

**Traces of colonialism in english language teaching (ELT) materials: a raciolinguistic justice  
exploration of decolonizing ELT curricula**

by

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B.S., Universidad del Valle, 2020

A REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Modern Languages  
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

2024

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## **Abstract**

Decolonizing world language education represents a multifaceted approach that questions some traditional pedagogies in foreign, second, and heritage language contexts. This current trend challenges monoglossic ideologies, western thought, and stereotypes that perpetuate harmful narratives about minoritized linguistic groups while seeking to embrace diverse perspectives, value linguistic diversity, and ensure the inclusion of multiple cultural identities and communities. Therefore, the process of transforming world language education practices requires didactic materials to be thoroughly analyzed to create awareness of the need for decolonizing language education. Thus, the current research study, rooted in Raciolinguistic Justice, primarily aims to identify if there are traces of colonial ideologies in English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula and materials at the college level. Additionally, this study will exemplify to what extent raciolinguistic justice frameworks can be employed to thematically categorize and analyze the crossways of language, race, and education in the representation of decolonizing epistemologies within language education. Furthermore, a sample lesson will be provided for language instructors to be equipped to make pedagogical decisions to decolonize language education. A thorough analysis of the intersection of language and race in ELT materials will be carried out, to evaluate the hypothesis that most world language teaching materials are embedded in colonial ideologies that prioritize monolingualism, Eurocentric thinking, and white speech.

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## **Introduction**

The decolonization of world language education reflects the act of questioning foreign and second language pedagogical approaches that prioritize monoglossic ideologies, western thought, and white speech. Exploring the historical context of colonial and post-colonial language instruction settings leads to a deeper understanding of the significance of decolonizing foreign language education. At the same time, by comprehending how colonialism and imperialism have historically informed foreign language practices, we can then address issues of power, identity, and linguistic diversity in the curriculum and teaching materials, analyzing these through raciolinguistic frameworks and translanguaging practices.

During the colonial period, native and African populations were not only subjected to many different forms of violence but also suffered from institutionalized cultural genocide, by being stripped of their language, and ways of knowing and forced to assimilate Western culture and traditions. At the time, the imposition of colonial languages (English, for this essay) as a medium of instruction in schools and institutions served as a strategy designed to perpetuate the values and norms of the colonizers, further entrenching the linguistic and cultural hegemony of English (Macedo et al., 2003).

In the wake of independence movements, the legacy of colonial-era language education practices persisted in many post-colonial settings. However, newly formed independent nations sought to redefine their identities and reclaim their cultural autonomy by reevaluating and creating more inclusive language teaching policies which included indigenizing the curriculum and

promoting the incorporation of local languages and language varieties (Lopes Cardozo, 2012). Understanding the historical context of foreign language education in colonial and postcolonial settings is crucial for appreciating the enduring impact of historical power dynamics in contemporary language education. In order to move forward to pedagogical approaches that are based on raciolinguistic justice frameworks, it is essential to explore how colonial ideologies are supported and/or challenged in language education curricula.

Efforts to decolonize foreign language education must be made to empower people and communities to reclaim their heritage. According to DeGraff (2019), 40% of the world's population receives education in a language that is foreign to them, that is the case of Haiti where Kreyol-dominant children receive instruction in French because the latter is perceived as a more prestigious language. DeGraff (2019) also encourages educators and linguists to promote linguistic decolonization by incorporating educational practices that allow children to use their entire linguistic repertoire and not prohibit them from using their native languages. Decolonizing the curriculum is a multifaceted approach that embraces diverse perspectives, values linguistic diversity, ensures the inclusion of diverse cultural identities and communities, and challenges stereotypes that perpetuate harmful narratives about certain groups of people.

In order to analyze the ways in which language and race intersect, in different areas such as language and identity in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, language ideologies in EFL materials, and decolonizing assessment practices; raciolinguistics will be used as the theoretical framework in which part of the analysis will be based on, accompanied by selected criteria to identify whether the chosen curriculum and teaching materials follow colonial



ideologies or not. Additionally, this study will propose translanguaging practices to decolonize the curriculum. Considering the previous rationale, the purpose of the current study, therefore, is to explore the intersections of race, language, and education in the context of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Program at Kansas State University. Drawing from raciolinguistic frameworks and translanguaging practices, this research investigates the impact of colonial ideologies on language education and proposes strategies to decolonize EFL pedagogy.

## Review of the Literature

Pedagogical views on resistance to colonization began to emerge as a response to the legacy and impact of colonization in educational settings. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and onward significant approaches to decolonizing education have gained prominence in academia and have served as pathways to creating educational policies based on transformative and critical pedagogies. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970) laid the foundation for pedagogical approaches that sought to empower marginalized communities through critical consciousness (changing reality through intervention) while engaging in dialogue and praxis (reflection and action). Freire's work opened up the discussion on education as a means of social justice and liberation of the oppressed from their colonizers since education is intrinsically related to power.

Colonial ideologies in education refer to curricula, didactic frameworks and language policies created to reinforce social hierarchies and cultural superiority at the expense of minoritized and racialized peoples which constitute to the hidden discourse of modern colonialism (Quintero & Clavijo, 2023). For instance, Latin American educational processes have centered around Eurocentric knowledge imposed as universal which does not reflect the history and sociocultural contexts of the South (Palermo, 2010).

The field of language teaching has posited the teaching and learning of colonial languages in a privileged position as opposed to native languages. English Language Teaching (ELT) serves as a representation of modern systems of colonialism because the pedagogical frameworks used to teach English come from the "inner circle countries", where English is the primary language spoken and serves as an official or dominant language holding significant cultural, political, and economic importance (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). The widespread influential narratives of English

being a superior language and its speakers' competent thinkers reflect the native speaker/non-native speaker dichotomy which are constructions that "enact cultures and ideologies of the global north" (Pennycook, 1998). At the same time, Pennycook (2007) explains the two ways in which colonialism and ELT are intrinsically linked: the first one refers to the historical relationship between colonialism and ELT, which suggests that ELT has contributed to the spread of English as an imperial language and the subjugation of L2 English speakers; secondly, the political-economic relationship shows that ELT favors structures of global inequality, for example, obtaining certified proficiency in English with tests that prioritize monoglossic ideologies which posit a single variety (standard) of English as the norm, have created difficulties for equal access to education, employment, and science by promoting the dominance of a high prestige language variety as the superior form of communication and therefore marginalizing those who do not adhere to this dialect. Practices that encourage resistance to colonial ideologies in ELT, must enact strategies "by which the marginalized detach themselves from the ideologies of the powerful, retain a measure of critical thinking, and gain some sense of control over their life in an oppressive situation" (Canagarajah, 2000, as cited in Pennycook, 2007, p. 22).

As a dynamic field that is constantly evolving, studies on decolonizing ELT education have increased throughout the years, with more and more educators and second language acquisition researchers making efforts to identify and dismantle colonial ideologies present in the curriculum and didactic materials. For instance, Lucero & Castañeda (2021) highlight the growing community in Colombia working to transform ELT in the country by focusing on locally produced knowledge that reconceptualizes the ELT field, works towards the resistance of imposed hegemonic discourses and values local knowledge and practices, particularly those of native communities. In a similar trend, the process of transforming ELT practices requires didactic materials to be the

subject of a thorough analysis to create awareness of the need for decolonizing ELT. Molina's (2020) analysis of ESL textbooks produced by mainstream publishing houses "calls for students' and teachers' resistance to hegemony, a search for their critical socio-political awareness, a committed agency, and generation of local knowledge, so that subaltern communities are considered as the locus for other epistemologies." (p. 123). Lastly, decolonizing ELT also implies the use of alternative assessment methods that embrace diverse language practices and encourage moving away from monoglossic beliefs. Rajendram (2022) argues that educational policies in ELT are embedded in colonial history and monoglossic ideologies that "stigmatize language practices of minoritized and racialized learners" (p. 78), this research shows the importance of recognizing that various aspects of ELT policies promote the hegemony of English by prioritizing native-speaker norms and marginalizing other language varieties. Additionally, it informs the transformative potential of translanguaging pedagogy to leverage multilingual learners' linguistic resources which have been constrained in ELT classrooms.

Working hand in hand with colonial ideologies in ELT, raciolinguistics being a field that studies the intersections of language, race, and power, also offers an insight into the complex ways in which language practices both reflect and contribute to the construction of racial identities and hierarchies. Raciolinguistic frameworks assert that it is imperative to question the role that language education has in the racialization of minoritized speakers and state that language education is particularly rooted in monoglossic ideologies which perpetuate the reproduction of racial normativity, because it expects language minoritized students to model the linguistic practices of white speaking subjects, completely ignoring their sociolinguistic experiences with bilingualism (Flores & Rosa, 2015). In language education, Flores & Rosa (2017) describe that raciolinguistics has been used as a framework to "analyze research seeking to legitimize so-called

nonstandard language varieties such as Spanglish (Poplack, 1980) and African American English (Labov, 1972), as well as studies focused on documenting and revitalizing heritage language practices associated with various indigenous and immigrant groups as part of broader efforts to promote bilingualism (Fishman 1991)” (p. 621). On the other hand, little work has been done on raciolinguistic frameworks used as the basis for the analysis of ELT materials in order to not only identify racial biases related to language, but also colonial traces embedded in ELT pedagogy.

Literature on decolonizing English Language Teaching is substantial and serves as a starting point to continue with the analysis of curricular plans, standardized tests, teaching methods and materials, and teacher preparation programs. Consequently, such analysis can be complemented by employing raciolinguistic justice frameworks to dig deeper into issues of language and identity, language ideologies, and decolonizing assessment practices. Therefore, the current study posits the following research questions:

1. Does the curriculum of the ELP at KSU deploy colonial ideologies on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language? If so, (1a) how does it perpetuate colonial legacies embedded in language education? If not, (1b) what strategies are used to help in dismantling colonial ideologies and/or in creating more equitable and inclusive language learning environments?
2. How can raciolinguistic justice frameworks and translanguaging practices better guide us in proposing strategies to decolonize language teaching?

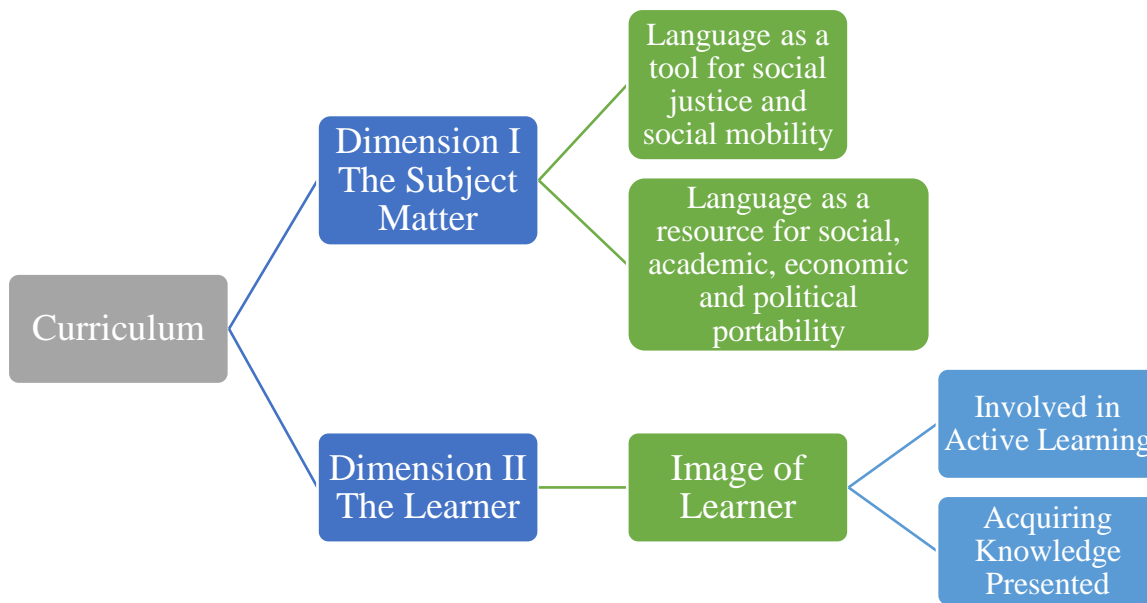
3. Can decolonizing language teaching promote linguistic inclusivity and cultural diversity in the classroom whilst students develop the English language skills required by the university's policies?

## **Methodology**

This section presents the research methodology, materials, and methods used to analyze the data collected. The present study falls under the Content Analysis methodology since it is an extensive study of how ELT curricula and materials manifest in their efforts to challenge colonial ideologies, with results that can further inform the creation of material that contributes to dismantling colonial views in English language teaching. Such type of research methodology helps researchers to accurately identify themes to analyze the data collected while allowing them to reflect on their results, enabling them conceptually and analytically.

For the purpose of investigating colonial ideologies present in ELT curricula and materials at the college level, this study focused on a sample curriculum and textbook. Both were sourced from a public grant university located in the Midwestern region of the United States, which offers an English Language Program (ELP) tailored for international students who according to the university's policies need to fulfill certain English proficiency requirements to be academically successful in their higher education journey. While the program encompasses a range of courses to address students' varying levels of English proficiency, the curriculum and textbook selected for this study are specifically associated with a combined Speaking and Listening course. The textbook chosen is part of National Geographic's Pathway series, titled "Pathways: Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking 1, 2nd edition." Subsequently, the analysis focuses on Unit 3 'Cultures and Traditions' because it provides relevant data to analyze how different multicultural communities and cultures are portrayed in the textbook.

The analysis will follow two phases: the first one is aimed at identifying colonial ideologies present in the ELP’s curriculum and how these are viewed and/or treated. In this stage, the analytical framework proposed by Ben-Peretz (1977, 1990) was adapted to analyze the data. Figure 1 illustrates the matrix for curricular analysis and the perspectives upon which its dimensions and categories are based.



**Figure 1.** Analytical framework for curriculum analysis (adapted from the curriculum analysis matrix (Ben-Peretz, 1977)).

In order to interpret the data, the scheme for analyzing curriculum materials suggested by Ben-Peretz (1977, 1990) was adapted into two dimensions: (1) ‘the subject matter’, establishing two subcategories related to two different approaches to the view of language, as a tool for social justice and mobility and language as a resource. The second dimension: introduces ‘the image of learner’, in which learners can either be viewed as a passive agent, or as involved in active learning. Lavrenteva and Orland-Barak (2015) utilized a similar framework based on the original one to



conduct an exploration study about the treatment of culture in the foreign language curriculum, which serves as a precedent for the framework in curricular analysis.

The second phase of the methodology consists of examining how raciolinguistic justice frameworks can inform the intersection of race and language in ELT material and the possible presence of ideologies that might perpetuate colonial ideologies. Table 1 portrays characteristics of raciolinguistic frameworks that were considered during the analysis of the selected textbook's Unit.

**Table 1** Raciolinguistic Justice Frameworks

<b>Raciolinguistic Justice Frameworks</b>			
<i>Language and Identity in EFL</i>	<i>Language Ideologies in EFL Materials</i>	<i>Power Dynamics</i>	<i>Decolonizing assessment practices</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Racialized language varieties:</b> examine how racialized language varieties are perceived and treated in the textbook's Unit.</li> <li>○ <b>Language crossing:</b> identify how the textbook portrays communities of practice and how such negotiate their racial and linguistic identities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Perpetuation of Eurocentric perspectives:</b> does the textbook perpetuates the idea that Western cultures are the norm?</li> <li>○ <b>Promoting linguistic diversity:</b> does the textbook focus on superficial rather than deep components of culture, somehow stereotyping some communities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Reinforcement of dominant linguistic norms:</b> does the language used in the textbook may reflect power imbalances, positioning native speakers of English as linguistic authorities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Language assessment biases:</b> does the curriculum questions whether assessments disproportionately disadvantage students from particular linguistic backgrounds and advocate for more inclusive evaluation criteria?</li> <li>○ <b>Alternative Assessment Methods:</b> does the curriculum embraces diverse language practices that encourage moving away from rigid native-speaker norms?</li> </ul>

Due to the fact that raciolinguistic frameworks focus on how language reflects and contributes to the construction of racial and ethnic identities and how such are intrinsically linked in the way others perceive our linguistic performance and therefore relevant to foreign language education, this part of the methodology followed Krippendorff's (2012) thematic analysis approach to code the categories and subcategories of the previous raciolinguistic justice framework, which will account for a guided and concrete analysis by specifically looking into language ideologies in ELT materials that relate to linguistic hierarchies and the stigmatization of linguistic varieties of the target language, as well as language and identity and the decolonization of assessment methods.

## Results

This section encompasses the analysis of the primary documents under scrutiny, namely the curriculum of the EFL course and the instructional materials utilized. Focusing on a sample unit (3) from the course's textbook which explores themes related to cultures and traditions. This unit offers a substantial dataset for assessing the extent to which the textbook emphasizes the importance of assertive cultural representation for underrepresented learners and communities.

The initial phase of the analysis involved conducting a thorough examination of the English course curriculum by adapting the framework for analyzing curriculum materials suggested by Ben-Peretz (1977, 1990), as a means to interpret the data. Taking the two dimensions: the subject matter and the learner and contrasting them with the curriculum's learning outcomes for students and its proposed class activities. Such analysis yielded sufficient and precise data to address the initial research question presented in this study: Does the curriculum of the ELP at KSU deploy/reflect colonial ideologies on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language? If so, how does it perpetuate colonial legacies embedded in language education? If not, what strategies are used to help dismantling colonial ideologies and/or in creating more equitable and inclusive language learning environments?

Furthermore, the second and last phase of the data analysis sought to identify how raciolinguistic ideologies are present in the content introduced in Unit 3 "My people" of the selected textbook, and the ways in which such ideologies shape and reflect societal beliefs about the intersection of race and language in educational contexts. Using a content analysis approach

(Krippendorff, 2012), four coding categories and seven coding subcategories of raciolinguistic justice frameworks in ELT materials were identified and contrasted within the content of Unit 3 “My people”, which served as a basis for organizing and interpreting the content. The qualitative analysis described in this section refers to specific activities that exemplified the colonial ideology they represented and the rationale for it to be considered a task that perpetuates Eurocentric views and reinforces linguistic hierarchies.

#### **4.1. Traces of colonial ideologies in ELT curriculum at the college level**

The first step of this study consisted of a thorough analysis of an English Language Program curriculum at the college level. Such examination allowed us to classify the curriculum’s student learning outcomes and suggested activities to belonging to four major categories within two dimensions: the subject matter and the learner.

##### **Dimension I subject matter: linguistic ideologies on English language teaching curricula**

The first dimension The Subject Matter, encompasses two categories: (1) language as a tool for social justice and social mobility and (2) language as a resource for social, academic, economic, and political portability. These two subcategories represent different approaches to language teaching and the ideological beliefs about language and teaching in which curriculums are based on. The learning outcomes presented in the ELP’s curriculum mostly reflect a language as a resource ideology (Table 2), in which English is perceived as a means for socioeconomic advancement, offering a way into education and employment opportunities that might otherwise remain inaccessible in the learners’ countries and language. Such ideology perpetuates colonial legacies, where the language of former colonial powers continues to be privileged, maintaining

economic disparities, and reinforcing language and educational inequalities. As Litzenberg (2023) points out, by incorporating terms such as ‘academic language’, ‘academic skills’, ‘improve’ and ‘non-native’, the IEP’s (Intensive English Programs) curriculum further bolsters neoliberal concepts of success, where English is conceived as a pathway to achieving “greater opportunity”, “more money” and a “better life”. Consequently, the curriculum under study conceptualizes its students as ‘non-native’, which can extend stereotypes and biases related to language proficiency and at the same time may lead to the internalization of inferiority complexes among learners, affecting their confidence and self-esteem, hindering their linguistic and communicative skills. Similarly, notions like ‘appropriateness’, ‘language proficiency’ ‘improvement’ and ‘comprehensibility’, align with monoglossic ideologies that impose standardized English as the norm and expectation in EFL contexts. Curricular normative that prioritizes the use of standardized English as the predilected one in the classroom, marginalizes speakers of World Englishes whose linguistic expressions, vocabulary, and cultural references may differ from the standardized norm. For instance, having ‘students will improve their English pronunciation skills’ as a learning outcome, reinforces linguistic hierarchies that favor standardized English and associates a particular accent with linguistic proficiency and authority. Discriminating and supporting beliefs of speakers of World Englishes as less competent in the language.

Additionally, standardized English, when treated as the sole legitimate form, can contribute to the erasure of local cultures and linguistic identities. By adopting traditional language proficiency and improvement measures, IEPs often align with colonial education models that may not be culturally relevant or inclusive. On the other hand, by aligning one objective to the ideology

of language as a tool for social justice and social mobility, the ELP states its compromise to promoting students’ critical thinking skills.

In sum, despite being rooted in colonial assumptions and capitalist ideologies, English Language Programs (ELPs) at the college level in the United States, should “recognize the pluriculturality and plurilingualism of students’ translingual lives, avoid categorizations such as native/non-native, and keep goals pertinent to the challenge of curricular decolonization.” (Litzenberg, 2023, p. 362).

**Table 2.** Dimension I subject matter: linguistic ideologies on English language teaching curricula

	<b>Dimension I subject matter: linguistic ideologies on English language teaching curricula</b>	
<b>Students’ learning outcomes</b>	<i>Language as a tool for social justice and social mobility</i>	<i>Language as a resource for social, academic, economic, and political portability</i>
The mission of the English Language Program is to serve <b><u>non-native speakers</u></b> of English and Kansas State University		✓
Assessing <b><u>language proficiency</u></b>		✓
<b><u>Orienting students to American</u></b> culture and the academic environment		✓
Use situationally <b><u>appropriate grammar</u></b> to narrate, explain,		✓

describe, and summarize ideas or events in the past, present, or future.	
Comprehensibly produce consonant and vowel sounds and demonstrate awareness of <b>appropriate</b> stress, rhythm, and intonation.	✓
Students will <b>improve their pronunciation</b> skills.	✓
Students will <b>improve</b> their oral fluency and accuracy.	✓
Support answers with clearly related reasons and examples.	✓
<b>Use level-appropriate*</b> vocabulary on selected non-personal topics.	✓

## **Dimension II The Learner: Image of Learner**

The second and last dimension of curricular analysis pertains to The Learner, enclosing the following two categories: (1) learner who is involved in active learning and (2) learner who is expected to acquire knowledge presented. Curricula that promote an image of learners engaged in active learning, follow a student-centered approach that includes tasks in which students have practical experiences, develop critical thinking skills for problem-solving activities and focus on collaboration and teamwork among learners. On the other hand, a curriculum where students are expected to acquire knowledge, pictures learners as passive recipients of information by focusing on tasks like listening to lectures, watching videos, and completing book activities. Taking these two categories allowed an exploration of the selected to curriculum to validate whether it reflects an active or passive image of its learners. Table 3 illustrates the categorization of two orientations to 'learner' discernible within the curriculum.

**Table 3 . Dimension II The Learner: Image of Learner**

<b>Curriculum's expected/suggested class activities</b>	<b>Dimension II The Learner: Image of Learner</b>	
	<i>Involved in Active Learning</i>	<i>Acquiring Knowledge Presented</i>
Participate in large and small group discussions	✓	
<b>Form questions and answer them in small groups</b>	✓	
Give a somewhat detailed explanation of level-appropriate academic vocabulary through in- class discussion and quizzes		✓
Impromptu-Style Quiz		✓
Administer Pronunciation Diagnostic and use of Focus on Pronunciation 2		✓
Read level-appropriate materials aloud		✓
At teacher discretion, using textbook and other provided materials		✓

The suggested activities in the ELP's curriculum primarily portray an image of The Learner as a passive agent who acquires information solely through the teacher's instruction and the course materials. Learning tasks that mainly focus on rote memorization of vocabulary, grammar structures and concepts, without opportunities for deeper understanding or critical thinking contribute to an image of the learner as a passive agent in their language learning process. Stepp-



Greany (2002) posits that language learning should encourage students' active involvement in the construction of new knowledge pertinent to their individuality and prior experiences. Hence, learners take on responsibility for their learning, with the teacher serving as a facilitator rather than the primary source of knowledge. A curriculum that emphasizes passive learning can perpetuate epistemic injustice, where learners' ability to participate in epistemic practices, such as sharing knowledge with others or interpreting their experiences, is undermined.

For example, Table 3 shows how the curriculum suggests activities that may inadvertently perpetuate colonial views on ELT by having students 'give detailed explanations of level-appropriate academic vocabulary through in-class discussion and quizzes' and using quizzes to assess students' vocabulary and English production. Making emphasis on level-appropriate vocabulary and structures might prioritize standardized English norms, which upholds linguistic standards associated with the elites. This approach diminishes linguistic diversity and reinforces the hegemony of certain English varieties over others, keeping alive colonial hierarchies within ELT. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning the curriculum's incorporation of group discussion and inquiry tasks which well-directed and instructed can guide learners to be agents who question assumptions, consider multiple perspectives, and make informed language choices based on their audience, context, and message to be transmitted.

All in all, to counteract colonial and monoglossic ideologies that prioritize learning languages as a resource for socioeconomic mobility and gives learners the role of passive recipients of knowledge, curricula should promote active student engagement, diversity, and critical thinking to foster inclusive and equitable learning environments.

## **4.2 Raciolinguistic Justice Frameworks**

The second stage of analysis consisted of examining Unit 3 ‘Culture and Tradition’ of the textbook: *Pathways: Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking 1, 2nd edition*. Such analysis was situated within frameworks of raciolinguistic justice, due to the approach’s accountability to address the intersection of race and language in comprehending and challenging linguistic inequalities in world languages education. Applying Krippendorff’s (2012) methodology, we identified four coding categories and seven subcategories to investigate monoglossic ideologies within the context of raciolinguistic justice frameworks, in order to answer the second research question of the current study: how can raciolinguistic justice frameworks and translanguaging practices better guide us in proposing strategies to decolonize language teaching?

The categorical analysis hereunder is grounded in characteristics of raciolinguistic justice, encompassing concepts pertaining to language and identity, language ideologies, power dynamics and assessment practices within ELT materials. This analysis will provide an overview of the textbook’s ideologies on ELT and how such are conveyed to learners.

### **Language and Identity in ELT materials**

The reflection of language and identity in ELT materials is evident through the portrayal and incorporation of non-standardized varieties of English in textbooks, along with the linguistic and cultural practices of these communities, which often diverge from mainstream societal norms. However, although this view of language and identity acknowledges the significance of diversity and interculturality, many ELT textbooks fail to reflect this perspective.

For the following analysis, all the textbook’s tasks enclosed in Unit 3 ‘Culture and Tradition’ were examined through the lenses of the two subcategories shown in table 4: (1) racialized language varieties, and (2) language crossing. Firstly, when it comes to the incorporation of racialized varieties of English, in Unit 3 there is no inclusion whatsoever of language variations linked to racial identities, but instead there is a strong emphasis on the standardized and academic usage of English even in the Listening tasks, which could lead students to believe there is a singular "correct" way to use language. This can alienate them, pushing them towards producing language that caters primarily to privileged language users. The absence of ethnic dialects such as African American English, Chicano English, Southern American English, English spoken by Foreign, Second and Heritage Learners, among others, perpetuates linguistic and cultural biases by prioritizing the variety that is associated with prestige, power, and academic success. The exclusion of these varieties might reflect the cultural and historical dominance of a certain group and might also influence the preservation of the status quo.

**Table 4.** Language and Identity in ELT materials

<b>Language and Identity in ELT materials</b>		<b>Total Book Tasks</b>
<i>Racialized language varieties</i>	<i>Language crossing</i>	
The textbook incorporates language varieties associated with racialized identities, challenging monoglossic ideologies commonly found in EFL materials.	0	10
The textbook exemplifies language practices within specific racial or	0	0

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ethnic communities and invites learners to analyze how such language practices contribute to group identity.


linguistic resources to express themselves and communicate effectively in diverse social contexts.

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Following the same thematic, the second subcategory refers to how the textbook invites students to analyze language practices that contribute to group identity within specific communities of practice. While Unit 3 includes examples of these communities, the topic is superficially addressed, failing to prompt learners to explore the linguistic choices and cultural practices of the mentioned ethnic group. The task depicted in figure 2 follows a sequence of activities subsequent to the introduction of the Cowboy way of living through a lecture, in which the members of this community were superficially portrayed, with no mention of their linguistic practices or the historical background of colonization that surrounds them.

The activities shown in figure 2, are merely focused on listening comprehension and surface level reflection of students' prior knowledge about Cowboys and suppositions about them, first because true and false activities often reinforce binary thinking, where complex issues are reduced to simplistic dichotomies and secondly, the discussion questions could be adapted in order to involve students into inquiring about the cultural impact of cowboys in the southwestern US culture. A decolonial approach to this task can incorporate the historical context of early Spanish colonization in the US, and the incorporation of elements from various cultural groups, including Native American, African American, Mexican, and European American influences, which account for the diverse population and interactions in the American West during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Secondly, the incorporation of vocabulary and phrases associated with the 'Cowboy

Lifestyle' can be addressed. This involves examining how certain terms, such as 'Howdy' compose language practices of southwestern speakers that contribute to their group identity and similarly, analyzing how the usage of words like "lasso" and "rodeo," which originated as lexical borrowings from Spanish, highlight the evolution of language influenced by sociocultural contexts and the linguistic practices of its speakers. Moreover, leveraging the lecture's discussion on both an American and a Mexican cowboy, students have the opportunity to delve into the broader cultural assumptions surrounding cowboys being predominantly portrayed as white American men, while noting the limited representation of Mexican cowboys in popular culture, which can be linked to raciolinguistic ideologies. Learners can also be invited to further explore the surreal representation of cowboys in films, usually portrayed as belonging to a high-status role erases the authenticity of their experiences and undermines the cultural significance of cowboy culture, which emerged from the struggles and resilience of working-class communities in the American West. The previous aforementioned alternatives to the activities shown in figure 2, pose a decolonial approach to ELT which exposes students to themes related to social justice and linguistic diversity, while valuing the cultural and language practices of underrepresented communities. A sample lesson is included in Appendix A which illustrates an adaptation of this activity from the textbook into a decolonial approach.

**D**  1.20 Read the statements below. Listen again and choose T for *True* or F for *False* for each statement. The professor does not say the answers directly. You will need to think about what you hear. Correct the false statements.

CRITICAL THINKING:  
MAKING INFERENCES

1. Tyrel liked school.	T	F	
2. Tyrel and his brother ate a healthy diet.	T	F	
3. Both of these cowboys would be unhappy living in a big city.	T	F	
4. The two men want to get better jobs.	T	F	

**E** Work with a partner. Compare your answers from exercise D and discuss this question:  
What information from the lecture helped you choose your answers?

### AFTER LISTENING

**F** Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

CRITICAL THINKING:  
REFLECTING

1. What ideas did you have about cowboys before you listened to the lecture? Have your ideas changed at all? Explain.
2. Why do you think Robb Kendrick used an old kind of camera to take photos of cowboys?
3. Why do you think some people still want to be cowboys today?
4. Would you like the cowboy way of life? Explain.

**Figure 2.** Activities related to “The Cowboy Way of Life”

The second subcategory under analysis in table 4 refers to language crossing, a practice in which learners are provided with opportunities to utilize a range of linguistic resources to effectively express themselves and communicate in a variety of social settings. The results show that the textbook does not include material that gives an accurate representation of multicultural environments. Within Unit 3, there is a lack of activities that highlight the richness and complexity of multicultural societies, as well as readings, audio, or videos that explore topics such as cultural sensitivity, empathy, and effective communication in multicultural contexts. The textbook favors monolingualism over multilingualism by featuring materials, tasks, and activities that expect students to adhere to monolingual English norms, rather than incorporating resources from multilingual communities that would allow students to see themselves represented. Likewise, the production tasks do not allow students to engage in language crossing practices by not providing them with the opportunity to draw from various linguistic sources to express themselves assertively depending on the social context they find themselves in. Tasks should incorporate opportunities

for learners to take on different roles and use appropriate language varieties to negotiate meaning and achieve communication goals.

**Language Ideologies in ELT materials**

In language teaching there can be different beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions about language that are embedded within the instructional resources used in the ELT courses, these ideologies shape how language is represented, valued, and taught in educational contexts. In the current study, table 5 showcases the analysis of language ideologies present in Unit 3 ‘Culture and Traditions’, categorizing such into two categories: (1) language ideologies that perpetuate Eurocentric perspectives and (2) language ideologies that promote linguistic diversity.

**Table 5.** Language Ideologies in ELT materials

<b>Language Ideologies in ELT materials</b>		<b>Total Book Tasks</b>
<i>Perpetuation of Eurocentric perspectives</i>	<i>Promotion of Linguistic Diversity</i>	
The textbook relies on cultural references, examples, and contexts that are Eurocentric, which marginalizes the cultural experiences of learners from non-Western backgrounds, perpetuating the idea that European cultures are the norm.	The textbook includes diverse voices, authors, or perspectives which may contribute to nullifying one-sided and Eurocentric narratives that marginalize the experiences and contributions of various communities.	10
The textbook focuses on superficial rather than deep components of culture and by some means stereotypes certain cultures or	The textbook highlights the importance of “Global Englishes”, recognizing and validating	0

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communities perpetuating colonial-era representations that position some cultures as superior and others as inferior.

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different ways English is spoken and used around the world.

The first category under examination seeks to assess ideologies that perpetuate cultural views that are Eurocentric and posit some sociocultural experiences as superior to others. Based on Unit 3's tasks analysis, it is shown that although the Unit depicts other cultures decentralizing the cultural and linguistic hegemony of English, the main task of the Unit revolves around the theme of 'Cowboys', as the central cultural topic learners should learn about, which upholds American culture and by doing so diminishes the cultural experiences of learners from non-Western backgrounds. Despite such thematic centralization, it is noticeable that the textbook makes an effort to include various cultural information, fostering global citizenship by preparing learners to interact with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Furthermore, due to the rich cultural content that the textbook and the unit present, it is pertinent to analyze whether it focuses on providing superficial or deep components of culture. Gómez (2015) classifies surface cultural elements into emblematic and representative elements and deep components of culture as representations of beliefs, values, and ideologies. In Unit 3, The topics that received superficial treatment were extensive when compared to those that were explored with a deeper cultural understanding. Topics such as gift giving around the world, the cowboy tradition, clothing, music, and dance belong to the surface treatment of culture due to their neutral and shallow inclusion in the Unit. In contrast, deep aspects of culture were found scarce in the Unit, however given the opportunity topics such as gender norms, social justice, educational



inequalities, and language preservation can be redirected to transformative tasks that cater to students' sociocultural agency. Overall, the proportion of topics dedicated to fostering intercultural discussions through in-depth cultural exploration is limited. This implies that teachers advocating for intercultural approaches must supplement or enhance the material.

The second subcategory concerning the promotion of linguistic diversity was examined in this Unit through the lens of embracing diverse voices, thereby supporting the eradication of Eurocentric narratives that marginalize the experiences of various communities. However, within the Unit, the short texts, descriptions, and audios presented do not encompass voices beyond the hegemonic culture(s). This is evident in the linguistic choices throughout the Unit, which predominantly reflect the use of standardized academic English. This oversight extends to the absence of consideration for 'World Englishes' in Unit 3, despite its focus on 'Cultures and Traditions'. No other English varieties are acknowledged or mentioned in the Unit, reinforcing monoglossic language ideologies that lack representation of diverse communities and their linguistic practices. This deficiency in material inhibits learners from developing empathy, cultural awareness, and respect for differences, while also depriving them of authentic language input that mirrors the diversity of English-speaking communities worldwide, hindering their preparation for real-world communication. Flores and Rosa (2021) explained that:

Becoming dissatisfied with normative applied linguistic and broader sociolinguistic logics suggests that we could best support stigmatized communities by affirming their non-standardized language practices and promoting their accumulation of standardized practices to facilitate their mainstream institutional inclusion. In fact, we found that even

when marginalized people within these contexts engaged in linguistic practices that seemed to correspond to mainstream standards, they continued to be perceived as deficient and in need of remediation. This insight suggested that we needed to redirect our attention away from marginalized—specifically, racialized—people’s linguistic practices and toward the systematic historical and institutional processes that overdetermine these practices as deficient.” (p.1164).

In general terms, language ideologies that center on the perpetuation of Eurocentric perspectives by promoting superficial rather than deep components of culture and relying on cultural reference that uphold western cultures and ways of thinking, results in downplaying learners’ experiences and backgrounds. Additionally, ELT material should advocate for the inclusion of diverse voices, including short texts written by ELT learners or members of non-western cultures, which recognizes the different ways in which English is used worldwide.

### **Power Dynamics in ELT materials**

The portrayal of high-standardized academic English as the expected outcome for ELP learners reinforces power imbalances in which native speakers of the prestige language variety are positioned as linguistic authorities, whereas students are seen as linguistically deficient and in need of acquiring the variety of the language that is associated with academic success. Table 6 depicts all language tasks of the book as indicative of power imbalances related to hierarchical language proficiency, since learners are encouraged to acquire the variety of the elites, therefore recognizing existent relationships of authority, control, and influence between learners and English.

**Table 6.** Power Dynamics in ELT materials

<b>Power Dynamics in ELT materials</b>		<b>Total Book Tasks</b>
<b><i>Reinforcement of Dominant Linguistic Norms</i></b>		
The language used in the textbook may reflect power imbalances, positioning native speakers of English as linguistic authorities and non-native speakers as needing assistance or correction. This reinforces a hierarchical view of language proficiency.	10	10

Correspondingly, such tasks that rely on the ‘proper’ use of grammar and vocabulary, takes the agency and autonomy of the learner by limiting their opportunities for critical thinking, creativity, and student-centered learning. Such approach to language learning is strongly linked to the image of the learner as a recipient of knowledge, passively receiving and reproducing linguistic forms without actively engaging in meaningful communication or language production. An approach that looks into dismantling power dynamics in ELT materials encourages self-directed learning and fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment where learners feel empowered to take ownership of their language learning journey.

### **Decolonizing Assessment Practices in ELT materials**

The decolonization of assessment practices in ELT involves moving away from traditional assessment implementations that evaluate students’ knowledge of the subject matter through exams, quizzes, listening and reading comprehension tests, and oral examinations that look into grading students’ pronunciation and adherence to standardized English vocabulary and grammar. The content under study, was analyzed following the criteria of these two subcategories: (1)

language assessment biases present in Unit 3, and (2) alternative assessment methods included that convey a decolonial option to traditional assessment practices in ELT.

Table 7 shows that all tasks depicted in Unit 3 encourage an English Only assessment approach, where students must comply to tasks in which there are limited options for them to expand on or use their entire linguistic repertoire, also making sure that learners produce the standardized variety of the language, completely disregarding learners' linguistic background and abilities. For instance, the tasks presented in Unit 3 feature a narrow range of varied activities since learners are mostly asked to match vocabulary with definitions, write appropriate grammatical structures with fill in the gap activities and true or false inquiries based on either listening or reading comprehension. However, although overt questions related to the Unit's topics are provided, such questions could encourage deeper discussion and critical thinking from learners. Moreover, the textbook fails to include alternative assessment methods that to cater students' needs, capabilities and struggles in their language learning process. Within the context of the ELP, biased assessment and instruction methods can account for students' academic failure and their achievement gap as opposed to their monolingual counterparts. Therefore, a translanguaging pedagogy that allows multilingual learners to leverage their entire language repertoire and restores the power of language to the speakers is needed in ELT. (Garcia, 2019)

**Table 7.** Decolonizing assessment practices in ELT materials

<b>Decolonizing assessment practices in ELT materials</b>			<b>Total Book Tasks</b>
<i>Language Assessment Biases</i>		<i>Alternative Assessment Methods</i>	
The textbook encourages English Only assessment practices, reinforcing linguistic hierarchies by imposing linguistic norms where students must comply to tasks making use of the standardized variety of English.	10	The textbook includes tasks that encourage the use of alternative assessment methods such as translanguaging where students are allowed to make sense of the knowledge, they are acquiring by deploying their entire linguistic and semiotic repertoires.	0
			10

Overall, decolonizing assessment practices represents a challenge in ELT due to the limitations present in ELT curricula and materials, which are often based on educational institutions resisting to changes in assessment practices posing barriers to decolonial approaches. Such approaches can include but are not limited to structuring sets of topics or rotating workshops instead of focusing on specific skills and proficiency levels to track students' advancement. Alternative assessment methods that do not rely on exams, such as project-based assessments or student-led lessons, offer alternatives to traditional academic frameworks and provide opportunities for showcasing linguistic proficiency beyond standardized tests like TOEFL or IELTS. Coming to a consensus between learners and teachers where realistic objectives are maintained, can make assessment methods more democratic by actively involving students in their learning process (Litzenberg, 2023).

## Conclusions

In conclusion, the examination of colonial ideologies traces in ELT textbooks revealed that there is still an enduring legacy of historical power dynamics on language education. This analysis helped in identifying that ELT textbooks often reflect Eurocentric perspectives that reinforce standard language norms and exclude speakers of other varieties of the language.

Colonial legacies in ELT textbooks are present in the choice of language, examples, activities, texts, and cultural references that center in the experience of the colonizers while marginalizing the voices, languages, and cultures of historically subjugated communities. Additionally, the reinforcement of linguistic imperialism can contribute to perpetuation of inequalities which does not only affect learners' self-perceptions of their own cultural identities but also maintains racist societal attitudes towards linguistic diversity.

As an action call, educators, curriculum developers and ELT material creators must contribute to decolonizing ELT by committing to the inclusion of diverse language varieties, inclusive language, creating activities and materials that promote equitable representation of cultures and histories while challenging linguistic hierarchies.

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## Appendix A - Sample Lesson Plan (Designed from Raciolinguistic

### Justice Framework

#### Linguistic Objectives:

- Employ *vocabulary* related to regions in the United States
- Identify *lexicon* which belongs to racialized/minoritized varieties of English.
- Make use of the *simple present, simple past and past continuous* to narrate historical events, experiences and expand points of view

#### Communicative Objectives:

- Narrate past events and their impact in today's society.
- Discuss the ways in which speech can index identity and sociocultural belonging.
- Compare the status and linguistic features of language varieties of English to those of my home language.

#### Cultural Objectives:

- Identify the role that stereotypes play in the perpetuation of racism and classism.
- Recognize inclusion of marginalized communities' linguistic practices and the biases that surround them.

**Students' Level:** Advanced Mid

## **Cowboy Culture and Southern Identity**

This task presents the historical, socioeconomic, and racial connotations of the ‘Cowboy Culture’ in the United States, and these carry with them connotations on how Southern and Western communities are perceived and portrayed in mainstream society.

### **Step 1. Pre-Reading**

Think about your prior knowledge on the topic and answer the following prompts:

1. Each group will be assigned a region of the United States. Take a look at your assigned region and the states that encompass it. Based on your prior knowledge, write five (5) words that you associate with the region.
2. Do you think that some of these words reflect biases or stereotypes about the communities that inhabit those regions? Discuss this question with your group, support your answer with examples.

### **Let’s focus on the South!**

- Have you ever heard the word ‘Cowboy’? What words do you associate with the Cowboy Culture?
- What do you know about the history of Cowboys in the United States?

Discuss these questions with your groups and try to come up with a list of at least three (3) words that can be related to the Cowboy way of living.

## **Paso 2. While- Reading**

Read the following passage about the history of the Cowboy, encompassing the roots of the Cowboy tradition and the language practices of Southwestern speakers which are linked to their identities.

1. **Jigsaw:** Divided in three groups, each group will have assigned a section of the reading. Read it and discuss the main idea and specific details. Then, get ready to report it to other groups.

### **Origins of the cowboy**

In 1519, shortly after the Spanish arrived in the Americas, they began to build ranches to raise cattle and other livestock. Horses were imported from Spain and put to work on the ranches. Cowboys came from diverse backgrounds and included African Americans, Native Americans, Mexicans and settlers from the eastern United States and Europe. Scholars have identified that 1 in 5 cattle trail workers was a cowboy of color, either Hispanic or African American. At that time, most cowboys in south Texas were Hispanic, and along the Texas coast the majority of cowboys were Black. As the cattle drive traveled up the trails, Native Americans joined.

In addition to herding cattle, they also helped care for horses, repaired fences, and buildings, worked cattle drives and in some cases helped establish frontier towns.

### **Cowboys in popular media**

Initially the cowboy had many faces. However, the 20th century created a homogenous image of the cowboy as a white American man. It was romanticized and heroized because the world was a

crazy place during the first half of the 1900s. So American citizens, caught in the rush of the Industrial Revolution, were craving strong, ingenious, free characters who would gloriously reflect the luster of the national history and identity of the United States. The cowboy culture bred the Western genre in cinema, literature, poetry, music, and dance. It spawned a rich vocabulary, gave recreation and sports that arose from cowboy working practices, and created distinctive clothing.

### **Cowboy Culture and its connection to Southernness**

Often times the Cowboy Culture is related associated with Southern identity, whether it be by the way in which people dress or speak. When it comes to language practices, the varieties of a particular language: the sounds they enounce, the words they use and some grammatical variants, are used by speakers to shape their social identities and express their belonging to a certain social or cultural group. The Southern variety of English has varied linguistic features, such as the lack of pronunciation of the /r/ sound in some contexts, g-dropping by pronouncing -ing endings as -in (e.g., doin'), there are also words that are related to Southern identities such as y'all and howdy. Although, language variation as an identity marker is a common practice, they can also depict stereotypical ideas of speakers that have racist and classist connotations which must be challenged.

**Sources taken and adapted from:** <https://sidrichardsonmuseum.org/the-evolution-of-cowboy-culture/>, [https://mrenwick.franklinresearch.uga.edu/southern\\_speech/linguistic\\_features](https://mrenwick.franklinresearch.uga.edu/southern_speech/linguistic_features), <https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/cowboys>.

2. Once your group has read the assigned passage, you will get a new group to whom you will report the information that you learned.

3. Take some time to discuss this information by answering the following questions:
  - Did you know that the United States was colonized by Spain and France? What were the effects of the colonization process in this part of America?
  - Have you watched any Cowboy films? How are they portrayed? Was this portrayal accurate based on what you read? How do you think films portray false narratives and stereotype certain speakers?
  - Have you ever heard the Southern accent before? If yes, in what contexts? Was it an exaggerated portrayal? Think about your home language, do you speak a variety of it? What are some characteristics of your language variety? Do you think that such variety is part of your identity?

### **Paso 3. Post-Reading**

Taking advantage of the fact that Kansas State University is located in the Midwest of the United States, we will conduct interviews in order to know what K-State students think of Southern English and the associations that go along with it. (3 interviews per group)

1. Let's conjointly create the questionnaire for you to conduct your interviews.
  - What are your thoughts on Cowboy Culture?
  - Do you know what a Southern accent is? What are some of its characteristics?

*The questionnaire process will be guided by the instructor, however, for the purpose of this lesson plan the previous sample questions were included.*

2. Once you have conducted your interviews, you and your classmate will make a creative piece that informs your findings: painting/drawing, a flyer or poster, a blog post, a short

video, or a collage. The product depends on whatever you feel comfortable on doing, that also shows what you learned conducting these interviews.

3. You will present your project in the classroom.