

Plurilingualism in a Constructively Aligned and Decolonized TESOL Curriculum

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While learning and teaching English as an additional language are lifelong learning processes for both learners and teachers, these two sectors are largely dominated by West-centric linguistic and cultural imperialism, epistemic hegemony, racism, and neoliberalism, which are tied to colonialism and imperialism. In light of this issue, I argue that it is necessary to decolonize and de-imperialize the teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) teacher education curricula to prepare future English as an additional language (EAL) teachers to identify, challenge, and resist the hegemonic elements embedded in EAL education worldwide. I claim that plurilingual pedagogical approaches can be identified as critical pedagogies since they can empower adult EAL learners by resisting linguistic and epistemic imperialism through activation and endorsement of their plurilingual repertoire, diverse knowledge systems, and identities. Drawing on the literature of plurilingualism, decolonization of knowledge production, and curriculum design, this article discusses how plurilingual approaches can be combined with critical and transformative pedagogies in a TESOL curriculum for the purpose of training future EAL teachers to empower their adult EAL learners globally. These curriculum suggestions are relevant to TESOL curricula to illustrate how plurilingualism and decolonizing theory can be put into practice.

Alors que l'apprentissage et l'enseignement de l'anglais comme langue additionnelle sont des processus d'apprentissage qui durent toute une vie à la fois pour les apprenants et les enseignants, ces deux secteurs sont largement dominés par un impérialisme linguistique et culturel occidendo-centrique, une hégémonie épistémique, le racisme et le néolibéralisme, qui sont liés au colonialisme et à l'impérialisme. À la lumière de ce problème, j'avance qu'il est nécessaire de décoloniser et de désimpérialiser l'enseignement de l'anglais aux locuteurs d'autres langues (TESOL), les programmes d'enseignement pour préparer les futurs enseignants d'anglais langue additionnelle (ALA) à identifier, remettre en question et résister aux éléments hégémoniques enchâssés dans l'enseignement d'ALA partout dans le monde. Je soutiens que les approches pédagogiques plurilingues peuvent être identifiées comme pédagogies critiques puisqu'elles permettent aux apprenants d'ALA de résister à l'impérialisme épistémique par l'activation et la validation de leur répertoire plurilingue, les divers systèmes de connaissance et leurs identités. En s'inspirant de la littérature

sur le plurilinguisme, sur la décolonisation de la production de connaissance et sur l'élaboration de programmes, cet article discute de la façon dont les approches plurilingues peuvent être combinées à des pédagogies critiques et transformatives dans un programme de TESOL dans le but de former les futurs enseignants d'ALA afin qu'ils autonomisent leurs apprenants adultes mondialement. Ces suggestions de programmes concernent les programmes de TESOL pour illustrer comment le plurilinguisme et la théorie de la décolonisation peuvent être mis en œuvre.

Keywords: plurilingualism, translanguaging, language imperialism, decolonization, TESOL, EAL

Adult English as an additional language (EAL) and teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) fields are considered sectors of lifelong learning for both learners and teachers. New immigrants, international students, and multilingual citizens, including Indigenous Peoples in Canada, continuously seek to acquire English language skills to compete in the Canadian labour market and access Canada's settler society. Likewise, the popularity of TESOL and adult EAL courses has increased around the world due to the globalization and internationalization of higher education (Hasrati & Tavakoli, 2015; Yeo & Newton, 2021). Correspondingly, TESOL practitioners have to train and retrain themselves to meet the evolving needs of adult EAL students in an evolving society. In this article, I argue that decolonizing and de-imperializing TESOL curricula is a required action since EAL programs have become a necessity in settler colonial Canada, and in other neo-colonized transnational spaces where geographical boundaries are blurred, languages are mixed, and cultures are fluid but governed by an imperial order.

Recent discussions in applied linguistics have uncovered issues of discrimination in TESOL. Many critical scholars are of the view that both EAL students and non-native English speaking educators around the world are tyrannized by accent discrimination (Creese & Kambers, 2003), language imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), epistemic hegemony (Amin, 2005; Kubota, 2019), racism (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Taylor, 2006), and standard language ideology (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Motha, 2014; Rosa & Flores, 2017), which benefit the Western, White (neo)colonizer or settler. For instance, West-centric White settler ideology could be traced in three TESOL syllabi in Ontario (Suraweera, 2020). Furthermore, Canada has a number of well-delineated policies in place that marginalize and assimilate Indigenous Peoples and immigrants (Bannerji, 2000). The Canadian education system does not offer opportunities for plurilingual competence in languages other than English and French (Kubota & Bale, 2020), except for a few out-of-

school language programs such as heritage and foreign language classes. The constitutional rights for Indigenous languages and heritage languages are not propounded in the bilingual policy of Canada's Official Languages Act—although the language rights of Indigenous Peoples are supported in the National Indian Brotherhood (1972), the policy on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), and the Cultural Enrichment Program (1977) (Burnaby, 1997). As a result of Eurocentric linguistic and cultural assimilation, rich and diverse bodies of Indigenous knowledge are lost (MacPherson, 2003) because “where indigenous knowledge epistemology survives, it is transmitted through the Indigenous languages” (Battiste, 2013, p. 33).

Tuck and Yang (2012) argued that settler colonialism is built upon the settler-native-slave triad structure. Accordingly, the cultural and linguistic genocide of Indigenous Peoples continues to this day in Canada, and the culture, traditions, history, and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples are judged undesirably as a means of maintaining the imperial metropole (Talaga, 2018). Anglo-Franco settler thinking is inclined to be scientific and modern in Canada and “settler colonialism fuels imperialism all around the globe” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31). Furthermore, the sociopolitics of the Cold War have strengthened the Western versus non-Western hierarchical structure of sentiment (Chen, 2010; Lin, 2012), creating a new imperial order. Hardt and Negri (2001) defined this new imperial order as follows:

The imperial order is formed not only on the basis of its powers of accumulation and global extension but also on the basis of its capacity to develop itself more deeply to be reborn, and to extend itself throughout the bio-political lattice work of world society. (p. 41)

As a result of these different forms of domination that benefit White settlers and the West, English language imperialism continues to hegemonize numerous EAL contexts through native speakerism, monolingualism, epistemic hegemony, and language standardization. Many critical applied linguists confirm that plurilingual approaches empower learners through recognition of their plurilingual repertoire and their diverse knowledges and identities (Canagarajah, 2013; Galante, 2019, 2021; Lin, 2013; Payant & Maatouk, in press). However, political resistance and curriculum design challenges have obstructed successful implementation of these approaches in education. For instance, the condemnation of Indigenous and heritage language practices is reflected in translanguaging practices as there is resistance and rigidity shown by educators, institutions, and even students who value monolingual norms (Schissel et al., 2021). Resistance towards plurilingual pedagogy is widespread not only in the West but also in the East. Lin (2013) and Byean (2015) showed how native speakerism, standard language ideology, and monolingual English language teaching (ELT) methods are deep-rooted and overly valued in Hong Kong and Korea. As far as curriculum challenges are concerned, Schissel et al. (2021) noted

that there is a clear disparity between the use of multilingual methods as classroom practices and assessment practices. Thus, this article discusses how plurilingual classroom and assessment practices can be incorporated in a constructively aligned TESOL curriculum as an endeavour towards decolonizing and de-imperializing its learning objectives, content, and pedagogical and assessment methods.

Plurilingual Pedagogies for Student Empowerment

I argue that plurilingual pedagogies are effective decolonizing tools since they make use of multilingual speakers' cognitive and social resources in the process of learning an additional language, which results in multiple positive outcomes. Studies done by language scholars (Canagarajah, 2013; Cenoz & Gorter, 2013; Galante, 2019; García & Sylvan 2011; Hurst & Mona, 2017; Piccardo, 2013) explained how plurilingual pedagogical approaches empower students and facilitate their language learning by making use of a plurilingual repertoire, validating plural systems of knowledge, acknowledging their identities, and giving them a voice.

Plurilingualism can be viewed as a *socially just* and *anti-racist* pedagogy that endorses and recognizes diverse knowledge and language systems while challenging linguistic and epistemic hegemony. For instance, Boeckmann et al. (2011) specified that the underpinning values of plurilingualism contest and reject racial and language discrimination by being "inclusive of varying language skills, proficiency profiles, cultural backgrounds," and "student voice" (p. 24). Similarly, Lin (2019) demonstrated that through translanguaging and trans-semiotizing, the teacher can develop understanding and empathy regarding bilinguals. In another study, Galante (2021) investigated the effects of plurilingual instruction on students' plurilingual and pluricultural competence and their perceived benefits of this type of instruction. One of the affordances of plurilingual instruction was the gaining of critical awareness of multicultural realities in Canada, including awareness of systemic racism, which can in turn help learners challenge racial identities forced on them.

Studies also show that plurilingual pedagogies are empowering for learners as they challenge epistemic injustice. Hurst and Mona (2017) described how translanguaging methods were utilized in a South African university as a socially just teaching approach that can be applied to question, analyze, and resist systems of oppression. In their project, the students were given an opportunity to examine and critique systems of oppression by using translanguaging strategies. The authors reported that this approach increased student engagement to a significant degree. Furthermore, Mahmoud and Galante (2020) showed that translanguaging tasks can develop the agency of ESL learners provided that the tasks are embedded in pedagogical practices driven by complexity theory (CT) and the idea of affordance. They clarified that the concept of affordance demands that learners actively engage with

subject matter to make meaningful interpretations. They further argued that creating transnational spaces in ESL classes empowers learners by allowing them to discuss contentious topics that involve their identity, culture, and educational challenges. This suggests that translanguaging has the qualities of transformative pedagogies to help students tap into their “deep-rooted desires, fears, cultural stereotypes, and emotions, which have been the effect of colonialism, cold war, imperialism and other dominant social structures” (Lin, 2012, p. 172). Likewise, Lin (2013) and Wu and Lin (2019) described innovative translanguaging and trans-semiotizing methods successfully used by local teachers in Hong Kong, where students were given the latitude to express their ideas freely and fluently, even when they ran short of second language (L2) resources to maintain the same motivation. Schissel et al. (2021) were of the view that “translanguaging additionally implies a shift in power dynamics, with more attention given to the practices of speakers than to idealized linguistic forms” (p. 342).

The advantages of plurilingual pedagogies can be supported by empirical studies that emphasize the importance of previous linguistic knowledge and cognitive skills during the completion of authentic classroom-based tasks. For example, paying special attention to task modalities and task types, Payant and Kim (2015) explored the mediating functions of the learners’ plurilingual repertoire in the target language learning process. The findings suggest that learners’ first language (L1) performs social and cognitive functions when they engage in language- and task-related discussions. Individuals who speak more than one language are better at divergent and creative thinking, problem-solving, understanding diverse cultures, and communicative sensitivity, and they show better metalinguistic awareness, mental flexibility, and openness to different cultures (Hebert et al., 2008). For instance, Galante’s (2021) study revealed that the most significant affordance of plurilingual tasks was the use of cognitive strategies, such as reflecting, reasoning, and comparing, which were utilized to understand the differences and similarities between different languages and cultures. In English for academic purposes (EAP) classes, there are many highly educated and experienced mature learners seeking academic and professional success. Plurilingual tasks help adult language learners tap into the cognitive and social resources that they possess in order to engage in cognitively demanding tasks that require activation of higher order linguistic and cognitive skills (Galante, 2021; Payant, 2020). This again shows the effectiveness of plurilingual approaches that help activate adult students’ schemata where subject-specific knowledge is stored in languages more familiar to them. Plurilingual approaches reject monolingualism and challenge epistemic and English language hegemony by helping students bring the specialized knowledge stored in their familiar languages to the surface, so they can continue the learning task through a negotiation process with other learners.

From a pedagogical perspective, particularly with regard to implementation, while plurilingualism can be implemented as a teaching approach in different ways, it is important to identify how this approach can be incorporated into a TESOL curriculum for future EAL teachers. When employing plurilingual practices in the classroom, Cenoz and Gorter (2013) emphasized the importance of “setting realistic goals,” “using plurilingual competence,” “integrated syllabi,” and “the creation of resources” (pp. 596–597). Aiming to explore a systematic approach to implementing plurilingual teaching methods in the higher education sector, Galante et al. (2019) identified administrative support, instructors’ openness to plurilingual language use, weekly collaboration checks, and learner centredness as components of a framework for successful implementation of plurilingual tasks. They also stressed that a curriculum needs to offer opportunities to learn about and enjoy different languages and language systems while enhancing sensitivity towards one’s own language use. Hebert et al. (2008) argued that teacher preparation and professional development should be directed at plurilingual realities in Canada. It is important to design plurilingual pedagogies that suit a given sociocultural context and include them in the field of TESOL (Lin, 2013). However, upon an analysis of three TESOL curricula in Ontario, Suraweera (2020) found that while diversity is discussed as a theoretical topic, there were inadequate alternative plurilingual or anti-racist approaches included in the methods section to suit diverse learners. Considering this gap, the next section discusses how plurilingual approaches can be incorporated into a TESOL curriculum going in the direction of decolonization.

Towards a Constructively Aligned and Decolonized TESOL Curriculum

Curriculum design requires careful planning and contemplation as “curriculum is a key site where people’s subjectivities and cultural imaginaries are produced, contested, or transformed” (Lin, 2012, p. 170). It is believed that dominant groups, such as settlers and (neo)colonizers, use their “vision of legitimate knowledge” (Apple, 1993, p. 222) in order to silence others and dispossess their knowledge in the process of colonization (Battiste, 1998). This legitimized form of domination is also seen in non-Western neo-colonized spaces (Valdez, 2011). In the process of decolonizing and de-imperializing educational curricula, critical education scholars have advocated for incorporating critical pedagogy to allow the construction of plural systems of knowledge (Kubota, 2015, 2019; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Maitra & Guo, 2019; Taylor, 2006) and to raise critical consciousness at individual and institutional levels (Lin & Motha, 2021).

Maitra and Guo (2019) explained four decolonization processes in the context of lifelong education in the era of transnationalism. First, they suggested that we should examine the connection between knowledge and

“the process of domination and exploitation by the capitalist/patriarchal/imperial Western Metropolis over the rest of the world” (p. 15). Second, lifelong learning practices should incorporate and validate “plural systems of knowledge production” (p. 13). Third, they recommended incorporating anti-racist, feminist critical pedagogical approaches into the curriculum to recognize and facilitate the construction of diverse bodies of knowledge from non-Western origins. Fourth, they advocated for the decolonization of the minds of learners, teachers, and policy makers to contest the historical and ongoing colonization and marginalization of learners. This resonates with the idea that “without going through the process of de-imperialization at the psychological and cultural imaginary level, subjects remain locked in the hierarchical structure of sentiment regarding cultural self and others” (Lin, 2012, p. 169).

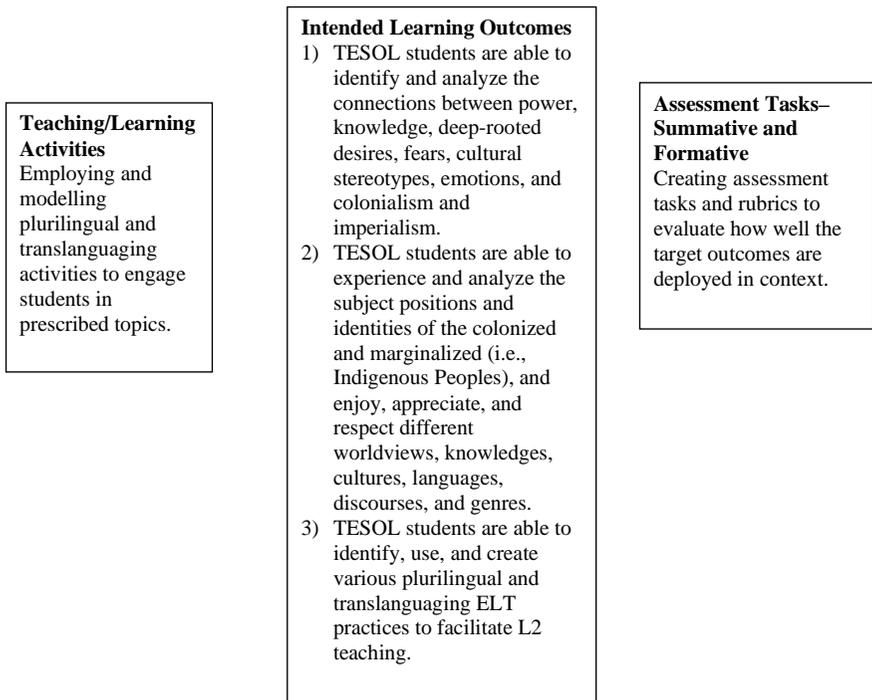
Nevertheless, Tuck and Yang (2012) warned against using decolonization metaphorically since such moves facilitate the reconciliation of “settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity” (p. 1). They argued that since decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity, it is important to “consider the permanent settler war as the theatre for all imperial wars” (p. 29). In settler contexts, curriculum objectives should focus on improving the students’ knowledge about Indigenous lands and freedoms (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and disturbing narratives of settler dominance. In agreement, Smylie (2015) argued that Indigenous Peoples’ ways of being must be recognized and should not be disparaged in any reconciliation efforts. I consider decolonizing the TESOL curricula as an attempt to disrupt “the settler desire to be made innocent” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9).

Individuals who migrate from postcolonial societies are subject to internal colonization yet again in Canada. Referring to Chen’s (2010) idea in *Asia as Method*, Lin (2012) reiterated that the ex-colonized have to rebuild “their subjectivity so as to release themselves from the hierarchical structure of sentiment” (p. 168). In de-imperializing the new imperial order, Lin (2012) echoed Chen’s view that “we need to outgrow the binary categories of the West and the rest, so that we can be liberated from its limiting psychic and epistemological effects on us” (p. 167). Lin (2012) reiterated that it is important to develop the theories and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and to consider their specific settings without directly applying Western theories—although there is a possibility of “actively modifying and adapting [such theories]” (p. 175). Therefore, when moving towards decolonization of the TESOL curricula, I drew on plurilingual pedagogies within critical philosophies presented by both Indigenous and Western, non-White, and non-Western scholars. I predominantly used the recommendations of Tuck and Yang (2012), Maitra and Guo (2019), Lin and Motha (2021), Lin (2012) (as discussed above), and Biggs and Tang (2011).

Biggs and Tang (2011) proposed that a curriculum should be defined with clear intended learning outcomes considering the kinds of knowledge to be

taught and levels of understanding to be attained. For instance, “Declarative knowledge is knowledge about things, expressed in verbal or other symbolic form; functioning knowledge is knowledge that informs action by the learner” (p. 81). Furthermore, they showed that the teaching and learning activities should be aligned with the learning outcomes, and the assessment tasks should be employed to determine if students have achieved the learning outcomes. They added that we could allow room for unpredictable and unplanned learning outcomes to emerge in the specific learning and assessment milieu. Thus, I designed the plurilingualism in a constructively aligned and decolonized TESOL curriculum model, in which identifying and applying plurilingual approaches and developing critical consciousness of Indigenous and anti-imperialist struggles are set as intended learning outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 1. These curriculum suggestions can be added to any TESOL curricula to emphasize how decolonizing and anti-racist theory can be put into practice.

Figure 1
Plurilingualism in a Constructively Aligned and Decolonized TESOL Curriculum



Intended Learning Outcomes

In creating learning outcomes for plurilingual tasks, I drew on Bloom's taxonomy targeting cognitive skills, such as *identify, use, analyze, and create* to actively engage pre-service teachers in critical topics and plurilingual activities. I also considered the MARILLE framework (Boeckmann et al., 2011), in which contesting and rejecting racial and language discrimination as well as appreciating and enjoying different cultures and languages are considered as fortifying values of plurilingualism. These ideas resonate with the critical pedagogies that seek to make students experience and appreciate others' subject and identity positions, as well as diverse cultures and worldviews (Chen, 2010; Lin, 2012). Based on these premises, TESOL programs can include three learning outcomes (see Fig. 1) to design learning activities, assessment tasks, and rubrics for pre-service teachers.

Teaching and Learning Activities

I argue that including, acknowledging, and utilizing the diverse knowledge systems, languages, cultures, voices, and personalities of diverse student populations in educational curricula, along with plurilingual practices, is a way of "dismantling the imperial metropole" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31), which is a step towards decolonization. Flores (2013) cautioned that the concept of plurilingualism may promote "a covert neoliberal agenda" (p. 500), so it is important to consider it critically when implementing it in classroom teaching.

Accordingly, critical readings should be used as the content for the sociocultural component of a TESOL course to provide pre-service teachers with declarative knowledge on hegemonic and oppressive powers. For instance, critical readings on Indigenous land reclamation, epistemic hegemony, racism, sexism, and English language and cultural imperialism will provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to examine the connection between knowledge, power, and coloniality, as per Maitra and Guo's (2019) recommendation. This will help pre-service teachers identify how invisible effects of colonization have shaped the subjectivities of both the colonized and the settlers (Lin & Motha, 2021). However, providing a reading list alone is inadequate; it is important to provide engaging plurilingual tasks to facilitate the use of pre-service teachers' plurilingual repertoire while grasping the concepts discussed in the critical readings. In doing so, I suggest employing "critical consciousness raising and empathetic psychology expansion work" (Lin & Motha, 2021, p. 31), such as critical syncretism (Chen, 2010), through which pre-service teachers try out the subject positions of the weak or marginalized in the form of role-play or drama so that they can empower their own future EAL students. Similarly, Piccardo and Galante's (2018) pedagogical sequence in which EAL students engaged in role-play to resist linguistic and other forms of discrimination can be modelled in TESOL

classrooms. The critical consciousness pre-service teachers develop through these activities can empower them to give their future EAL students “the opportunity to step out of the straightjacket of identity categories and desires defined by the colonial logic and discourse” (Lin & Motha, 2021, p. 29). In addition to the activities recommended by various scholars and practitioners (see, for example, Canagarajah, 2013; Galante, 2019; García & Sylvan, 2011; Hurst & Mona, 2017), pre-service teachers should be given an opportunity to create innovative activities in which plurilingual practices are incorporated to suit the teaching and learning context. Designing these activities will help them acquire a functioning knowledge of the plurilingual approach to a great extent.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks should be carefully designed and employed to evaluate whether the pre-service teachers have achieved the intended outcomes shown in Figure 1. The assessment tasks can be both formative and summative. For instance, a *critical syncretic* plurilingual role-play can be used to formatively assess the ability of students to experience and analyze the subject positions and identities of the colonized and marginalized, while a critical translanguaging essay can be used for summative assessments. That is, in assessment, it is not only language goals that will be assessed but also the use of the repertoire (including translanguaging) along with how well they have developed critical consciousness of colonialism and imperialism to achieve learning goals. When pre-service teachers engage in decolonial practices during their training, they may feel better prepared to provide EAL students with a similar pedagogy; for example, they can provide EAL students with a case study that will raise their critical consciousness while allowing them to use their plurilingual resources, which could be a form of assessment. Finally, analytic rubrics with well-defined performance descriptors (Schissel et al., 2021) can be utilized to assess whether pre-service teachers have achieved the stipulated learning outcomes shown in Figure 1.

Conclusion

Unequal power structures of settler and imperial practices have extended to different fields of adult education and lifelong learning practices around the world. This article discussed how plurilingual practices can be used as a decolonizing and de-imperializing EAL pedagogy in designing TESOL curricula in settler colonial and transnational educational spaces. The suggestions put forward can help TESOL curriculum designers and trainers prepare pre-service teachers to become critically conscious and to challenge and resist some of the existing exclusionary mechanisms that have originated from imperialism and settler colonialism. By experiencing a decolonized

TESOL curriculum, pre-service teachers can learn to implement plurilingual approaches that empower their EAL learners to resist colonialism and marginalization.

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