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**SOCIAL JUSTICE, DECOLONIALITY, AND SOUTHERN
EPISTEMOLOGIES WITHIN LANGUAGE EDUCATION:
THEORIES, KNOWLEDGES, AND PRACTICES ON TESOL FROM
BRAZIL**

Hanna Kivistö-de Souza^{1*}

Thaynara da Luz Jenuario Quadros^{1**}

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil

The book *Social justice, decoloniality, and southern epistemologies within language education: Theories, knowledges, and practices on TESOL from Brazil* (2023), presents a collection of single- and multi-authored monographs integrating critical theories and practices in English language teaching from diverse Brazilian perspectives. Edited by Vander Tavares, a Postdoctoral Researcher in Education at Høgskolen i Innlandet University, the book presents the work of teachers, professors and teacher educators in the context of Brazil, fostering Southern-based dialogues on promoting decoloniality and social justice in TESOL. The series aims to serve as a venue where historically neglected voices— especially in the TESOL field, traditionally dominated by the Global North, which exports language theories and methods for the Global South—are foregrounded.

* Associate Professor at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in Brazil, where she teaches and advises at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Her main research interests are L2 speech acquisition and cognitive- and psycholinguistics applied to SLA. She is especially fascinated by the role of phonological (self) awareness in L2 speech acquisition and has conducted research mostly on explicit and implicit phonological awareness as well as phonological self-awareness. Email: hanna.kivistodesouza@gmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8498-2691>.

** Graduate student at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in Brazil. Her research interests include language and teacher education. Email: thaynara.jenuario@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1351-6826>.



Divided into five parts, the chapters contextualize, (re)imagine, and localize TESOL and education as a whole. They explore themes such as social justice, decoloniality, and alternative approaches to teaching and research, reflecting on the state of TESOL in Brazil. The chapters discuss transforming TESOL through Southern-based theories, knowledge systems, and practices. The five parts are organized around distinct themes: (1) Social justice through TESOL for and from the South, (2) Decolonizing constructions of TESOL teacher education and educators, (3) Southern-based knowledges and pedagogies, (4) (Re)Imagining TESOL through Brazilian perspectives, and (5) Confronting the hegemony of the English language in research and teaching.

In chapter 1, titled “Digging up our stones of shame: English language education and the memories of Brazil’s violent past”, Rocha Pessoa and Urzêda-Freitas present a teaching experience in which they critically examine the erasure of Brazil’s historical memory. Through the final activity of a series of English lessons, they problematized the hidden violent and colonial aspects of Brazil’s past, positioning the English language classroom as a space for revisiting and reflection. To achieve this, students used English in a meaningful way. The authors presented the students’ projects, which were related to two periods in Brazil: colonialism and the dictatorship. The students represented Indigenous people who were enslaved and catechized by Jesuit missionaries after the invasion of their territory (Brazil) by the Portuguese, led by Pedro Álvares Cabral. Such an event resulted in the massacre of the Indigenous population and the decimation of many ethnicities. They also addressed the *Inconfidência Mineira*, representing Tiradentes’ public assassination; and the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship, a period marked by the reinstitution of colonial and racist ideologies (Pessoa; Urzêda-Freitas, 2023). Although it was not possible to represent the entire Brazilian history, the projects presented throughout the chapter encouraged both students and readers to reflect on the violence and cruelty that shaped these historical periods and their consequences for our current social context and present-day dynamics.

In Chapter 2, titled “Developing critical awareness of Indigenous languages and cultures of Brazil in EFL education: children’s literature as an entryway,” the authors Tavares and Orlando reflect on the representation of minoritized groups in Brazilian English language education. They propose that Indigenous children’s literature can serve as a gateway for English students to critically engage with the Indigenous cultures and languages of Brazil, challenging stereotypes and discriminatory representations of Indigenous Brazilians. The chapter provides insightful examples of learning objectives, teaching activities, and book recommendations related to the theme. The proposal to work with Indigenous literature emphasizes literary works produced by Indigenous people through their own voices and discourses. The books suggested are welcoming tools for English classes, so as to promote a critical, intercultural, and multicultural education.

Part II focuses on the practices of teacher educators in reimagining teaching and teacher education.

In Chapter 3, titled “Reconstructing our teacher selves through decoloniality and southern epistemologies,” Martinez, Diniz de Figueiredo, and Milan discuss the reconceptualization of their approach to written feedback, based on two experiences from their teaching practices in academic literacies course for teacher-trainees. Additionally, they explain the shift of their teaching and research practices from Global North perspectives, critically examining concepts of language tied to the Nation-state construct. This critical examination is made based in Southern epistemologies and decolonial frameworks.

In Chapter 4, titled “Teacher education practices within Pibid: De/re/constructing what it means to be an English language educator,” Nascimento and Fonseca present an innovative approach to language teacher education through the incorporation of movies. Pre-service teachers watched movies following guidelines, and then responded to posts containing the movies’ links, reflecting not only on the movies but also the texts studied during the course. Their reflections should include emotional reactions, connections to their teaching experiences in public schools, actions that could contribute to public education, and links to their academic readings. They were also encouraged to respond to their peers’ posts, promoting dialogue and further discussion. The goal was to promote critical reflection on their identities as students from public schools and to consider how these experiences inform their teacher education and future teaching practices. Students’ reactions to the selected movies and how they connected them to their teacher preparation were analyzed. This analysis aimed to foster a broader understanding of teacher education, including sociological dimensions beyond language teaching and methodology. Through this approach, the authors addressed issues such as Indigenous education, gender differences, and social inequalities, while encouraging the development of students’ critical consciousness.

Part III explores local epistemologies, praxis, and the role of emotions in English language teaching. In Chapter 5, titled “Critical tasks in Brazil: Locally produced epistemologies and praxis,” Silva and Farias argue that language teaching must be committed to social justice. To support this, they discuss the development of pedagogical theories and practices that respond not only to the needs and challenges of Brazilian education but also to the specific context in which one is inserted. The authors present critical tasks where task-based language teaching theories have been appropriated and recontextualized through the lens of Freirean Critical Pedagogy, also incorporating a Southern perspective. The authors emphasize that theories produced in and by the Global North need to be recontextualized and reinterpreted with a focus on social justice by being responsive to the Brazilian socio-educational context.

In Chapter 6, titled “Affect and English language learning in the Global South: Literature-based teaching plans developed by Brazilian teachers,” Orlando presents the work by the Affect Group, a “Brazilian research group dedicated to the study of affect and educational practices [...]” (Orlando, p. 109). The author emphasizes the writing process behind teaching plans created by English

language teachers at a Brazilian public school, illustrating how knowledge built in the Global South can support transformative changes in educational practices. The relevance of children's literature, as it provides a foundation for teaching the language through a critical perspective is highlighted.

Chapter 7 is the first in Part IV ((Re)Imagining TESOL through Brazilian Perspectives), titled "Thinking ELT otherwise: Lessons from decoloniality". In it, Duboc examines ELT through decoloniality. Drawing on her experience as an English language educator and researcher, she explores ways of rethinking ELT, presenting decolonial attitudes and gestures as tools for this purpose. The author theorizes on modern and postmodern paradigms, discussing the complexity and diversity in the classroom. A list of four decolonial attitudes or gestures meant to inspire English teachers and teacher educators is provided: (1) "fostering epistemic disobedience and de-linking", which involves problematizing Western-based ideas; (2) encouraging English teachers to wear decolonial lenses by developing critical perspectives on classroom content and curriculum; (3) promoting decolonization in small places, such as classroom practices and the curriculum, by viewing them as spaces of potential; and (4) *andar perguntando* (Duboc, 2023), embracing a dialogical stance in which multiple perspectives are acknowledged, leading to the discussion of real social problems.

In Chapter 8, titled "A century of Paulo Freire: Problem-solving education, *conscientização*, dialogue, and TESL from a Freirean perspective," Tavares focuses on Freire's educational philosophy as a decolonial approach to language education from the Global South. The chapter provides an overview of Freire's life and educational philosophy. Following a discussion on the impact of colonization in education in Brazil, it explores decoloniality by addressing three key concepts of Freirean thought: problem-solving education, *conscientização*, and dialogue. Each of these is examined in detail to show their contribution to a decolonial approach in TESOL education. First, the chapter emphasizes problem-posing education, in which teachers and students are partners. This approach recognizes students' lived experiences and promotes an active, critical pedagogy as a path toward liberation. Second, it discusses *conscientização*, aimed at developing students' awareness of their place in the world, enabling them to critically examine their surroundings in connection with action. Third, it highlights dialogue as a space where students and teachers share reflections and work together toward social transformation. Together, these principles serve as critical and decolonial approaches to language education in the pursuit of social justice.

Initiating part V, in Chapter 9, titled "Realigning research publication practices in the South: Going beyond the 'must publish in English' controversy," Nogueira discusses publication processes and colonial practices that have made English the predominant language in national scientific journals. Based on a study with Brazilian professors, a model for the internationalization of higher education that promotes a less hierarchical and more equitable interplay between the Global North and Global South is proposed. The author also advocates for

fostering South-to-South collaboration, which could strengthen Latin American networks and encourage a more democratic use of language.

In Chapter 10, titled “Critical perspectives of Brazilian teachers on English as a lingua franca: Rethinking teaching through critical pedagogy,” Siqueira explores how teaching and learning English as a global lingua franca can intersect with education and fields of knowledge that support critical approaches to language teaching. The author demonstrates that teachers can critically reshape their teaching practices in response to contemporary challenges by adopting a critical intercultural pedagogy of ELF. This approach encourages ELT professionals to engage in ongoing professional development; analyze their teaching contexts and act upon them; design methodologies and materials that reflect local realities; prepare learners to engage in inter- and transcultural communication; and conceive language as a social and ideological instrument, among other principles. As the author notes, it all depends on how language is used and what we do with it, while also recognizing that we are global users of English.

In the last chapter, “African and Afro-Brazilian cultural themes as possible paths toward decolonizing English as a foreign language education,” Nascimento and Tavares position language as inseparable from the speaker and their social context. They argue that teaching and learning must consider the social and historical aspects of the target language for it to be emancipatory. The authors highlight the importance of legitimizing African diasporic cultures for English language classes from an Afrocentric pedagogy perspective, proposing that this contributes to strengthening the ethnic identities of students, as well as the decolonization of EFL teaching and learning. The focus is on Brazil and Africa, addressing issues of colonialism and Afro-Brazilian identities.

All in all, this volume contributes to a TESOL perspective made in the Global South, particularly in Brazil, considering local contexts through a variety of perspectives and voices. As the book demonstrates, TESOL made in the Global South is diverse, critical, and subversive. It creates a space for English language teachers from the Global South to question educational policies, language practices, research, and publication norms often rooted in coloniality. In doing so, it also provides a space to rethink and transform English teaching, advocating for a more diverse, contextualized, and emancipatory education. Being recommended to English language teachers, teacher educators, and all professionals engaged with language education, critical pedagogy, and social justice, this collection of chapters offers valuable insights into decolonial approaches to ELT, grounded in local realities, intercultural dialogue, and transformative educational practices.

Despite the relevance of the discussions presented throughout the book, one important limitation is its lack of accessibility, especially for Brazilian readers who may not have full proficiency in English. Given the local context in which many of these experiences and reflections are situated, it is essential for the book to also be made available in Portuguese. Furthermore, the high cost of the book (published by an international publishing house), combined with restrictions on reproducing or sharing its content, further limits its reach among educators

and students in Brazil. Making such works more accessible linguistically and financially would help ensure broader engagement with the critical and decolonial perspectives they offer, allowing these insights to more effectively inform local educational practices.

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References

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