in deconstructing the possible imperial and colonial implications of ELT, especially following the widespread of the British Empire. Currently, the assumption that English contributes to the maintenance of a complex of inferiority is indeed significant of how ELT may function as a practical realization of these tendencies. For instance, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) studies and their findings have contributed to the deconstruction and reconceptualization of some foundations of the ELT tradition that have helped perpetuate the inner-circle-oriented supremacy (Siqueira, 2020).

I use the concept of the coloniality of language to refer to the current underlying systems of power formed by the linguistic othering of non-native speakers or learners and the centrality of language in producing coloniality and maintaining hegemonic systems of power. These processes largely contribute to the repression of other ways of enunciation different from the Northern Anglophone tongue. It denotes how the unprecedented authority of English in terms of economic and cultural capital has resulted in the replacement of many voices and identities of speakers from less global cultures. The Intersection of language and power creates a process of linguistic othering which leads to a peripheralisation of some contexts and the centralization of North-Atlantic contexts, which own the primary sources of enunciating not only knowledge but also desirable imaginaries of what should remain to be the case. As non-Anglophone contexts are required to learn/speak English to be recognized in all fields, subalternity is further perpetuated and enforced. The additional burden of speaking another language even in local contexts leads to the subordination of non-Western/non-Anglophone

epistemologies, ontologies and knowledges, which, consequently, produces the effect of subtly rendering their languages as obsolete and non-modern. Therefore, to examine the hierarchical language systems constrained by the colonial world system, it is necessary to analyze linguistic relations of power as concomitant effects and narratives of the coloniality of power (Veronelli, 2015).

I am referring to the coloniality of language here because of ELT's potential functioning as a new colonial linguistic governmentality and its potential involvement in privileging and marginalizing through reifying the coloniality of language. An embracing of the supremacy of English over other languages means using language as a system of domination. The coloniality of language would be made clearer in my discussion of the papers comprising the thesis. It will be used as a concept that reflects the entanglement of the domination of a particular linguistic pattern, power imbalances and the colonial-like relations between the Global North and South. The argument of ELT functioning as an enduring influence of coloniality is not recent. It has been studied specifically within the field of TESOL (Pennycook, 2007). The spread of English should not be understood as benevolent and neutral. It might masquerade a continuation of north-western domination of the world via neo-imperialist and globalization paths. In other words, modernity establishes exteriorities that consider southern contexts as inferior, just as it did with varieties of English, through exerting a form of coloniality that places a great emphasis on the exclusivity of language. The monolingual character of modernity limits the possibility of giving prominence not only to other ways of enunciation but also to other epistemologies. These ideas indicate that English may not only be a condition for inclusion in modernity but also its only linguistic possibility.

1.5. English Language Teachers' Beliefs about Interculturality and the Cultural Superiority of Anglophone Cultures

The reason for providing a literature review of studies examining teachers' beliefs about interculturality and the cultural superiority of Anglophone cultures is to illuminate the processes of reinforcing the supremacy of English and its associated cultures. This should help to further clarify the need to challenge the traditional understandings of ELT as being totally benevolent and benign.

Multiple studies have investigated teachers' beliefs and practices regarding teaching culture with a special emphasis on how participants come to perceive the status of Anglophone and local cultures. Research has reported mixed results. On the one hand, Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) reported that the representation of inner-circle varieties and their associated cultural contents are dominant in global ELT textbooks and several other studies have concluded that teachers tend to favour inner-circle Englishes and cultures at the expense of not only outer and expanding circles but also local cultures. For example, Liu (2018) showed that teachers in China granted a prestigious status to native English speaker teachers (NESTs), particularly Anglo-American Caucasians, Inner Circle English and culture. Also, participants held Inner Circle English as the learning/teaching target. Although teachers expressed a desire to include Outer and Expanding Circle cultures, it was merely a supplement to Inner Circle culture.

On the other hand, other studies have found that teachers were keen on incorporating local culture as an important component of the syllabus. For example, Fan (2017) used interviews, observations and a survey to investigate elementary teachers' beliefs and practices

to support students' heritage language and culture. Results revealed that participants (39 classroom teachers) emphasized the importance of including heritage language. This was reflected in schools and teachers' implementation of different strategies and practices to incorporate students' heritage language and culture into classrooms. Bayyurt (2006), drawing on the results of an interview study with a small group of Turkish teachers of English working in public and private schools, also concluded that the participants agreed on the practice of referring to an 'international culture' with a particular emphasis not only on English-speaking Anglo-American cultures but also on the learners' local culture in the English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) classroom. Moreover, Moradkhani and Asakereh (2018) reported that their participants, 43 public-school English language teachers and 63 private language institute instructors in Iran, believed that both target and local cultures should be included in the language classroom. Monfared et al. (2016) adopted a mixed-method research study with English language teachers from Inner (40 American, 36 British), Outer (44 Indian, 40 Malaysian) and Expanding (44 Iranian and 40 Turkish) circles. The study explored teachers' attitudes toward the cultural content of ELT books within the framework of English as an international language (EIL) and how they perceived themselves in relation to language and culture. The findings revealed that teachers expressed a positive attitude toward learning and teaching about both local and international cultures. The majority of the teachers from the three circles (about 87.0%) used teaching materials and activities based on both local and international situations. However, a few teachers in the three groups (13%) supported native-speakerism with a focus on Western culture.

Other studies investigating teachers' beliefs (e.g., Pan & Seargeant, 2012) have reported their concerns about acculturation and the relegation of local cultures, which has led instructors

to avoid teaching the target culture. For example, Onalan (2005) conducted a study investigating 24 Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs about the place of target cultural information in English language teaching and their related applications in EFL classrooms in four universities. Findings revealed that teachers did not perceive culture as a relevant element for language teaching and found difficulties in defining 'culture'. Upon the researchers' questions, teachers associated culture with surface culture (Big 'C') noting traditions, literature, customs and values as constituent elements. Some teachers exhibited reluctance to implement culture-focused language teaching due to their focus on developing students' linguistic competence (reading, listening, writing and speaking) and their concerns regarding cultural imperialism. They believed that culture teaching would lead to acculturation (UK/US culture). Teachers were unaware of the importance of teaching culture and developing students' intercultural competence (IC).

This lack of knowledge and awareness has been confirmed in other studies. For instance, Bešter and Medvešek (2016), who explored the IC of 21 in-service teachers in Slovene schools, discovered that teachers demonstrated "a lack of knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and often do not go beyond the ethno-centric perspective" since, without critical reflection, "the teachers often implicitly (and unconsciously) contribute to the preservation of the existing unequal social relations between majority and minority groups" (p. 26). Derin et al. (2009) confirmed that teachers in Turkey prioritized the linguistic aspect of language since they considered teaching English fulfilled practical purposes. Teachers limited their cultural teaching to help the students understand their own culture better rather than initiating discussions on the target or foreign cultures. Stapleton (2000) investigated the views of 28 university-level native English teachers in Japan on the role of culture in TEFL. By using questionnaires, the

researcher found that despite teachers' support for incorporating culture, its inclusion in their classes was more random than other aspects of language teaching. The researcher argued that this sense of ambiguity and uncertainty was due to "the sheer weight of the term 'culture'" (p. 292), which problematizes teachers' ability to advance untested beliefs about the target culture and/or the students' own culture. The sense of ambiguity may be attributed to the time constraints and to considering culture as less important than other aspects of the language. Also, 'culture' is a problematic concept that is open to several interpretations which mean that teachers may hold different understandings of what should be taught. Teachers may be reluctant to teach culture and interculturality if they feel that their knowledge of other cultures is not sufficiently broad.

2. Context

2.1. Context of the Study

The Moroccan constitution of 2011 designated standard Arabic and Tamazight as the nation's official languages. French is the country's second language and is largely used in the fields of administration, business and education, while English and Spanish are merely employed as foreign languages for different purposes (Ennaji, 2009). While the presence of English in Morocco is not due to colonial legacy (Buckner, 2011), French and Spanish have been present in the Moroccan linguistic situation as a result of their colonial policy in the 20th century. English has existed in the Moroccan university since the 1960s, but its influence has substantially grown in the era of globalization (Belhiah et al., 2020).

Many Moroccan scholars and educators have been calling for embracing English instead of French as the country's second language. A number of stakeholders and officials involved in linguistic policy in Morocco have argued that English seems a better alternative since it is a

language closely associated with contemporary neoliberal circumstances. The requirements of neoliberalism and globalization render the English language a necessity to participate in global affairs. The strong demand for a lingua franca along with the economic incentives and internationalization efforts have contributed to the increasing popularity and the greater status of English in Morocco as a global language (Zouhir, 2013).

There has been a power struggle between local and foreign languages in Morocco (Boukous, 2009; Zouhir, 2013). Research on the Moroccan linguistic situation has indicated that the country's official languages (Arabic and different varieties of Tamazight) are often seen as symbols of local identity, cultural heritage and traditions (Marley, 2004). On the other hand, French and increasingly English are perceived as high-prestige languages (Jaafari, 2019), which reflect modernity, contemporaneity and status-bearing significance (Chakrani, 2011; Chakrani & Huang, 2014; Mouhssine, 1995). This perception may perpetuate the exclusion of the voices and complaints of disenfranchised groups (Stroud, 2009) since their rhetorical means are restricted and do not enjoy the same visibility as foreign languages. Reproducing similar practices is more likely to relegate the place of Arabic and Tamazight due to their association with locality and conservatism, while French and English represent modernity and secularism.

In the case of English language teaching in Morocco, it is important to pay attention to the range of representations that potentially promote neoliberalism. For instance, a number of studies have documented the presence of some principles of neoliberalism in teaching methods (Ramanathan, 2006) and in imported textbooks that have been developed in inner-circle countries (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Daghigh & Rahim, 2021; Mirhosseini, 2018;). Also, the new global neoliberal demands and the increasing interest in English learning have propelled its

status in Morocco. This might contribute to the linguistic supremacy of English, which is likely to strongly shape the linguistic diversity of the country in the near future.

These issues stretch not only to the educational field, where they are represented by the challenges and future of the English departments in neoliberal Morocco (Bahmad, 2020) but also to the cultural identity of English learners with the representation of English as an alternative cultural capital for university EFL students in Morocco (Azhar, 2020). Taking these assumptions and ideas into account, it is necessary to situate the discussion on the global spread of English in the global south, and, particularly in Morocco, within the broader themes of power imbalances (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Sousa Santos, 2018, R'boul, 2021), the linguistic imperialism of a neoliberal empire (Phillipson, 2008) and the coloniality of power, knowledge and being (Quijano, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

It is clear that Morocco has been experiencing a postcolonial malaise characterized by linguistic dependency on French after its independence and increasingly on English in the modern era. The fact that Moroccan authorities have introduced different policies in the postcolonial era evidences the country's attempts to keep up with the changes that have shaped not only local society but also the world. The need to emphasize the significance of postcoloniality in shaping the linguistic situation of Morocco is justified by the assumption that the country's linguistic dependency would be aggravated with the massive momentum of English worldwide. That is why it is important to consider that since Morocco is a postcolonial space situated within the global south, it may be easier to perpetuate the dominance of a particular linguistic pattern there.

Morocco's postcolonial struggles are likely to render the spread of English greater among Moroccans, especially the youth (Chakrani, 2013). In particular, one key manifestation of this rapid spread is that the number of students enrolling in the English section of Moroccan universities is increasing (El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016; Jebbour, 2021). The rapid spread of English across the country is not only due to globalization and neoliberalism but also to Moroccans' extensive exposure to American culture (R'boul, 2020b). Therefore, it is necessary to analyse English language teaching and reflect on the global spread of English and its implications. The conditions brought about by postcoloniality and the global spread of English may entail the entanglement of various elements in English language teaching including the supremacy of English, neoliberalism and Moroccans' willingness to embrace English as a representation of modernity and high status.

2.2. English Language Education in Morocco

2.2.1. Secondary School Education

In public schools, English is not introduced until the 9th grade (Final year of middle school), while in private schools it can be taught from the very beginning of elementary school. Moroccan public schools use locally-produced textbooks while private schools usually use international textbooks and materials. With regards to public schools, the Ministry of Education assumes the responsibility of examining different available textbooks and authorizes the use of the ones that have been developed in accordance with their mandated guidelines for textbook design. Teachers can decide on the textbook they use depending on their preferences or on the unanimous agreement among all the teachers in a school. The most commonly used textbook in the final year of middle school is *FOCUS* and it comes with a student's book and a workbook. Also, different textbooks are used throughout the upper secondary school including *Windows*

on the World in the first common core curriculum, *Ticket To English 1* or *Gateway To English 1* in the first year of baccalaureate and *Ticket To English 2* or *Gateway to English 2* in the second-year.

English is taught throughout all the years of high school with comparable emphasis between students who have opted for literature/humanities or sciences. Culture and interculturality are openly discussed in the senior year of high school, specifically in the second unit of *Gateway to English 2*. Other units include a number of representations of culture and interculturality with varying degrees of emphasis and explicitness. Several teachers who have had the experience of working in private English-teaching centres such as the American Language Centers and British Council schools expressed that textbooks are more oriented towards Anglophone cultures and reflect their norms. These include attitudes of individualism, economic prosperity and investment. Teachers further noted that textbooks were often developed for general use in different contexts without careful attention to the Moroccan context (R'boul, in press). This means that textbooks have not been specifically designed to meet Moroccan specificities, but are based on native speakers' ways of languaging, culture and thinking.

Bouzid (2016) investigated the representation of race and social class in three second-year Baccalaureate ELT textbooks, *Gateway to English 2*, *Insights into English 2* and *Tickets to English 2*, which are currently used in Moroccan public high school. The findings revealed that the Caucasian race dominated textbooks' representation, which might result in the marginalization of the lower class. This could also be seen as evidence of the increasing presence of neoliberal attitudes that underscore money, business and class.

2.2.2. Tertiary Level Education

The Moroccan higher education system follows the francophone structure of LMD (Licence (3 years), Master (2 years) and Doctorate (3 to 6 years)). It is analogous to the international system of B.A, Master's degree and PhD. In tertiary education, English is part of almost all majors' curriculum, mainly English for specific purposes (ESP), except in the English Studies degree programs. In higher education, all Moroccan universities offer a bachelor, master and doctoral degree in English studies and they have been receiving an increasing number of students enrolling in the English Studies departments (Chakrani & Huang, 2014; Jebbour, 2021).

In these departments' bachelor programs, students are taught the linguistic aspects of the language such as reading, writing and speaking with some modules that introduce popular English-speaking literature in the first two years. In addition, in the second year, there are two modules of British History and Culture; and US History and Culture, which are the main courses that discuss culture in the first two years. In the third year, students can opt for an emphasis either on linguistics, literary studies or culture (only at some universities). In the fifth semester, there is a module titled "Intercultural awareness" that deals with issues of intercultural communication. Some Moroccan universities offer professional bachelor's degrees that prepare would-be teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills in order to pass the national recruitment written and oral exams. The exams often involve a module on intercultural communication.

French is used as the medium of instruction in most higher education institutions to teach business, medicine and engineering. Several schools in major Moroccan cities have adopted American curriculums. English is increasingly used to teach STEM courses in order to enable

professors and students to publish in international journals so as to increase universities' ranking (Belhiah & Abdelatif, 2016). In recent years, many stakeholders and scholars have called for embracing English as the medium of instruction (Ben Haman, 2021; Kachoub & Hilgendorf, 2020). There are several Moroccan private universities whose medium of instruction is English, e.g., Al-Akawayn University and the International University of Rabat. Furthermore, internationally accredited US and UK institutions such as the American Language Center and the British Council have schools in major cities in Morocco and they attract a great number of students. Additionally, British and American universities have established their campuses in Morocco, particularly the University of Sunderland and Cardiff Metropolitan University in Casablanca, Rabat and Tangier and the University of New England in Tangier (Belhiah, 2020). Although Moroccan authorities still prefer French due to its deeply-rooted presence in society and economy, the global spread of English and the neoliberal pressures are likely to elevate the status of English, which could even replace French as the medium of instruction (R'boul, 2020b).

2.3. Interculturality in English Language Studies and Teacher Education in Morocco

As this thesis is based on interculturality and how the teaching of ELT is affected by intercultural colonial-like relations between the Global North and South, we need to present and discuss the way interculturality is approached in English language studies and teacher education programs in Morocco. We are going to describe the programs first so as to make readers aware of the way English Studies and Teacher Training Programs are organized in Morocco and also the way culture and issues related to intercultural knowledge and awareness are dealt with or shown in the following four programs.

2.3.1. Bachelor of Arts in English Studies for Teaching

In 2018, the Ministry of Education mandated an ‘Ecole Supérieure de l'Education et de la Formation’ [Higher Schools of Education and Training] which should be created in all universities in Morocco throughout the few following years. This decision was made in accordance with the requirements of the strategic vision for education, training and scientific research 2015-2030, which included a national program whose aim was to train 200,000 teachers by 2028. The Ministry of Education announced that the foundation of these institutions would also take place by changing the name of the existing ‘École normale supérieure’, which were public higher education institutions that trained secondary school teachers.

The establishment of the Higher Schools of Education and Training came within the framework of the new vision of the university map that aimed to improve the university pedagogical offer. The objective was to create institutions that could keep pace with the development of social demands for higher education as well as alleviate the pressure that universities with open access experienced. The Higher Schools of Education and Training train professionals to operate in the educational sector. According to the Ministry of Education, these institutions provide varied training offerings that focus on excellence, innovation and a clear response to the needs of society. The following table shows the modules taught in the bachelor’s degree program in ‘English Studies’ for teaching purposes:

Table 1. The modules taught in the bachelor’s degree program in ‘English Studies’ for teaching

Semesters	Modules
S1	Reading Comprehension and Précis 1 Paragraph Writing Grammar 1 Spoken English Guided Reading Study Skills

	ICT and teaching English 2
S2	Oral Communication Readings in Culture Reading Comprehension and Précis 2 Grammar 2 ICT and teaching English 2 Composition 1 British Culture and Society
S3	Extensive Reading Composition 2 Grammar 3 Public Speaking and Debating 1 British Culture & Society/Culture & Society in the USA Educational Sciences
S4	Introduction to Literary Studies and Cultural Studies Introduction to Language Advanced Composition Introduction to Linguistics English Teaching Methodology 1 Public Speaking and Debating 2
S5	English Teaching Methodology Individual Learner Differences 1 Language Awareness Approaches and Methods Profession Ethics and Values Decisions Educational Research Immersion Internship in the school 1
S6	English Teaching Methodology 2 Learning technologies for the EFL classroom Competencies and standards in the EFL curriculum History of theories and models of language Individual Learner Differences 2 Immersion Internship in the school 2

The first two years (4 semesters) include the same modules that are taught in regular public universities. English teaching-related courses are introduced in the final third year. Importantly, culture is discussed in two modules: “Readings in Culture” and “British Culture & Society/Culture & Society in the USA”. However, these modules provide factual knowledge

about the history and culture of the UK and the USA without any critical consideration of intercultural communication and the global spread of English.

2.3.2. English Teaching Professional Bachelors Programs

Apart from the English Studies Degrees, which aim at developing students' knowledge of English linguistics or literature, several Moroccan universities offer professional bachelors programs, which are more focused on providing would-be teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to embark on their teaching career. Each university can offer its own program but it remains a preparation rather than a pre-service training prior to recruitment. Students who have obtained these bachelor's degrees are still required to sit for the national recruitment exam and take part in the official pre-service training. Since one article of this thesis is based on research conducted at Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra, we will focus on the programs there. The program at that university is a one-year degree available to students who have already completed the first two years of a bachelors' degree in English studies. The program is called "Teaching English as a Foreign Language" and consists of the following courses organized in two semesters:

Table 2. The modules taught in the EFL professional program

Semesters	Modules
S5	Teaching Profession Teaching Methods and Approaches Cultural Awareness in TEFL Applied Linguistics Theories of Language Acquisition and Learning ICT in Education
S6	Teaching the Four Skills Phonology and Morphology Gender Pedagogy in TEFL A period of 'Professional Internship' in a high school with a supervisor who is an in-service

teacher.

The university does not specify the lessons and topics taught in each module. Based on my observations, culture and interculturality are discussed only in the module of ‘Cultural Awareness in TEFL’. It is at the discretion of the professor to decide on the topics in this subject, but the general guidelines were to inform students of the importance of English in intercultural communication and how teachers can approach cultural differences or similarities in their classes.

2.3.3. English Teaching Master’s Degree Programs

Most Moroccan universities offer master’s degree programs in English Teaching or Applied Linguistics concentrated on teaching. I will describe here the professional master’s program of ‘Teaching English as a Foreign Language’ at Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra because one of the articles included in this dissertation is based at that university. The degree is a four-semester program over a period of two years. The last semester is a professional internship in a high school that involves both observation and practicum under the supervision of an experienced teacher. The four semesters include the following modules:

Table 3. The modules taught in the EFL Master’s degree

Semesters	Modules
S1	Oral Communication Pedagogy 1 ICT Education Applied Linguistics Morphology and Syntax Phonology and Phonetics
S2	Pedagogy 2 Cultural Awareness in TEFL Writing Psycholinguistics in TEFL

	Gender in TEFL Sociolinguistics in TEFL
S3	Statistics Teaching Profession Teaching Methods Legislation (Taught in Arabic) Teaching the Four Skills English for Specific Purposes
S4	Professional Internship with a host teacher in a high school

Culture and interculturality are discussed in the ‘Culture Awareness in TEFL’ module, which draws on Byram’s (1997) book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. This module entails discussing different chapters of the book and offering practical applications for developing students’ intercultural competence. The main focus is on the ‘Five Savoirs’ constituting intercultural communicative competence, which is explained and considered throughout the course.

2.3.4. Pre-service Training Program

The pre-service teacher training program takes place in different major Moroccan cities in the ‘Regional Centres for Education and Training’. They all share the same curriculum and syllabus, which are determined by the Ministry of Education. Since information on this program is not available at the centres or the ministry’s websites, the descriptions presented below were the ones provided by student teachers. The program includes two semesters over a period of 7 months. Each semester involves a one-month professional internship in a high school. Drawing on interviews with student teachers, the taught modules did not entail significant engagement with culture and interculturality teaching. The focus was mainly on teaching methodology including learning theories, teaching practices and classroom management. The two semesters consist of the following modules:

Table 4. the modules taught in the pre-service training program

Semesters	Modules
S1	Teaching Skills Approaches and Methods Classroom Management Planning (i. e. how to form lesson plans) Action research School life (this module is taught in Arabic) Education sciences (this module is taught in Arabic)
S2	Managing the Learning Situation Professional Development/Reflective Teaching ICTs Testing and Evaluation Material Evaluation and Adaptation Legislation and Ethics Didactic Production and Workshops Micro Teaching and Analysis of Professional Situations

2.3.5. Cultural/Intercultural Recommendations in the English Language Teaching Guidelines

Due to the economic crisis of the 1990s, the Moroccan ministry of education made considerable efforts to reform education in order “to expedite its economic recovery and to keep pace with swift social, political and economic challenges transpiring as a result of globalization” (Chafi et al. 2016, p. 134). Three essential resources have shaped the educational reforms and structures in relation to English teaching at Moroccan schools. They are the English Language Guidelines for Secondary Education (2007), the National Charter for Education and Training introduced in 1999 and the Strategic Vision for Reform (2015–2030). The main focus here is on the English Language Guidelines for Secondary Education, which regulates the process of English teaching-learning and provides important insights into practising English teaching in Morocco.

This document was issued by the Moroccan Ministry of Education in 2007. It provides instructional input on the following themes in ELT (Table 5).

Table 5. Themes of the English Language Guidelines for Secondary Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Themes	Pages
Preface	3
Part One	4
Standards-based Approach: An overview	5
Teaching through standards: A lesson plan	7
Part Two	8
The teaching of the four skills	9
Listening and speaking	9
- Teaching listening	
- Teaching speaking	
Reading and writing	21
- Teaching reading	
- Teaching writing	
Teaching language functions	30
Teaching grammar	33
Teaching Vocabulary	38
Part Three	43
Learner autonomy and learner training	44
Classroom management	52
Project work	57
Part Four	61
Performance-based assessment	62
Part Four:	
Syllabi	70
- Common Core Syllabus	
- First year Baccaalaureate syllabus	
- First year Baccaalaureate syllabus	
- Second year Baccaalaureate syllabus	
Appendices	85-90

Since this document directly relates to English education in Morocco, it is the most important and relevant to this thesis' focus. It indicates that English teaching should address the following five areas:

“1. Communication: Learners will communicate in both oral and written forms, interpret both oral and written messages, show cultural understanding and present oral and written information to various audiences for a variety of purposes. Three modes of communication are involved here: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational communication.

2. Cultures: Learners will gain a deeper understanding of their culture(s) and other cultures in terms of their perspectives (e.g., values, ideas, attitudes, etc.), practices (pattern of social interactions), and products (e.g., books, laws, music, etc.).
3. Connections: Learners will make connections with other subject areas and acquire information and use them [connections] through English for their own purposes.
4. Comparisons: Learners will gain awareness of cross-cultural similarities and differences (in terms of both language(s) and culture).
5. Communities: Learners will extend their learning experiences from the EFL classroom to the outside world through activities such as the use of the Internet. They will therefore be made aware that we live in a global world” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 5)

The guidelines indicate that “cultural understanding is essential in language education” (p. 5). The area of ‘Cultures’ is an essential part of English language education as learners are expected to gain a deeper understanding of their own cultures and other cultures in terms of values, attitudes, patterns of social interactions and laws. While the terms ‘intercultural’ and ‘interculturality’ were not included, the guidelines involve strong references to the importance of ensuring the smooth functioning of intercultural relations through cultural understanding. Throughout the various sections of the guidelines, numerous references have been identified as goals for English language education including “interact culturally with peers and/ other speakers of English” (p. 13), “ability to transmit, share and compare ideas, information and cultural patterns of different speakers.” (p. 14) and “learners will be able to speak with their interlocutors in a culturally appropriate way” (p. 15). In particular, the guidelines emphasize the usefulness of taking into account the cultural element in teaching the four skills (writing,

reading, speaking and listening). For instance, reading should be oriented to provide “learners with the opportunity to know and interact with other cultures and experiences” (p. 21). Also, the guidelines encouraged teachers to develop students’ competency in “getting acquainted with the various cultural aspects and accepting cultural differences” (p. 23).

2.4. Research on Interculturality and English Language Teaching in Morocco

Few studies have examined interculturality in English language teaching in Morocco. Koumachi (2015) assessed the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) of 61 EFL Moroccan university students using an ‘intercultural test’ composed of multi-choice and open-ended questions. Items were formulated to investigate students’ factual knowledge and beliefs through eliciting their reactions to given scenarios. Data analysis was based on the ICC model created by Byram (1997). Findings revealed that “Moroccan EFL university students do possess the average necessary needed intercultural communicative competence to be mindful intercultural speakers and act purposefully and appropriately in cross-cultural communication encounters” (p. 54).

Echcharfy and Erguig (2020) explored how the teaching of “Reading Comprehension and Précis II” using intercultural topics (Moroccan and American cultures) along with intercultural tasks contributed to the development of Moroccan EFL learners’ intercultural awareness in the area of knowledge/savoir. The participants were 60 students in the experimental group and 38 in the control group. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, an intercultural test and a semi-structured interview before and after the experiment. The findings showed that students in the experimental group outperformed students in the control group regarding different intercultural aspects. After the administration of the

treatment, there was a statistically significant increase in students' mean scores in terms of knowledge about Moroccan and American cultures.

Another study by Echcharfy (2020) compared teachers' perceptions with students' expectations regarding intercultural learning in Moroccan higher education. Two Likert-scale questionnaires were administered to 51 participants (25 teachers and 26 students). The findings showed that "most of the teachers held positive perceptions by showing a high degree of agreement with different aspects of intercultural learning" and, although students disagreed with some aspects of intercultural learning, they exhibited "positive and high expectations about most of the aspects" (p. 19).

Elboubekri (2017) explored the assumption that Oujda university students' low test scores in English might be, to some extent, due to the absence of intercultural teaching. Data were collected using questionnaires with 23 teachers and 131 students of the English department at the University of Mohamed the First. The researcher concluded that the hypothesis related to the divergence between students' learning anticipations about intercultural communication and the actual teaching programs was "fully supported" (p. 540). Furthermore, the author hypothesized that the lack of intercultural teaching would result in a lack of training in intercultural pedagogy, which was also partly confirmed by the data.

Only one study has explored the possible cultural threat that English poses to local languages and cultures. Elboubkeri (2013) investigated the assumption that English might jeopardize the local cultures and identities in Morocco. The researcher used a questionnaire with 78 teachers of English and open conversations with 37 high school graduate students. Findings indicated that the "English language poses no real threat on the national culture in

Morocco” (p. 1934). However, the research further noted that students were not exposed to “visible facets of western cultures in the syllabus of English courses for fear that would end up in discontent with local traditions and values” (p. 1934).

Overall, interculturality-related studies in Morocco have mainly examined students’ intercultural competence/awareness and teachers’ beliefs about the feasibility of intercultural education. That is why the rationale for this thesis is to provide studies that first offer various insights on culture and interculturality in English language teaching in Morocco and link it to the global power imbalances and the North and South relations in intercultural communication and then critically investigate the impact of the spread of English in Morocco on students’ perceptions of their own culture.

2.5. Objectives of the research

This thesis endeavours to establish a critical discussion of the influence of ELT in the Global South by considering the scholarship on power imbalances and colonial-like relations between the Global North and South. Therefore, this thesis seeks to challenge the traditional understandings of ELT as being entirely benign and objective without any sociopolitical implications. However, these perceptions are not deterministic; they are an extension of the available literature in critical applied linguistics along with empirical evidence on teachers’ perspectives and students’ attitudes. Drawing on the insights provided by the critical literature on English language teaching and the spread of English in the Global South, the objectives of this research have been defined as follows:

- A. To explore how Global North and South imbalances are reflected in intercultural communication education

- B. To argue that teaching intercultural communication in ELT has to take into consideration power imbalances and sociopolitical realities
- C. To study how intercultural communication dialectics inform English language teaching
- D. To analyse how the dominance of inner-circle countries on ELT theory and praxis shape EFL in non-western contexts
- E. To examine how learning and speaking English influence Moroccan EFL university students' language ontologies

3. Paper's thematic unit, Summaries, Significance of the study and Contribution to Knowledge

Four academic journal papers are included in this thesis. These papers are three theoretical and one empirical article. In alignment with the traditions of critical applied linguistics, the studies shed light on different aspects related to the hegemonic understandings of the global spread of English as reflected in ELT theory and praxis. They are also thematically united given their particular focus on power imbalances between the Global North and South. They specifically tackle how intercultural relations are unequal, which results in the dichotomy of 'Self' and 'Other' as has been argued in the literature. The main argument of the studies is that due to power inequalities, Anglophone perspectives and cultures are dominant and more valued compared to Southern perceptions. The second argument is that ELT might be contributing to the maintenance of power imbalances and the relegation of local perspectives and cultures. In addition to the dominance of Anglophone knowledge on ELT theory and practice, southern teachers may not be aware of the possible influence of their practices in reifying the

subalternity of their contexts as they do not reflect a critical understating of the global spread of English.

The thematic unity of these studies is made clear in their orientations and methodologies as they examine various dimensions of the influence of English language teaching and power imbalances on local languages and cultures as well as ELT praxis in the Global South. The studies draw on different constructs, but they simultaneously probe into the dynamics that have created the common belief that ELT is entirely benign and benevolent. To develop a comprehensive analysis of the cultural politics of English and ELT, it is important to build on the idea that the personal, the political and the pedagogical realms are intersected. These studies' thematic unity not only delivers a common concern but also provides a well-rounded examination of the various elements which impact how the global spread of English and, thus, ELT is functioning in the Global South. The studies are grounded on theoretical frameworks which are reflective of the complexity of the global spread of English and its interconnectedness with various constructs including globalization, coloniality and intercultural communication.

The cohesive aims of these studies are twofold: First, to develop a conceptual trajectory that deconstructs the hegemonic traditions of English language in postcolonial spaces by discussing intercultural communicative education, intercultural communication dialectics and the supremacy of inner-circle's ELT theory and praxis; Second, to explore university students' language ontologies, which capture the cultural and societal influences of speaking English. The findings of the studies can be collectively represented as they contribute to analysing different facets of the same theme. In order to clarify and explain the contribution of each paper to the process of discussing the cultural politics of English and ELT, an explanation of

the main arguments and findings of each paper is provided in the next section. They are presented in a way that supports their thematic unity and clarifies the logical build-up of the thesis as a combination of different studies.

3.1. First paper: R'boul, H. (2020). Re-imagining intercultural communication dynamics in TESOL: culture/interculturality. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, 14(2), 177-188. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-03-2020-0016>.

The **Journal for Multicultural Education** is indexed in the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) in the subject areas of Cultural Studies (Q1), Linguistics and Language (Q1) and Education (Q3). Its impact factor for 2020 is 0.384.

Because of the persistent inequality between the Anglo-Atlantic spaces and the Global South (Thompson, 2019), multiple works have discussed the endeavour to decolonize ELT and TESOL (Chan & Henderson, 2018; Macedo, 2019; Meighan, 2020; Vettorel, 2018). These inequalities are specifically highlighted in TESOL, and that is why promoting social justice has to be aligned with the particularities of TESOL. The focus is, therefore, not only to account for classrooms' cultural capital but also to discuss the issues related to using English in the real world. Related to this aim, the first theoretical paper problematized interculturality and intercultural communication within the conditions of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and today's circumstances. The paper argued that despite the emphasis on intersubjectivity and non-linearity in intercultural communication studies, TESOL seems to still perpetuate hyper-solid and essentialist representations of interculturality. The manuscript discussed the necessity to alter some common perceptions of TESOL students by critically

considering the imbalanced sociopolitical realities that may be reflected/encouraged in classrooms.

The premise was that without accounting for the additional factors involved in using English while interacting with the culturally different other, TESOL may not be able to ensure a mutually satisfactory communicative experience. Intercultural communication research and pedagogy in TESOL were examined to delineate the inaccuracies that have pervaded interculturality narratives in order to encourage socio-politically conscious teaching that recognizes discourses of power and justice. The paper concluded that the simplistic and positivist consideration of interculturality in TESOL is rather unresponsive to the possible unfair treatment of students' cultures and current circumstances, which are imbued with a high sense of complexity and non-linearity, resulting in producing ready-made conclusions. To account for the findings, more complex approaches are needed to accommodate the complexity of interculturality in TESOL pedagogy and research by taking into account intersubjectivity, suspending native-speakerism normativity, western hegemony and non-linearity of intercultural interactions. The main contribution of this paper to the overall argument of the thesis is that it recognizes the inefficiency of presenting interculturality as a matter of conforming to the communication standards of Anglophone cultures and argues for the need to promote inclusive education that appreciates cultural diversity and considers power imbalances and the conditions (identity and culture) of non-native speakers in TESOL.

The paper further posits that challenging sociopolitical realities implies developing an inclusive intercultural perspective on TESOL education that actively encourages a form of intercultural awareness informed by a conscious inquiry into power relations and the dichotomy of Western/non-Western narratives. As language can be used to construct particular socio-

cultural realities, it is important to develop an understanding of socially and politically oppressed people. While “intercultural learning is necessary for critique” (Young, 1996, p. 209), one possible orientation is to emphasize interculturally critical teaching, which not only serves an emancipatory and transforming purpose but also “aims at the radical transformation of the educational system (curricula, school manuals, teaching strategies, teacher training) with the perspective of societal change” (Maniatis, 2012, p. 157).

Engaging in intercultural encounters through English can be a complex experience. For instance, Peck and Yates (2019) explored the complex emotions associated with using English as a foreign language in intercultural experiences by investigating South Koreans’ ideologies of the intercultural. These researchers used a series of in-depth interviews with eight South Korean speakers of EFL. Findings showed that because proficiency in English determines to a large extent access to intercultural experiences, the process of acquiring competence in English is emotionally charged. By suspending the hegemony of native speakers, TESOL classrooms can prepare students for equal appreciation of their interlocutors’ multiple identities/cultures and bring about social changes while making students realise challenging inequalities between cultures in hierarchized spaces (Makoni, 2019). TESOL instructors have to realize the importance of embracing critical intercultural communication education and teaching for social justice. For example, teachers can embrace approaches of critical intercultural communication pedagogy, while recognizing how larger power structures influence intercultural interactions (Halualani, 2011).

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R'Boul, H. “ Re-imagining intercultural communication dynamics in TESOL: culture/interculturality”, *Journal for Multicultural Education*, vol. 14, nº 22 , pp. 177-188, 2020. DOI: [10.1108/JME-03-2020-0016](https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-03-2020-0016)

3.2. Second paper: R'boul, H. (2021). Intercultural Communication Dialectics in English Language Teaching. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 9(1), 30-42.

International Journal of Society, Culture and Language is indexed in SJR in the Anthropology (Q2), Linguistics and Language (Q2), Education (Q3) and Gender Studies (Q3) subject areas. Its impact factor is 0.296

Conceptualizations of intercultural communication in English language teaching have largely been constructed on western-centric and essentialist representations of interculturality. The failure to take into account power imbalances among Anglophone and Southern spaces may perpetuate the inequalities that have long existed. The second theoretical paper presents the questioning of the singularity of approaches in intercultural language education as a required process to become aware of the complexity of intercultural interactions, especially in terms of power imbalances. The dialectic perspective, with its inclusiveness of varying discursive reasonings, can offer a discerning treatment of interculturality through reconciling the opposing dialectics in intercultural communication scholarship. These dialectics are Cultural-Individual Dialectic; Personal/Social-Contextual Dialectic; Differences-Similarities Dialectic; Static-Dynamic Dialectic; Present-Future/History-Past Dialectic; and Privilege-Disadvantage Dialectic. This article made a case for the usefulness of incorporating multiple epistemological stances in order to develop more comprehensive insights about interculturality; and argued that, by developing pluriversal perspectives, we can simultaneously consider the multiplicity of individuals' ontologies, identities and cultures. This is realized by first advancing an inter-paradigmatic discussion of culture and communication research dialectics and then considering its theoretical relevance and practical applications in English language teaching.

The main contribution of this paper is to advance a pluriversal understanding of the intercultural that is informed by the necessity to expand common assumptions of interculturality in ELT. It critiques current understandings of interculturality in ELT that are often pragmatic and only discuss communicative aspects without examining how power asymmetries influence the way intercultural interactions are handled. A pluriversal understanding emphasizes synergizing intellectual insights from different perceptions of interculturality in order to achieve a perception of even the underrepresented contexts. It is rather promising in the sense that it can contribute to a broader range of comprehensiveness and move towards an inclusive building up of the intercultural. Since interculturality implies “a plurality of perspectives about culture and identity” and “multiplicity of viewpoints and their intersections” (Tinghe, 2017, p. 309), embracing pluriversal perspectives entails weaving together prominent concepts from diverse but complementary disciplines, and transcending dominant perceptions of intercultural narratives that have been formulated in alignment with normative assumptions.

Pluriversal perspectives entail primarily striving towards more nuanced understandings of intercultural situations, especially the ones that involve the use of the English language. An interdisciplinary theoretical approach, informed by the dialectics of intercultural communication, can contribute to the scholarship by emphasizing sensitivity to the role of culture in linguistic choices and perceptions, clarifying the importance of considering personal identity/cultural trajectories (Nair-Venugopalal, 2009) and examining the intercultural and its interrelations with education (Gorski, 2008; Palaiologou & Gorski, 2017), globalization (Cantle, 2012), political realities (Aman, 2018; Collins, 2018) and interculturalism/multiculturalism (Guilherme, 2019; Levey, 2012; Meer & Modood, 2012) in multicultural societies.

The pluriversality of perspectives is emphasised as individuals' cultures/identities are in constant change and, thus, cannot be accurately imagined in any given moment due to the overwhelming number of influential factors. Conceptualizing and enacting pluriversality in the context of ELT necessitates considering how interlocutors bring to the communication act different ontologies, perceptions and ecologies that may hinder the smooth functioning of communicative activities. A pluriversal understanding in English teaching theory and praxis would require challenging pre-defined and ostensibly popular perceptions of interculturality. Also, it is important to move towards perceiving intercultural interactions as a site of continuous intersubjective dialogue involving a myriad of cultures, identities, ontologies and dynamics. That is why a more nuanced understanding of interculturality would support dismissing simplistic considerations of intercultural communication in English language teaching.

Advancing a pluriversality of perspectives delivers an inclusive understanding of interculturality that discounts the normative assumptions regarding the conditions of successful intercultural interactions. Language is often used to construct socio-political realities, especially in the instances involving western and nonwestern ontologies (e.g., Sousa Santos's (2014) *Epistemologies of the South*); thus, language teaching has to adopt a de-westernized approach (Miike, 2006; Wang, 2011) presenting intercultural communication as a site of negotiation rather than a matter of cultural superiority and ascendancy. The notion of pluriversal perspectives emphasizes the significance of equally considering the communicative aspect and interculturality with its intersections with interculturalism/multiculturalism, western/non-western ontologies, knowledge production and pedagogical practicalities.

Intercultural ELT has to cease recognizing individuals as representatives of particular cultures and, thus, completely ignoring their inherent individuality since members of a given culture never express the same degree of identification, nor do they reflect their culture in a similar fashion. The key elements remain the co-construction of identities, the importance of relationships in interactions and the representations of oneself and the others (western/non-western). English language teaching has to prioritize not only teaching interculturality but teaching about interculturality to promote meta-awareness which can help students to critically analyze the processes and dynamics of intercultural interactions* The aim is to enable students to achieve a higher level of independence in dealing with various intercultural situations in terms of objectives, strategies, actions and reactions.

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R'boul, H. "Intercultural Communication Dialectics in English Language Teaching" *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, vol. 9, nº 1, pp. 30-42, 2020.

3.3.Third paper: R'boul, H. (2021). North/South imbalances in intercultural communication education. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 21(2), 144-157.

DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2020.1866593

Language and Intercultural Communication is indexed in the Journal Citations Reports (JCR) in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). Its Impact Factor for 2020 is 1,903 (Q2). It is also indexed in SCImago Journal Rank in Communication (Q1) and Linguistics and Language (Q1). Its impact factor is 0.714.

Western-centric perceptions of knowledge, behaviours and communication are more dominant and often obscure underrepresented non-western communities. This renders the mission of intercultural communication education (ICE) necessarily encompassing the reconsideration of these hierarchies and differences. The third theoretical paper article argues that by dewesternizing ICE, there could be a valid scope for establishing reconciliation between western and non-western ontologies, e.g. Africa, Asia and Latin America, resulting in mutually satisfying intercultural communicative experiences. The article presents ‘decolonized consciousness’ and ‘pluri-perspectivity’ as postmodern reflections and approaches to the complexity of intercultural communication in socio-politically unbalanced contexts.

Since intercultural communication is often mediated through English, Kumaravadivelu (2012) expressed the plea for “an epistemic break from its dependency on Western-oriented or, more specifically, Center-based (aka Inner Circle-based) knowledge systems” (p. 9). In order to account for the complexity of interculturality in ICE, instructors should seek to reflect social realities in teaching procedures and materials. Although developing interculturally appropriate practices and materials that are commensurated with the current times may seem unreachable,

an objective of ICE has to be reconciling the inconsistency between “an understanding of interculturality as a programmatic, political-educational strategy for smoothing over, softening, or mitigating relations” and another view which perceives interculturality as a “transformative strategy to unveil, question, and change historically rooted inequalities within society” (Dietz, 2018, p. 3). ICE is expected to undermine cultural hegemony by deconstructing the aspiration of melting into western culture. A contemporary understanding of interculturality should stop encouraging students from underrepresented contexts to culturally compromise their plural identities and cultures for more dominant western ones. ICE is about ensuring the severance of intercultural communication from its current western concentration and transcending any association with a particular culture or the implication of the superiority of western-centred perspectives (see, for example, Huntington, 1997) including knowledge, practices and objectives.

In what I call ‘De-westernized Consciousness’ in ICE, I support developing a morally and politically responsible education that challenges current power hierarchies and propels mutually satisfying intercultural communicative experiences. Through de-westernizing current notions of action and thought, interculturality can be perceived on the basis of diverse realities in an equal manner since ICE does not only deal with cultural differences but also intellectual and cultural monologues. ICE’s possible complicity in power imbalances can be, thus, confronted and gradually eliminated by promoting contemplative processes on the part of instructors and curriculum developers; for example, Merryfield’s (2008) concept of global awareness can be a contribution here. This paper tries to bring scholars’ and instructors’ attention to the specificities of current times, which require more complex approaches to account for the complexity of intercultural interactions. De-westernized consciousness refers to

the outcome of advancing de-westernizing frames of reference, also decolonial but in the sense of ceasing to absentmindedly value northern ontologies over southern ones.

De-westernized consciousness is a state of mind that ICE should aim to promote and develop in instructors and students. It acknowledges that there is a dysfunctional relationship between ICE and the world's current conditions and conflicts since educational approaches are dominated by pragmatic modern regimes, which are often underpinned by the hegemony of political monocultures. Developing de-westernized consciousness entails (a) recognizing that non-western cultural traditions have either been underrepresented or delivered with a sense of having been required to embrace the epistemologies and communicative norms of northern spaces; (b) suspending the deeply-rooted belief in the universality of specific theories covering all cultures even those with drastically dissimilar values; (c) seeking the development of an awareness of these historical trajectories with the help of postcolonial theory in order to question the 'relative exteriorities' of hegemonic educational systems (Amsler & Facer, 2017, p. 7) and (d) promoting the engagement in self-reflection about self-proclaimed assumptions that either privilege or discriminate against oneself. ICE has to exhibit a critical dimension in the de-westernizing task of both communication and beyond-communication constructs by highlighting non-western societies and perspectives rather than simply reproducing fixated western priorities.

Pluri-perspectivity denotes the complexity of establishing reconciliation and harmony among cultures without acknowledging the multiplicity of voices. It also speaks of the need to transcend biased knowledge production about interculturality in order to get acquainted with the individual. It requests reimaging intellectual dependency on western-centric theory and moving on to consider other narratives. ICE can work on the intersectionality of socio-economic,

political-societal categories and linguistic backgrounds, oscillating between differences and similarities at both cultural and personal levels in intercultural interactions. ICE can be, thus, perceived in a more complex framework that is highly responsive to the complexities involved in human communication in general (Kim, 2002). This understanding supports the plurality of perspectives since individuals' ontologies are in constant change and cannot be fully captured at any given moment due to the overwhelming number of influential factors. Perspectives are not static, but more unconsciously instantly formed ideas of oneself and the other while taking into account the surrounding categories including context, expectations, personality and mood. For example, instructors can look more closely at themselves and their students' positionality. Instructors can pay more attention to intersectionality by reflecting on the interlacement of different social categorizations such as race and gender, and how they may create overlapping systems of privilege and oppression.

It is indeed important to develop students' understanding of themselves either as privileged or discriminated individuals. This can even propel their scope of comprehension regarding how power relations exert an influence on intercultural relations. Pluri-perspectivity recognizes the entanglement of several perspectives that are unfairly interacted and interconnected in a world that necessitates high resilience on the part of non-western cultures and individuals. Although the theoretical narrative of pluri-perspectivity is dialectical because it emphasizes the dynamics between the global and local as well as the western and non-western, it foregrounds cultural flexibility and even individuals' possible culturelessness. Culture can be a part of one's representation, not the uppermost indicator of existence: what I say, what I should say, what the others are saying while engaging in intercultural communicative experiences. By embracing a plurality of perspectives in one's understanding,

an interlocutor can function as a mediator between oneself and others, putting oneself in a higher position of comprehension of the dynamics of intercultural encounters. ICE should be expected to deliver critical accounts of interculturality as it is researched and discussed in intercultural communication studies. Therefore, ICE should include the questioning of power differences and the subordination or the ascendancy of certain cosmologies, ontologies and epistemologies. It is an educational representation of current discussions on the geopolitical dimensions of interculturality and knowledge including communication either verbal, non-verbal, symbolic or political and imbalanced structural systems, e.g. lingering colonial structures.

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R'boul, H. "North/South imbalances in intercultural communication education". *Language and Intercultural Communication*, vol. 21, nº 2, pp. 144-157, 2021 . DOI: [10.1080/14708477.2020.1866593](https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2020.1866593)

3.4.Fourth Paper: R'boul, H. (2020). The spread of English in Morocco: Examining university students' language ontologies. **English Today**, 1-8. DOI:10.1017/S0266078420000449

English Today is indexed in the Journal Citations Reports (JCR) in the Social Sciences Citation Index. Its Impact Factor for 2020 is 1.123 in Linguistics (Q2). It is also in the SCImago Journal Rank in the Language and Linguistics (Q1). Its impact factor is 0.72.

This paper looked at how the historical position of Morocco as a postcolonial space situated within the Global South may represent an additional reason for both teachers and students to unintentionally favour Anglophone cultures. A central concept to the study's framework and analysis is the concept of 'language ontology'. It denotes how a speaker either perceives or uses a particular language to construct a reality. In other words, it refers to the process by which a language is used as an analogue of another reality. Therefore, using language entails a specific understanding of entities, morals, behaviours and lifestyles. While this may be contingent on individuals' perspectives, it remains interesting to investigate the extent to which a particular group of people share a similar language ontology.

The study investigated the language ontology of 28 undergraduates and master students (aged between 19 and 28) using focus group discussions. It also used in-depth interviews and classroom observations to include the perspectives of four university professors so as to corroborate students' comments and perspectives. The findings indicated that Moroccan university students expressed a willingness to associate themselves to a lesser extent to their local culture in order to embrace an Anglophone one (US and UK are emblematic), which is perceived as more modern and attractive. Students used English as an analogy to living another reality that is similar to the lives of the Americans and the British. This is more convoluted if

we consider that non-western learners might be othered as inferior (Hsu, 2017) by their own non-native teachers in their local communities. Teachers might be unaware of the possible unfair treatment of local perspectives and cultures by perpetuating western hegemony and native-speakerism normativity.

These findings reaffirm the necessity of advancing a critical framework in teaching intercultural communication. ICE needs to be based on a critical understanding of intercultural relations and profound engagement with power imbalances between the Global North and South. This type of findings is clear evidence of the importance of not only focusing on the linguistic forms of language but also prioritizing the role of language in shaping learners' perspectives of themselves and others. It is indeed crucial to theorize and practice ICE in English language classrooms through critical lenses that consider North/South imbalances as a central concern. The findings of this empirical article clarified the type of urgency and importance entailed in the arguments advanced in the theoretical papers in this thesis. ICE in English language classrooms requires more critical orientations that seek to undermine the superiority of Anglophone perspectives and transform students' language ontologies.

The spread of English in Morocco

HAMZA R'BOUL 

Examining university students' language ontologies

Introduction

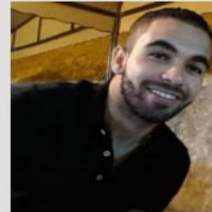
Morocco is a multilingual country where the official languages, as indicated in the constitution of 2011, are standard Arabic and Tamazight, while French is the nation's second language, pervading sectors of business, administration, diplomacy and higher education. English and Spanish are used as foreign languages in many contexts for different purposes and tasks (Ennaji, 2009). Unlike French and Spanish, whose presence in the Moroccan linguistic situation is due to colonial policy in the 20th century, English does not 'have a colonial legacy in Morocco' (Buckner, 2011: 213). With 'strong demand for a lingua franca' brought about by the media, economic incentives and globalization, the presence of English has consequently been furthered in Morocco 'as a global language' (Zouhir, 2013: 275).

In particular, the higher education sector has exhibited a growing interest in embracing English, and the general educational policy adopted by decision-makers has appreciably contributed to its spread in Morocco (Sadiqi, 1991: 106). Recent endeavors to internationalize and improve the outcomes of tertiary education have been accompanied by calls to replace French with English as a medium of instruction (Belhiah & Abdelatif, 2016; Ben Haman, 2020; Kachoub & Hilgendorf, 2019). One key aspect of this spread is that Moroccan universities have witnessed an increasing number of students enrolling in the English department (El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016; Jebbour, 2019). Moroccan scholars have ascribed this spread to the influence of the ideology of modernity on language attitudes (Chakrani, 2013; Chakrani & Huang, 2014), achieving socio-economic goals (Buckner, 2011; Jaafari, 2019; Ouakrime, 2016), instrumental perspective (Marley, 2004) and English language's lack of association with any colonial connotations for Moroccans (Ennaji, 1991; Zouhir, 2013).

However, considering that most university students are young, it is important to examine other factors that might have been unaddressed by previous studies.

This article aims at examining students and professors' perspectives and engagements with the English language. The concept of 'language ontology' is used throughout this paper to denote how a speaker either perceives or uses a particular language to construct a reality. In other words, it refers to the process by which a language is used as an analogue of another reality. Therefore, using a language entails a specific understanding of entities, morals, behaviours and lifestyles. While this may be contingent on individuals' perspective, it remains interesting to investigate the extent to which a particular group of people share similar language ontology. The objective is not only to identify which factors underpin the current growing interest in English, but also to further clarify whether students and professors' language ontologies are developed in alignment with national cultural frameworks.

By drawing on a number of group discussions and observations (inside and outside classrooms) conducted in different Moroccan universities, this paper makes the case for cultural factors in



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Moroccan English speakers' language ontologies. These factors serve as clear testaments of (a) how these individuals, who might consider themselves to be cultural representatives of English, are not simultaneously keen on maintaining their identification with Moroccan culture; and (b) English is used as a deliberate projection of self-representation and disclosure that is constructed under the rubrics of desirable socio-cultural realities.

This paper recognizes that Moroccan youth's proclivity to learn English is driven by (a) the usual association of English language with high education, socio-economic privilege, and modernism whereas (b) Darija (the Moroccan dialect of Arabic), or one of the various forms of Tamazight that constitute Moroccans' mother tongues, are identified with traditions, religion, non-modernity and conservatism. Accordingly, this paper considers that an important factor behind this recognized English expansion in Morocco is dissatisfaction with Moroccan culture and its characterizing elements and social dynamics. With exposure to the popular culture associated with English (Hilgendorf, 2007), Moroccan youth may come to develop a particular understanding that their language and culture hinders their possibilities of leading similar lifestyles due to restrictions, beliefs, norms and moral standards. Such an assumption would often concurrently entail cultural submission to more modern, permissive, and liberal western values.

English, culture and society

The increased prominence of the English language as a form of global communication has expedited the worldwide diffusion and consumption of its often associated cultures (Baker, 2009). This is a worldwide phenomenon that infiltrates all layers of society including the cultural fabric (see, e.g., Kuppens, 2013; Low & Ao, 2018; Pennycook, 2017; Schulzke, 2014) and even local speech communities, e.g., 'nativisation' of some English words (Lee & Choe, 2019: 8). However, this spread is not always perceived positively. English, in the current sociolinguistic conditions of unprecedented authority, is sometimes seen as 'a language of fluidity and fixity . . . [a] language of imagined communities and refashioning identities' (Pennycook, 2006: 5–6). Some assumptions have supported that the spread of English may entail a threat to local languages and cultures (Pan & Seargeant, 2012) through growing attitudes of westernization and detachment to local

countries, traditions and even religions (Haq & Smadi, 1996).

Moroccan context

In the Moroccan context, there has been a power struggle between local and foreign languages (Boukous, 2009; Zouhir, 2013). While Arabic, Darija and different varieties of Tamazight are perceived as the languages of local identity, cultural authenticity, and traditions (Marley, 2004: 29), French and English are portrayed as high-prestige languages (Jaafari, 2019: 128), which represent modernity and status-bearing significance (Bentahila, 1983; Chakrani, 2011; Chakrani & Huang, 2014; Mouhssine, 1995). In recent years, the emergence of English as the second foreign language in Morocco has presented some competition to French by reducing the latter's linguistic authority. Such a transformation in Moroccan linguistic situation has given way to a 'drastic reduction of the space of French' (Zouhir, 2013: 275) in numerous domains including education. This may, indeed, at some point result in English overtaking French in the long term (Marley, 2004).

While English has been introduced in many fields in Morocco, it has specifically been viewed favorably by young people (Chakrani, 2013). Recent statistics on the number of students enrolling to study English in Moroccan universities reveal a constant considerable increase while the number of students enrolling in French studies program has been continually decreasing; English has gained considerable popularity in recent years and it has become 'the most favourable and important language (French being the second) among Moroccan students' (Jebbour, 2019: 7). Belhiah (2020) investigated the motivations of 268 Moroccan university students for choosing English as a field of study. By adopting qualitative approaches, the researcher concluded that ten typologies accounted for students' motivations: '(i) Language attitudes and beliefs, (ii) Cultural interest, (iii) Ideal L2 self, (iv) Instrumentality (v) International orientation, (vi) Language facility, (vii) Linguistic vitality, (viii) Social milieu, (ix) School Milieu, and (x) Multilingual orientation' (p. 33). Chakrani (2013) compared the language attitudes of 454 university students from four colleges using a questionnaire and Matched Guise Test (MGT). By examining both overt and covert attitudes, findings revealed that students' attitudes were affected by their tendency to embrace the ideology of modernity. Students' perspectives emphasized that modernity and open-mindedness

were closely associated with French and English, but were not ‘synonymous with the local languages of MA [Moroccan Arabic], SA [Standard Arabic], or Berber’ (433). It can be, thus, safely assumed that the linguistic dominance of French and increasingly English is further reinforced by ‘their exclusive attribution to a modern lifestyle’ (Chakrani, 2011: 172).

Younger generations such as university students have often been shown to hold positive attitudes towards English in different contexts (Lin, 2012; Menking, 2015; Sung, 2018). Young people also play a significant role in introducing English into their communities (Lee & Choe, 2019: 2). Drawing on previous research, this paper endeavours to understand Moroccan university students’ rationale for their attitudes and whether they feel like a different person when speaking in English (Seilhamer, 2013).

The study

This paper is based on a qualitative study conducted at a major university in Kenitra, Morocco. A total of 32 participants took part in the study. 28 of the participants were undergraduates and master students (aged between 19 and 28), and four were professors, whose teaching experience in higher education ranged between one and 25 years. Students reported that they used English not only on campus but also sometimes in their daily lives and on social media. Also, all professors reported that they visited English-speaking countries regularly and had done some of their post-graduate studies either in the UK or in the US.

Data collection involved the use of focus group discussions, unstructured interviews, and classroom observations. The researcher used unstructured interviews and focus group discussions in order to (a) develop a deeper understanding of participants’ perception of a situation, and (b) modify questions according to participants’ responses and beliefs. Classroom observations allowed more insights into different topics and noticing any further attitudes not elicited during the interviews.

There were four group discussions conducted in the university library; each one involved seven students and lasted approximately 45 minutes. Individual interviews were used with professors and lasted 20 minutes. There were a total of ten classroom observations, which lasted for one hour and a half; two sessions with each professor. During the observations, a template was used to record any remarks and comments.

Interviews and group discussions were conducted in English. All interviews and group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012) was used to code and group responses into recurring themes. Selected extracts from interviews and group discussion data have been included for illustration. Randomly assigned numbers are used to identify participants. S refers to a student and P to a professor.

Results and discussion

It is worth noting that most of the discussions were about the range of differences between Moroccan and Anglophone cultures. Based on the analysis of the data collected, there has been a conspicuous phrasing of dissatisfaction with Moroccan cultures and their inherent ontological features in participants’ discourses resulting in a deliberate acculturation process. Since most students’ opinions were based on the contrast between two cultures (local and foreign), their perspectives were accompanied by an idealization of the Western culture and lifestyle. For these students, English is a prerequisite for being seen as modern in Morocco (Chakrani, 2013; Mouhssine, 1995).

The following two sections present the two main themes of the study’s findings. The first section discusses students’ perceptions of their use of English and how it entails the construction of a different reality. The second section examines how English helps students in performing a modern identity which is associated with Americans or British.

Students’ language ontologies

During group discussion, most students indicated that the Moroccan ‘self’ and ‘personal identity’ were fundamentally different from their western (associated with English) counterpart. Moroccan culture and its perceptions of reality were presented as ‘incapable of modernity’, while those associated with English cultures were perceived as modern. Cultural deracination – ‘the erosion of belief in the ability of native culture and language to deal with the modern world’ (Hyde, 1994: 296) was also reported. Students stated:

Although I have never been there, I mean in the US; I feel like people there are receptive of differences.

(S16)

I think the main difference between us and natives is that it would be an issue if you like . . . have an idea that is different from what all people believe. (S3)

Traditions are so restrictive, like we can't even challenge them. It is the 21st century. Everything is different now. (S22)

I live in another city which is small, so I commute every day; here things are a bit better, but I wish people could mind their business. (S15)

For students, reflecting the values, norms and behaviours represented by English native speakers implied an endeavour to compensate for the restrictions embedded in local cultures. Concepts of 'freedom', 'living the dream', and 'owning one's fate' were recurrent in most participants' discourses. It can be inferred from students' narratives that speaking English created a new sense of belonging to a more valued culture. In other words, speaking English signaled an ontological and intellectual distancing from local socio-cultural realities and thought commonalities. Several students indicated that English represented a mindset of 'freedom and mind your own business' (S21).

Many students and teachers at both secondary and tertiary levels from rich and middle-class families in Morocco do not identify culturally with dominant Moroccan culture. They used English as an instrument for participating in international elite culture, especially identifying culturally with American culture. For them, English symbolizes the absence of intellectual censorship, sexual freedom, and penchant for individualism. This portion of the Moroccan population accentuates the proposition that 'language is used as a symbol for status and power, and therefore influences and shapes people's responses and values' (Hyde, 1994: 299).

Some students perceived their parents as being immersed in the past, and thus they rejected the hegemonic non-modern group and its language. They were trying to be encapsulated in English-speaking culture (mostly the US and its popular culture) in terms of clothing, lifestyle, mindset, etc. This quote illustrates that view: 'If I were in the US, I could easily invite my girlfriend to my place, but since I have Moroccan parents, I doubt I can do that one day' (S5).

Other students exhibited hybrid cultural identities as they referred to some positive qualities in local cultures. Particularly, three students (S28, S14 and S4) were keen on confirming the value of local language, culture and traditions:

I understand that Anglophone people and culture may be more modern but we should not forget about our identity; we will never be them (S26)

I believe that we can speak English, and speak it very

fluently, but still be Moroccan; we should not succumb to a foreign culture; we won't be respected (S14)

I don't like how those in other countries don't care about their parents and put them in care homes; I would never do that (S4)

It seems that some aspects of Western culture were not appreciated. Although students may have shown a positive attitude towards English, some elements of that culture were perceived as undesirable since they were the opposite to what they had learnt; e.g., the lack of family bonds. The giving up of some characteristics of one's culture does not necessarily mean complete endorsement of the norms and values of another cultural group. Some students seemed to be trying to balance the conflicting components of the local and foreign culture. They seemed to be establishing a bicultural self that interweaved elements from both cultures.

Many participants indicated that students majoring in English are perceived by other students to be more sexually open-minded, tolerant to differences and characterized by the inclination to reject Islam (the dominant religion in Morocco). Participants explained that:

You know, there are some assumptions about students in the English department. People usually say that there are a lot of beautiful girls there, and those guys with weird clothes and haircuts. (S10)

That's true, in my class, there are like more gays, lesbians and atheists than in any other department. (S11)

Participants further noted that students of English were the ones more inclined to wear earrings (men), tattoos and relatively indecent clothing according to the dominant Moroccan dressing standards. It is often said, as a joke, that 'it is impossible to convince students majoring in English studies that they are Moroccans' (S6). In this context, cultural misrecognition might be the cause of such perceptions. One important point to consider is that these assumptions could be construed on two different bases; students embraced another culture because they were studying English = they were studying English because they were embracing another culture.

Importantly, English was presented as a means of emphasizing a particular type of self-expression. In other words, speaking English displays a modern identity that is perceived by students to be laudable and alluring to the others given its prominence and cultural puissance. However, this is may not be

the case for other students either in the same class or belonging to other departments. During an observation with P2, some students were making fun of a student who was talking and waving his hands in a way that was perceived as feminine. Also, as I asked P1 about the type of students in his class, he said that ‘some of the students are hardworking while the others are fully immersed in appearances and looking cool’. University professors, during classroom observation and interviews, expressed that using English (unlike Arabic) allowed them to discuss matters that were largely perceived as taboo and better left undiscussed (e.g., sexuality, religion, politics).

For them, English provided a disguise that enabled them to freely voice their opinions about critical issues without being criticized. P4 stated that ‘using Arabic to articulate some ideas would draw more criticism compared to articulating the same ideas in English’. One explanation for this behaviour would be that professors and their students had an additional linguistic resource that allowed them to discuss such topics without feeling embarrassed. This could also be indicative of how language affects our cognition since ‘language as a subsystem of culture transformatively interacts with cognition and how cognition at a cultural level is manifested in language’ (Sharifian, 2011: ii).

Interestingly, P3 recounted an incident that had taken place 3 years earlier, which showed that some students were more attached to their local culture, language and religion than others:

In the first semester, there is this course about Greek and Christian Mythology; so, we have to provide some information about Greek gods and discuss Christianity. One day, a number of students came to me, among them were some girls wearing a headscarf and ‘Hijab’, and they were sceptical why we had this course. They were mentioning things about converting to other religions which I did not understand. In the end, I had to assure them it was nothing more than a course we have to teach. But I can say that the course of ‘gender studies’ is always controversial; always students debating about feminism, women and men and their rights. Some students are liberal while the others are not, and this happens every year (P3)

It is safe to assume that cultural contestation or assimilation are two possible outcomes of the current frameworks underpinning English language education in Morocco since ‘a pervasive ideology within ELT, characterized by the belief that ‘native-speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western

culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology’ (Holliday, 2006: 385). Moreover, these particular incidents demonstrate that individuals exhibit varying degrees of association with a particular culture since cultural globalization/globalization is increasingly accepted as a relatively accurate characterization of socio-cultural realities in current times. Novel perceptions of culture and identity maintain that both culture and identity cannot be assumed to be strictly nation-wide and collective in terms of shared conception realities. Individuals are continuously oscillating between different cultures and identities and, thus, creating a personalized sense of cultural belonging and identity framing (Dervin, 2012).

These findings may indicate that the cultural switch is further reinforced by linguistic choices. Another evidence of this assumption is that a lot of Moroccans have been using French before and after English started to spread. Therefore, a pertinent question is: If it was not English, would it be another language since students are driven by the willingness to substitute their culture with a more modern and popular one? However, this is not the case for all Moroccans. Some ethnic groups such as Amazigh have preserved their language and culture despite different waves of settlements and the spread of foreign languages.

English, sociocultural reality and self-image

English and local languages may have a different ontological understanding of reality. Using Arabic, for instance, may entail a particular outlook to life that might be seen as traditional and conservative to students; while using English may allow for a different set of values and lifestyle and, therefore, alter students’ perception of some realities. For instance, discussing ‘homosexuality or atheism in standard Arabic sounds so obnoxious’ while referring to ‘the same topics in English feels more comfortable’ (S3). These perceptions indicate that languages come with different ontologies regarding a wide range of topics. The cultural conceptualizations embedded in a specific language pertain to the ontological perceptions of life and death, body, humour, sexuality, religion, gender, and politics (Sharifian, 2017a). Some languages are closely related to religion and conservatism while others denote liberty and individualism. However, this can only be applied to the young people we have analyzed since they are students in the English department, and their ontological perspective on English is more likely to be

favourable. Having the same type of discussion with other groups of young people may yield different findings.

The disparities between Morocco and the developed western world in terms of economy, national status, and international reputation may prompt a feeling of inferiority. In multiple occasions, students implicitly noted that Moroccan culture may be characterized by cultural humility that does not level up to the current modern cultural manifestations. Based on observations in the classroom and campus, it can be inferred that students' self-image and their interpretation of their own experience are not characteristic of their local society. For them, English seems to reflect desirable socio-cultural realities and ontologies. This particularly confirms not only how 'language in social and psychological terms is, therefore, value-laden' (Hyde, 1994: 299), but also that cultural cognition is transmitted through language and is instantiated in the content and use of language (Sharifian, 2011). Since every language constructs and maintains a particular socio-cultural reality (Marmaridou, 2000: 279), English is used as a social resource that allows students to live another reality.

By speaking English, students believe that they are living the first world in the third world and enjoying the privileges of North Americans. For them, English managed to create a different ontological understanding. They were ostensibly living another reality by speaking English and leading a similar lifestyle to Americans specifically. S7 stated that: 'watching a lot of movies and series, you know, make you feel like you want to have that life'. S8 agreed and further noted that 'I wanna live in the US someday; I have a friend who went there by the immigration lottery, and I already speak English, so I will blend in quite smoothly'. The feeling of dissatisfaction with local lifestyles, practices and values came as a reaction to the 'visions of affluence, democracy and consumer lifestyles on television' (Fairclough, 2006: 87).

These self-projections are particularly meaningful for these students when they compare themselves to other individuals. In other words, students feel that 'I speak English, therefore, I am'. They believe that speaking English makes them different from those who do not. It, thus, offers them a space for 'becoming' someone else or living another life. Since language accentuates certain realities, ontologies and epistemologies, students were using English as a meaning-making process, reality-creating (Alsagoff, 2012).

Conclusion

This paper tried to account for the main factors behind university students' choice of English and how they seemed to be encapsulated in a different culture associated with English; a language whose cultural logic is different from the Moroccan one. Based on the analysis of individuals' discourses, it was concluded that the cultural grounding of the English language is a significant underlying factor in the spread of English in Morocco. While acquiring the linguistic forms, students simultaneously acquire the social and cultural knowledge associated with that language. Also, the cultural cognition of English is perceived with appreciation and likeability. Students' desire to reflect modernism and liberal individualism meant a rupture with local traditions and values, which were not seen as neoteric, but rather as representing conservatism and collectivism. It appeared that both the willingness to study English and the ongoing process of studying English may sometimes entail a relative abandonment of one's cultural identity. This practice was sometimes underpinned by proclivities to experience the sociocultural conditions of English-speaking cultures. However, students may display positive attitudes towards English because it is not associated with colonialism as opposed to French which is the ex-colonial code (Chakrani & Huang, 2014; Ennaji, 2005; Sadiqi, 1991).

By embracing English linguistically and culturally, students appeared to be **constructing an alternative subjectivity**. English enabled them to have a novel cultural filter through which one's decisions, choices, epistemologies and perceptions were evaluated differently and could be either reinforced or depreciated. What is deemed as shameful or embarrassing in Moroccan culture could be acceptable in cultures associated with English. Moreover, by speaking English, students felt that they were living another reality without having to change their sociocultural context. For them, speaking English offered similar conditions and experiences to living in the US or UK. Such an attitude may be due to students' exposure to popular culture or the type of teaching embraced by instructors that implies the need to speak and act like native speakers (R'boul, 2020). English language's cultural schemas and its beliefs, values and expectations of behaviour pertinent to different aspects and components of experience (Sharifian, 2017b) were visible in English speakers' language ontologies. These assumptions not only justify young people's interest in English in Morocco but also

emphasize how language can manifest cultural conceptualizations of reality.

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4. Conclusion

4.1. Findings and contributions of the candidate to the field of research

The articles comprising this thesis are evidence of the need to focus our perspectives on the assumption that language teaching is more than the mere transmission of knowledge about the linguistic patterns of a particular language with the aim of producing fluent speakers. While the theoretical articles question the domination of western ways of knowing in ELT and intercultural communication scholarship, the empirical article examines the influence of English on students' identities and how the supremacy of English is perceived. By drawing on the insights of critical applied linguistics literature, the thesis serves to clarify the impact of the global spread of English and its teaching on local languages and cultures, focusing on one. The main premise here is that the rapid spread of English in the Global South is not benign and, thus, any critical engagement with ELT has to go beyond its pedagogical frameworks to examine the ideological constructs that underpin its theory and praxis. This is an idea that has been extensively explored and discussed in the theoretical papers as they draw on the dominance of Anglo-Atlantic perceptions in intercultural communication education as well as in ELT theory and praxis. In particular, native speakerism is an issue that still permeates foundational ELT literature and also shapes how students are educated to embrace native speakers' ways of languaging and their culture (Holliday, 2015). The fact that students who are studying English in Morocco embrace the language's western cultural ways of thinking is illustrative of this idea. While the theoretical papers have pointed the imbalances in ICE and ELT theory and practice, the empirical paper has illustrated how these inequalities shape students' languages ontologies and perspectives.

The context where the studies have been conducted is indeed essential to this thesis' overall arguments and scope. Morocco is a North African country, which is situated within the Global South and whose sociolinguistic situation has been strongly influenced by foreign languages. Morocco is an interesting setting where different languages have been engaged in a power struggle. Therefore, the rapid spread of English is likely to influence the dynamics of language policy in the country as well as its cultural fabric, especially considering how English has a great momentum supported by its global recognition and importance. The findings of this thesis can be useful not only for Morocco but also for other countries in the Global South which have similar cultural and linguistic conditions.

This thesis has been informed by the scholarship on the geopolitics of knowledge, intercultural communication and the use of language as symbolic power. The four articles have all solidified the assumption that the spread of English can further complicate expanding-circle countries' dependency and subalternity. The empirical work has illustrated how students are influenced by English, and how they tend to favour Anglophone cultures over their own since they are perceived as more modern and attractive. The main argument that the thesis has been trying to substantiate is that ELT needs to be redefined in a way that takes into account students' existing cultural and linguistic experiences rather than to "native speaker" language and culture (Holliday, 2018). Enabling students to have access to English does not have to be at the expense of their local cultures and perspectives. English language education has to consider the socio-cultural and sociolinguistic context where the teaching is taking place and actively account for the local specificities.

This thesis has presented the concept of the coloniality of language, which is a framework that underscores the intersections of language, power and education as manifested in

linguistic power relations that are often imbalanced. It recognizes that southern spaces are overburdened by their linguistic dependency, on English in this case, which undermines their attempts to maintain their symbolic sovereignty over their local cultural and linguistic situation. This thesis argues that ELT might be reinforcing colonial-like South/North relations by promoting neoliberalism, the dominance of whiteness and linguistic hegemony. An important idea informing the discussion throughout the thesis is the extent to which ELT is informed by the policies of the US Empire and expansionism.

The main argument here is that English maintains the political power of Anglophone spaces. The coloniality of English is both a manifestation and a means of the enduring coloniality of power, knowledge and being (Quijano, 2000, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). With Southern spaces' historical struggles to move from pre-modern to modern postcolonial societies, the positionality of English is maintained as a form of the “symbolic capital that represents the discursive power of Americanism” (Lee et al., 2010, p. 337). For instance, even locally-produced textbooks re-produce the same attitudes and assumptions that favour American English and culture (Song, 2013). That is why it is important to recognize that “the terrain of English language teaching can no longer seem benign” (Motha, 2014, p. xxiii). It is indeed no mystery that there is a close “connection between ELT industry and the Anglo-American dominance, the co-called linguistic imperialism” (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018, p. 260). Coloniality in the learning of the English language is not simple as its dynamics are interrelated and “woven throughout schooling policy and procedures as well as within the language-teaching processes with which TESOL professionals are involved” (Vafi, 2017, p. 76).

Coloniality remains in action despite the end of administrative colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) as long as lingering power structures that emerged from colonialism “maintain

the periphery in a subordinated position” (Quijano, 2000, p. 13). Understanding the pervasiveness of the systems of power requires acknowledging that there are interconnected colonialist manifestations that permeate all aspects of life and being. However, coloniality does not have to manifest itself in formal institutions or through the presence of colonial administrations. Global relations are still shaped by lingering systems of power. An important dimension of these structures is linguistic coloniality, which subtly contributes to the fixation of the North/South relations in global coloniality. One of these hegemonic implications is cultural assimilation and homogenization, which can be achieved by positioning Northern-Anglophone contexts as self while Southern ones remain the Other. The possible colonial logic underlying English teaching categories might present the epistemological, linguistic and cultural norms of the West as standards which non-western populations have been trying and continue trying to achieve. This is a practice that would reify perpetually imbalanced power relations.

This thesis has some limitations which should be pointed out. First, it is based on three theoretical and one experimental paper. Including more experimental papers exploring a bigger sample of students at different education stages (secondary and university) in different parts of Morocco would have provided a more deep analysis of students’ perceptions. Analysing professors and teachers’ classroom behaviour and teaching regarding interculturality on different setting would have also provided a richer picture of Morocco’s students’ perspectives and teachers’ practices. Both remain a question for further research. Finally, the thesis could have also proposed an intervention and carried it out in one setting to report on any possible changes in perspectives due to the intervention. Future works should explore different kinds of interventions to find out the most effective ones to modify current intercultural perspectives and to widen interculturality to include non-western perspectives.

4.2. Implications for ELT Theory and Praxis: Interculturality and a Decolonial/Postcolonial Approach to Decolonize ELT

English is seen as a modern mechanism in the continuation of colonial practices because the reproduction of dominant knowledge re-enacts the enduring inequalities that characterize North/South relations. Moreover, the place of English in putting colonial dynamics of power into practice is manifested in the dichotomous Self-Other subject positions, advancing neoliberal mentality and the relegation of local languages and knowledge (Holliday, 2009). However, there is another understanding of this situation that ascribes the privileged status of English and ELT to societal orientation rather than to an ingrained imperialist imperative. Another problem in the quest for more critical engagement with the cultural politics of English and ELT is postcolonial performativity (Pennycook, 2000). This conception recognizes the need to speak English to be able to express a critique of neoliberal and colonial practices associated with English itself. The neoliberal tendency of English has been normalized (Pennycook, 2007), which further problematizes the efforts to resist its hegemony.

The re-imagination of ELT beyond the confines of Anglo-Saxon canons requires resisting that coloniality (Hsu, 2017). It is necessary to challenge current foreign language and second language education praxis and theories that may feature representations and practices that favour white, western thought (Macedo, 2019). Importantly, more critical engagement with these issues requires establishing conversations in which language is seen as “a form of action in a specific place and time” (Pennycook, 2010, p. 1). Decolonizing ELT should be informed by southern knowledges to develop trajectories of praxis and materials that recognize the local specificities, and work towards contextualizing teaching and learning.

The role of English teaching educational institutions in the narrative of colonial modernity is indeed apparent to the extent that “the critical analysis of coloniality is necessary, especially when this coloniality is still very much an overt force and an underlying presupposition in the field of TESOL” (Lin & Luke, 2006, p. 67). Despite the increasing interest in understanding the contemporary effects of colonialism on ELT, teachers may be “left without a clear sense of how to traverse the precarious path of English teaching given the realities of the colonial context” (Hsu, 2017, p. 111). In order to resist the hegemonic coloniality of Western thought, it is also important to make visible our own subjectivities (Walsh, 2012) and how they come to shape our pedagogical practices. Decolonizing pedagogies in language education are expected to embrace decoloniality as a possible frame in reshaping ELT.

Developing postmodern theorizations and methodologies for ELT, which are informed by post- and decolonial theories, is important because they can offer profound insights into structural power inequalities (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Sousa Santos, 2018). Postcolonial perspectives on TESOL support a decolonial discursive framework that argues for the importance of locally produced knowledge grounded in cultural history, social particularities and daily human experiences of southern spaces. The decolonization of knowledge means to stymie the control of the production of meaning and subjectivity. Decolonializing and decolonial knowledges are “necessary steps for imagining and building democratic, just, and neoimperial/colonial societies” (Mignolo, 2009, p. 159).

Another important element to consider is that the intersection of coloniality and linguistic domination is particularly manifested in interculturality. For instance, the uncritical use of English as the language of intercultural communication exemplifies “the role of English

as a gatekeeping device in social interaction” (Hashimoto & Kudo, 2010, p. 373). That is why it is necessary as well to re-imagine intercultural communication dynamics in ELT, and especially TESOL with regards to the themes of culture and interculturality (R’boul, 2020c).

Decolonizing knowledge production in ELT can manifest as a tangible reformulation of dominant perspectives by emphasizing indigenous epistemology with the active involvement of southern ideas and practices. This should practically manifest in the “academic decolonization of TESOL as a global industry, and ELT theories and pedagogies” (Shin, 2006, p. 147). Recentring local epistemologies should entail considering local students and teachers as legitimate sources of knowledge to frame ELT’s theories and practices in a way that is conscious of local needs and specificities. The “Centre” which comprises the Anglo-Atlantic contexts must alleviate its authoritative attitude in defining the nature of culture and language in order to “allow Periphery educators and students to claim English and English language education in their own terms” (Holliday, 2009, p. 144).

For English users’ voices to be heard and not assumed, they need to be seen as “individuals and in relation to who they are, who they want to be and who they could become and in multiple domains in which their identities are produced and reproduced” (Ha, 2009, p. 201). Research could also contribute to the condition of decoloniality by “paying attention to the local exigencies of learning and teaching, identifying researchable questions, producing original knowledge, and subjecting it to further verification” (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 82). Another important proposition here is to move beyond the mindset that positions teachers who have received Western TESOL training and pedagogical teachings as periphery since it is not anymore valid to “assume the enlightening and educating role of such training” (Barnawi & Ha, 2015, p. 259). The ELT industry is in need of “critically-oriented problematizations of

essentialized and idealized nativeness enshrined in theory, inquiry, policy, teaching, and hiring practices” (Rudolph et al., 2019, p. 349).

Teachers’ practices can function as a decolonial project (Walsh, 2012) if they are power-literate (Kincheloe, 2004). Local teachers can become producers of pedagogic knowledge that is anchored in local epistemologies and ecologies. Teachers should seek to enable students to assess their place within the broader structures of power. Resistance should not only manifest in academic texts but also, and more importantly, in students and teachers’ practices in terms of methodologies and materials because “merely tinkering with the existing hegemonic system will not work, only a fundamental epistemological rupture will” (Kumaravadivelu, 2016, p. 15). Teaching practices should seek to carry out decolonial and liberatory attitudes in English teaching (Flores, 2013; Makoni, 2013).

Postcoloniality makes us realize that our practices may still be guided by the enduring structures of colonial power. Therefore, decolonial thinking builds on this realization and tries to situate our resistance within not only the historical specificities of local spaces but also their possibilities for a decolonial future. In alignment with these ideas, English and English teaching should be ‘provincialized’ in the sense that we not only need to develop a profound awareness of the “effects of English’s colonial and racial history on current-day language, economic, political and social practices” (Motha, 2014, p. 129) but also to understand their positions within ‘their specific localities’ so that English can be rendered provincial (Pennycook, 2018, p. 135).

A legitimate question is “how can we rethink and remake TESOL in postcolonial contexts?” (Lin & Luke, 2006, p. 70). Importantly, postcolonial theory can deepen our

understanding of the geopolitics of English language teaching. Postcoloniality offers the possibility of readdressing the enduring effects of global English while making a case for decolonial options. For example, the critique of the universality of western thought (Mignolo, 2018) can be applied to ELT in order to exercise resistance against coloniality and to maintain linguistic diversity worldwide. We can reinforce subaltern knowledges to deconstruct any linguistic and cultural imperialism. The re-thinking of current TESOL canons and practices should be grounded in postcolonial theories with their ability to engage with the historicity of colonial relationships.

I argue that the insights of postcolonial studies should be used to better understand current structures of power which employ English and ELT as a linguistic mechanism of hegemony and domination. Because many contexts where English reigns over other languages were colonized by English-speaking countries, it is necessary to engage specifically with forms of coloniality that did not ensue from former administrative colonialism. This offers the possibility of going beyond the current available decolonial approaches in ELT, which are mostly built on the colonial histories of English. In other words, what I am proposing here is not to make use of postcolonial theory as a framework to engage with the colonial histories of English, but rather as a set of sources to analyse power and knowledge relations among different spaces.

A decolonial approach to ELT can benefit from the theoretical premises of postcolonial theories, for example, Mignolo and Walsh's (2018) 'thinking Otherwise' and Sousa Santos's (2018, 2014) 'alternative thinking'. A decolonial approach should be specifically grounded in the 'Epistemologies of the South'. For instance, the decolonial proposal of an 'Ecology of Recognitions' (Sousa Santos, 2014) supports reconstructing knowledge production so as to

include other less popular perspectives. The critique of the colonial framework needs to offer new alternatives for knowledge production, which has to mean, on the Anglo-Saxon part, acknowledging first that there are alternative ways of knowing, theorizing, doing and understanding. The aim is, therefore, to develop non-derivative thinking that emerges from questioning Anglo-Atlantic perceptions and recognizing the epistemic value of the Global South.

ELT needs more nuanced decolonial knowledges and methodologies than those currently available. To challenge the hegemonic narratives associated with English (López Gopar, 2016), it is important to develop pedagogies that unravel and disrupt imbalanced power and knowledge relations. A decolonial pedagogy is “[...] forged in the perspective of intervening in the reinvention of society, in the politicization of pedagogical action, proposing to unlearn what has been learned and to challenge the epistemic structures of coloniality” (Walsh et al., 2018, p. 6). With current discourses of globalization, decolonial pedagogical options (Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Flores, 2013) should also recognize that the neoliberal commoditization of global English is operating within the framework of coloniality.

Postcolonial interventions in ELT should not be presented in dichotomous terms, either as resistance or compliance. Rejecting English is not an option in current times given its supremacy in many fields. Therefore, the main question should be how students and teachers can dispute the colonial ideology in ELT while concurrently enabling students to have access to the dominant language. Moreover, the situated complexities inherent to different spaces may mean that decoloniality should not be thought of and implemented in the same way across all contexts. Drawing trajectories for the future needs to be “thoroughly embedded in an analysis of local and specific sites, with connections then traced to the global” (Motha, 2006, p. 97).

That is why western ideologies dominating ELT should be “interpreted in light of some local, grounded realities in non-western, postcolonial contexts” (Ramanathan, 2006, p. 132).

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