



Reconfiguration of Praxis in Applied Linguistics to ELT: Social Transformation and Exaltation of Local Identities Towards Social Justice

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As noted in previous editorials of this journal, applied linguistics has shifted toward more critical, contextualized, social, and political perspectives on language and education ([Bonilla-Medina & Quintero-Polo, 2023](#)). Applied Linguistics reveals that language is far more than a tool for communication; it is a social practice, inextricably linked to human experience and embedded within historical frameworks of power. Yet, within our field, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT), we continue to navigate spaces shaped by the persistent influence of colonial legacies and monolingual ideologies. Nevertheless, reflection has helped us see that these structures have systematically privileged certain languages and speakers, reinforcing inequities in pedagogy, curriculum design, and policy development.

Within this reflection, we recognize that any practice that silences or marginalizes diverse languages, cultures, and identities is a practice that reproduces colonial thought. That is why a central challenge for us today is to critically examine and courageously disrupt these entrenched systems. To move beyond static and Western-centric models of language proficiency, we can embrace the power of plurilingual approaches. This evolution has recently emphasized the need to dismantle the colonial matrix of power that historically privileged Eurocentric views ([Bonilla-Medina & Samacá-Bohorquez, 2023](#)). Reconfiguring the field through this decolonial lens has fostered a deeper understanding of the complexity and critical nature of educational practices.

Reconfiguring praxis in applied linguistics has necessitated a stage in which the geopolitics of knowledge is recognized as a hierarchical system that privileges certain worldviews, specifically those from Western, Eurocentric, and power-centered contexts ([Archanjo, et al., 2019](#)). This commitment is evident in the work published in CALJ, which advocates for a model of language education deeply rooted in sensitivity and social justice. In this journal, this transformation has manifested as a shift away from canonical perspectives on language education, fostering dialogical discoveries situated in more equitable social and educational practices. Consequently, numerous publications have sought to centre previously invisibilized identities, leading ELT toward decolonial and innovative practices that represent the local knowledges of the Global South (see e.g. [Ortiz-Medina, 2017](#); [Archanjo, et al., 2019](#), or [Benavides Buitrago, 2017](#)). As editors, we observe that this body of work has created spaces for marginalized cultures and individuals to be recognized with dignity and hope, driven by educators whose committed praxis facilitates these transformative turning points and social justice.

We would like to highlight several aspects identified in this issue as part of this reconfiguration of applied linguistics toward local perspectives. First, a reconstruction of educative praxis from a humanistic and critical lens, suggesting a need to go beyond superficial linguistically based ideas of language teaching. The articles demonstrate that teachers are taking active roles as agents of change through the development of pedagogical devices against critical social problems such as racism and inequality, and that they are providing new perspectives to challenge deficit-based

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perspectives of education. Second, the use of multimodal learning as an approach to emancipation highlights not only the new and profound evolutions of communication but also reflects on their role in the transformation of social practice and meaning making. The articles in this issue indicate a reflection on the need to create new models of analysis to discourse and their implications for language teaching. Finally, we underscore the intention of showing the voices of the Global South as reflected in the way authors try to indicate their identities, agency, and interest in social change. All of these are new alternatives to open possibilities to decolonial methodologies for language teaching and research, which, in our view, push language educational practices towards sensitivity and social justice.

In this CALJ issue, Barrero Rico takes inclusion as a point of inspiration to motivate transformative praxis in language classrooms. He poignantly addresses this sensitive area to problematise prejudices that teachers usually confront in the school environment, which influence the shaping of their practice. With a critical mind, he questions how these tendencies usually come from positivistic views of policies that situate students with diverse capabilities as being at a deficit. Encouraging this critical view of realities, his lesson aims to change normalized practices that often are unhelpful to classroom settings and general institutional practice. In the same group of studies but from another angle, Giraldo-Gomez *et al.* introduce bilingual education in primary school students to understand the importance of different languages within this process. This article provides value in seeing the mother tongue and an additional language as complementary to the learning development, so, in agreement with [Picardo's \(2013\)](#), both languages are valued as part of a linguistic repertoire rather than seen as isolated systems. These languages highlight an integral pedagogical approach that keeps a balance between students' personal, linguistic, and cultural identities while learning languages.

From a more cognitive approach, Cao presents eye-tracking as a strategy for L2 assessment as an alternative to rethink the praxis of language assessment. In times of testing and general discourses of language as measured and accounted in tests, a study that explores alternative assessment is a way to reimagine the praxis of language education for more adequate results. Along the same line of thought, but more focused on learners, specifically their speaking ability, Rehmat developed a study to identify personality traits that could influence the learning process. In different levels, but all these articles reflect a reconfiguration of the educative praxis that grounds reflections based on human-centered approaches, recognizing education stakeholders as human beings affected by social practices and discourse. All these claims account for an educational practice that should not be seen as instrumental or superficially measured in results. They suggest that language educational practice is now more analysed and seen as embodied in political, social, and cultural complexities, an aspect that enclose a decolonial look to language education practice.

From another perspective, as an initial attempt to develop an understanding of new ways of meaning-making, Arias-Alzate reviews the literature in the field of Colombian applied linguistics over the last decades to track how this issue has been approached and researched. In his investigation, he reveals meaning making in a shifting paradigm in education, evidently introducing the need to acquire more critical tools for its understanding. He clearly pleads that language teaching and learning require a critical lens to view emerging communicative practices immersed in socio-cultural and identitarian factors. Surely, his review enables scholars in the field to articulate educational research with current critical societal issues, so that educational actors can envision liberatory routes for language teaching and research.

Giving a step ahead, Velandia-Santa María and Quintero propose an emancipatory perspective of language learning by opening space to alternative expressions mediated by digital environments and tools. The relevance of this study underscores how social issues shape learners' comprehension of the world and communities and how this exercise transforms their own identities. Although emphasis is placed on the rich opportunities this communicative landscape provides, social justice underlines their purpose by examining those tools as fostering participatory critical actions with students whose communities play a relevant role in the goal of societal transformation. Finally, Llopis presents an interesting approach to this line of emancipatory multimodal pedagogy in the field of Spanish as an additional language. In this case, he navigates the understanding of the learner's role to determine language learning opportunities that surpass the reductionist view of the learner's linguistic abilities. Llopis' work is exemplary here because he links multimodal language learning with students' experiences as part of digital narratives, identifying connections between culture and learners' emotional dimensions. The humanistic perspectives introduced earlier are synthesized in this article, exploring multimodal learning alternatives as tools to tie personal identities and the learning goals, while positioning identity as central to an integral view of language education.

In accordance with Llopis' article, several articles explore identities involved in the language learning and teaching process, highlighting agency and social change as part of their contribution. Castro-Mosqueda argument is also on identity, but oriented towards Mexican language teachers uses biographies to explore their teachers' construction of identity. Culture, context, and personal trajectories are the axes through which his study aims to display a comprehensive perspective on what happens in the development of a teacher's professional identity. With a decolonial intention to destabilize static views on the teacher's profession that prescribe practice, he uncovers classroom practices and interactions, teachers' knowledge and beliefs, experiences, motivations, and aspirations as constitutive elements to identity construction, which must be considered for a more reflective and caring approach to professionalization.

From another angle, Jaramillo-Calderon takes as an inspiration the policies of bilingualism in Colombia to pinpoint situational understandings of policy ideologies and enactment of educational stakeholders. Describing a movement towards an agentive role of these actors in the enactment of policies, the article advances a heteroglossic approach to language education to expand opportunities to participation that considers participants' realities. As part of the discussion of the involvement of diverse identities in policy constructions, he stresses how they are relevant to attain more appropriate curricula and pedagogical decisions. It purports to highlight context and social sensitivity practices that agree with relevant learning while calling for a more inclusive construction of policies where all language education identities have a voice.

Further strengthening this line of agency and participation in language education practice, Soler challenges traditional approaches to language education by proposing a pedagogical device centred on the teacher's self-reflective role. Her critical project strongly advocates for a pedagogical practice that integrates awareness of the critical social issues; such as discrimination and racism that surround the learner's contexts and lives. She alleges that this practice is insufficiently addressed by the expectation of students' own resistance. We emphasize the importance of self-reflection involving those aspects identified in her proposal as a critical decolonial praxis towards social justice. Finally, we highlight these efforts of, mostly, Latin-American scholars and one of India who highlight the value and interest of socializing local knowledge and social-driven discussions as a step further to stress the voices and experiences of the Global South.

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