The CATESOL Journal

Sarina Chugani Molina
University of San Diego

Reducing Colonial Harm in Language Teaching: A Guide to Critical Self-Reflexive Practices for Language Teachers

The powerful undercurrents and rooted presence of coloniality continue to influence the field of English language teaching today (Kubota, 2016). Motha (2014) argues that our field in its historicity and embedded colonial lineage is inherently intertwined with notions of race and power. The language of the colonized is considered by the colonizers to be inferior to the colonial language "associated with the word and people of God, of territory and ownership" (Kalyanpur et al., forthcoming). This essay engages the reader in consciousness-raising practices that require deep introspection on our own positionality, intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and histories with the English language and suggests ways to transform the self and system that dismisses the linguistic and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) of our students.

America is an old house. We can never declare the work over. Wind, flood drought, and human upheavals batter a structure that is already fighting whatever flaws were left unattended in the original foundation. When you live in an old house, you may not want to go into the basement after a storm to see what the rains have wrought. Choose not to look, however, at your own peril. The owner of an old house knows that whatever you are ignoring will never go away. Whatever is lurking will fester whether you choose to look or not. Ignorance is no protection from the consequences of inaction. Whatever you are wishing away will gnaw at you until you gather the courage to face what you would rather not see.
(Wilkerson, 2020, pp. 15–16)

This quote by Wilkerson (2020) references the historical and institutional racism in the United States, which also applies to our field of English language education. The very foundation of English language education is wrought with raciolinguistic ideologies that center white-middle-class norms and position those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as deviant from the norm. Whiteness in societal norms and expectations is unmarked (Frankenberg, 1993) and reveals itself when students of color are, for example, marked as 'exceptional' or the exception to the "rule" or "norm" or praised for being 'articulate' (Alim & Smiterman, 2012). These examples of 'othering' are common forms of oppression and reification and application of power in educational spaces. In English language classrooms, teachers and students work towards approximating white linguistic norms, which places the linguistic repertoire, variety, or vernacular of students as deviant from the norm. In the following reflection, I share my complex history with the English language, the questions that emerged through my analysis of the field of English language teaching, and the subsequent critical consciousness practices I engaged in as I navigated my colonial history and relationship to the English language.

Navigating the Complex Historicity of my Ties to the English Language

As collateral damage of the British departure and the subsequent partitioning of India in 1947, my parents fled their homeland of Sindh in pre-partition India and became refugees in their own land, India. Their psyche was deeply influenced by centuries of British colonial presence and control in India, particularly in the ways they viewed themselves and their status in society. When my father was 19, he traveled by ship to Hong Kong to join a distant relative, who owned a retail shop. He worked in Hong Kong for five years, but as the import and export market there became saturated with businessmen from India, my father moved to Japan to join his brother.

It was here in Japan that I was born. I attended a small Catholic American International School from kindergarten through 12th grade. The medium of instruction at this school was English. As I gained proficiency in English, I gradually lost my own heritage mother-tongue language, Sindhi. My parents strongly believed in the importance of learning English as the ticket to social mobility and this message was strongly communicated to me both within my home and at school. My school promoted an English-only policy, where speaking our heritage mother-tongue languages or Japanese would send us to detention. This policy and practice communicated a strong message about the importance of English above all other languages. This ideology is something that continues to not only permeate language policies and practices (see Kalyanpur et al., forthcoming) in colonizing and post-colonial contexts, but also those contexts impacted by the force of globalization, where language is considered a commodity (Harris, 1993).

Teaching English became a very lucrative job for me throughout my time in Japan.[1] I began teaching English at the age of 16 in Japan where English was in demand. The English language was not only a commodity for international business, but also a much sought-after language as Japan was gaining more exposure to American culture through media and advertising. There was a deep interest or あこがれ (akogare) or yearning for all things American from Hollywood movies to Americans and American life depicted in magazines and posters.

After studying language acquisition and pedagogy at an institute of higher education in the United States, I began to teach English to speakers of other languages at local community colleges, language academies, and community-based programs, where I had the opportunity to work with refugee, migrant, immigrant, and international students. I then obtained my doctoral degree and became a teacher educator, where I worked primarily with teacher candidates in a Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program. As a researcher, my epistemological stance on teacher development has been grounded in constructive-developmental (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016; Kegan, 1982, 1994) and sociocultural theories (Vygotsky, 1978). Constructive developmental theory provides a framework to understand the different orientations of the ways of "thinking, perceiving, understanding, and being" through which teachers experience the world (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2016, p. 2). Molina (2021b) further illustrates that "These developmental potentialities include not only the cognitive dimension, but also the affective, intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities that we bring to our experiences, which also influence how we position ourselves in response to feedback" (p. 146). Sociocultural theory complements constructive-developmental theory in that it acknowledges "the role

[1] To provide some context on the value of the English language in Japan, I have provided some compensation rates for comparison. In the late 1980s at the age of 13, I started working with a Korean elementary school student in Japan, where I made about 1,500 yen/hr. (approximately $13/hr. at the current exchange rate). In the early 1990s at the age of 16, I tutored a married couple, where I made 10,000 yen/hr. (approximately $87/hr. at the current exchange rate). In 1993, I attended college in the United States, where I tutored a student in Japanese and was paid $25/hr. After receiving a master's degree, I started teaching English at a local community college in the United States and earned $36/hr. as a starting rate. This has since increased from when I first started teaching English in the United States, but this is quite a significant difference from what I was earning at a much younger age in Japan when the yen was much stronger.

that society and relationships play in the learning process" as well as the "diverse values, beliefs, and attitudes of systems (social, institutional) that influence the learning process" (Molina, 2021b, p. 147).

More recently, I have studied and published in the area of critical language teaching utilizing a postcolonial lens. The postcolonial lens is a theoretical tool through which to understand the impact of English and heritage language loss in formerly colonized nations. Bridging this understanding with contemporary movements in decolonizing the field is another area I continue to critically reflect on in my role as an English language teacher and teacher educator. My experiences coupled with my study of decolonial authors and researchers have deeply influenced my practice as a language teacher and language teacher educator. Before delving into the notion of what it means to be an antiracist educator, it would be first important to operationalize this term. Kendi (2019) provides an explanation that cautions us to parse out sweeping generalizations about certain behaviors and associations of such with particularities of racial groups. He writes:

> To be antiracist is to think nothing is behaviorally wrong or right -- inferior or superior -- with any of the racial groups. Whenever the antiracist sees individuals behaving positively or negatively, the antiracist sees exactly that: individuals behaving positively or negatively, not representatives of whole races. To be antiracist is to deracialize behavior, to remove the tattooed stereotype from every racialized body. Behavior is something humans do, not races do. (p. 105)

I continue to contemplate what it means to be an anti-racist educator in the manner in which the Persian poet, Rumi, teaches us, "*You have to keep breaking your heart until it opens*" (Medrut, 2022). It is through making mistakes and teaching English as I had been taught that my heart continues to break for the unintentional and unconscious harm caused to my students, but as it breaks, I hope the light of understanding shines through to heal my history and the histories of those I serve as a language teacher. Anti-racism has come to mean many things. For me, it is fundamentally about intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional transformation that takes extra care and diligence in order to deracialize behavior. It takes consistent analysis of the historical, political, societal, and contemporary influences that impact the very act of instruction taking place within a particular context. I delve further in the specifics of how I have attempted to engage in anti-racist thinking and praxis as an English language teacher in the next section.

Understanding the Presence of Coloniality in English Language Education

As English language teachers and teacher educators, we must first recognize that our field is situated in the powerful and rooted presence of coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2013), and this manifests in the ways our beliefs about language, language speakers, cultures and "language teaching and learning" are transmuted (Kubota, 2016, p. 348). Additionally, Motha (2014) argues that the English language, with its historicity and colonial lineage is intricately interwoven with notions of race and power. Flores and Rosa (2015) define this complexity in their construct of raciolinguistic ideology:

> The ideological construction and value of standardized language practices are anchored in what we term *raciolinguistic ideologies* that conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices. That is, raciolinguistic ideologies produce racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects. (p. 150)

Consequently, in our English language classrooms, or in any context where English is the medium of instruction, there are beliefs about standard or mainstream English associated with whiteness as superior and refined. These beliefs devalue the linguistic repertoires of teachers and students who do not approximate this standard, both in terms of race and language. I recall an experience when I was a teaching assistant at an international school in Japan, where my colleague, a Japanese American, native English language speaker, and credentialed teacher, was told that she would not be invited back to the school the following year because the Japanese parents wished for their children to have "American-looking" teachers. This example illustrates the powerful connection between whiteness and English; even if your linguistic repertoires meet the standard of whiteness (McIntosh, 1988) in every way, your race will still solicit questions about your legitimacy and connection to and history with the language. This also manifests very clearly in advertising and discriminatory hiring practices for English language teachers, particularly in international contexts, where white American or British English speaking teachers are preferred over others. For example, I have seen many English language teaching positions overseas specify that they want "native" American-English and British-English teachers. They also often required that candidates place a picture of themselves in their application packet.

Decolonization and Anti-Racist Practice

It is important to understand that the term decolonization subverts "the taken-for-granted, everyday assumptions deeply held by society that work to routinely reinforce white power and privilege" (Dei & Jaimungal, 2018, p. 2). Dei and Jaimungal (2018) further argue that "Decolonization is about body, mind, soul, and spirit, and the transformation both within and outside…" and "breaking with dominant practices and resisting subordination in all its forms" (p. 2). Our work as language teachers is to reduce harm (Tuck & Yang, 2012) within our field. To this end, Motha (2014) suggests the necessity to engage in antiracist practice grounded in critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) assert:

> Although CRT began as a movement in the law, it has rapidly spread beyond that discipline. Today, many in the field of education consider themselves critical race theorists who use CRT's ideas to understand issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing. (p. 3)

When applied to the field of education, Solorzano (1997) defines critical race theory as "a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintains the subordination of People of Color" (p. 6). In schools, CRT can serve as a lens in which to view policies and practices that disproportionately impact students of color such as disciplinary referrals, graduation rates, demographic composition of accelerated programs as compared to other (e.g., remedial) tracks. It shows up prominently in the language used to 'other' students of color. CRT also applies to the intersection of race and language which I explore in the next section.

Positionality, Intersectionality, and Histories with the English Language

As I began to interrogate my own history and raciolinguistic identity,[2] I realized that I had myself become a byproduct of the western educational system and a vehicle of transmutation as a student and

[2] As with many who embody transnational identities, my raciolinguistic identity is a complex one. On applications and forms, I would check either Asian, South Asian, and/or Indian based on what options were listed. In India or amongst Indian people, I would identify as Sindhi, though my original ancestral land of Sindh became part of Pakistan after partition between India and Pakistan in 1947. I speak English and to a lesser extent Japanese and Sindhi though I have a good understanding of those languages. I primarily express myself in English and code-mesh when speaking to other bi- or tri-linguals in these three languages.

transmission as an English language teacher and teacher educator. I wished to approximate the ways of being, thinking, and the language of the colonizers and saw this as superior to my own wisdom traditions and cultural and linguistic histories. It took some time to unravel myself slowly from this powerful web, which I have been steeped in for so long. This process of unraveling required honest and authentic reflection, conscious awareness of the systems that influenced my patterns of thinking and being, as well as vigilance against the tendency for complacency. The series of guiding questions that I share in this essay are those very questions that I contemplated for many years as I engaged in this process of unraveling through deep introspection on my own positionality, intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and histories with the English language (Molina, 2020; 2021a). While positionality refers to our socially-constructed membership and relationship to systems of power, intersectionalities such as our race, gender, linguistic and cultural backgrounds are the levers on which power structures operate to oppress.

Dixson and Rousseau (2005), Kendi (2019), and other scholars have documented the systemic ways that educational systems in the US reproduce inequality and call to those interested in antiracist work to actively engage in disrupting systems. However, before we can move towards disrupting systems, Baker-Bell (2017) urges teachers to first recognize their complicity "in the reproduction of linguistic and racial inequality in schools and society" (p. 104). It is time for educators to transform deficit-based approaches to an asset-based, funds-of-knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) approach. While the starting point of deficit-based approaches is on what students do not have or cannot do, asset-based approaches start with a focus on the linguistic and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) students bring to the classroom and leverage this wealth in their pedagogical practices. Some examples of asset-based approaches are culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014) and translanguaging or translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b, 2018). In addition, González et al. (2005) describes pedagogy as learning situated within a social process and bound within an ecological context including the contextual, political, historical, and ideological dimensions that influence students' lives (p. ix). Understanding the multi-faceted, complex dimensions of our students' lived experiences is critical to linguistically and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014). In the next section, readers are guided through consciousness-raising questions to support them in their journey of reflexivity as they consider their work as language teachers and teacher educators.

Consciousness-Raising Reflexive Practice

The following series of guiding questions are offered to the readership to take a moment of pause and engage in self-reflexive practice within their own context. In particular, I would like readers to examine theory in practice and consider how their pedagogical practice informs their evolving theory on coloniality and decolonial practices. These questions emerged over the years, as I interacted with the readings and studies in critical language teaching as well as through reflecting on my own experiences teaching and mentoring my teacher candidates through their professional preparation to become English language teachers.

The first set of guiding questions will support our readers through a conscious self-awareness journey as they explore their raciolinguistic identity and relationship with the English language. I also provide strategies and methods readers can employ to engage in this work.

Exploring my Raciolinguistic Identity

1. What is my positionality? What are the intersectionalities that construct my identity?
2. In what ways have I been complicit with or oppressed by race ideologies and structures in my country, in my educational experience, and in my personal and professional life?

3. What is my relationship to the English language?
    a. Do I reside in a country where English is the dominant language?
    b. Is English considered the language of my race?
    c. Do I identify as a native or nonnative speaker of the English language and how has this privileged or marginalized me in my educational experience, and in my personal and professional life? How do others identify me?
4. What is my linguistic identity? Do I consider myself to be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual? What is the implication of this in my context?

As readers are considering these questions, they may wish to document their thoughts in an autoethnography (Chang, 2007; Molina, 2020), a powerful tool for self-reflection. An autoethnography helps us reflect on and systematically analyze our experiences and identity development by identifying cues from our previous experiences that provide a glimpse into our understanding of ourselves, particularly in terms of our raciolinguistic identity. Situating these experiences within the temporal, historical, and sociopolitical context can reveal the nature of power and privilege that surrounds these experiences and informs our understanding of our identity development. Though it may be an uncomfortable experience to recognize our own privilege and positionality in the world, it is an important process for us to sit with our discomfort so we may begin to enact change.

After deep contemplation and awareness about one's positionality and relationship to the English language, educators need to then reflect on our individual formation as well as the environments where we are actively engaged in forming others. The following set of guiding questions can assist readers in uncovering the history and location of their practice as influenced by systems in which their work resides.

Understanding the Influence of Coloniality on the Location of My Practice

1. What is the colonial history of my location?
2. How is the English or English as a Second/Additional language classroom situated both institutionally, as a system, and physically, as a location, in your local context?
    a. For those teaching in inner-circle English speaking countries, are students who are learning English taught completely separately from their grade-level peers? Is your English language classroom within the same space where core content courses are taught or is it removed from the center of educational activity?
    b. For those teaching English in higher education settings in outer-circle post-colonial settings, in what way is the English language department situated in comparison to other departments?
    c. For those teaching English as a foreign language in expanding circle contexts (Kachru, 1988), where is the English language department located in comparison to other departments in higher education and K-12 contexts?

    How are English language teachers positioned within your context in comparison to other teachers of other subjects?
3. What is the condition of your classroom? What kinds of resources (e.g., financial, material) are allocated to the English or English as a Second/Additional language department?
4. How are English as a Second/Foreign/Additional courses perceived at your institution (e.g., credit-bearing/non-credit bearing, developmental, remedial)? How might this speak to coloniality inherent within the system?
5. What are the institutional policies around the use of student languages in the classroom? How are those learning English labeled (e.g., remedial, developmental, English learners, multilingual users of English)? What beliefs do these labels signify about the students? Is this

labeling one that recognizes students' assets or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005)? How are the resources allocated to these programs and how does this communicate perceived value?

As I pondered the question of the colonial history of my location, I reflected on the indigenous wisdom of my native land, India, the land of my birth, Japan, as well as the land where I pursued my higher education, Hawai'i. I realized the importance of connection to the land, particularly because my parents were refugees in their own country. Though I hold a transnational identity, with no specific connection to one land, I deeply honor, with humility, the places and the wisdom of the ancestors of the lands that have housed me over the many years. In the doctoral courses I teach on 'globalization and education' and 'language, race, and culture,' we take a critical look at the ways in which the colonized continue to deal with the remnants of their colonial history and the ways in which heritage languages have been destroyed and indigenous wisdom dishonored. In the courses I teach and initiatives I lead at my university in San Diego, I began the practice of beginning every session with a land acknowledgment. I begin with the honoring of the Kumeyaay people of the land in which our university is situated and then invite our students who are online and at various locations to honor the peoples, the ancestors, and elders of the land in which they reside. As many of us are settlers on this land, we seek guidance on ways to reduce our harm, particularly as we reflect on ways in which coloniality is present in our policies, pedagogies, and practices, and work towards transforming the field.

The physical location of the building or classroom where the English language is taught is important to consider. In one institution where I taught, the English as a second language classrooms were located at the bottom of the hill far from the center of university activity. Students had to pay significant funds to complete many levels of English before entering the university, and many of these intensive courses were not offered for credit. My colleague shared that at one elementary school she taught at, English language learners and students with learning disabilities were taught in a converted janitor's closet. In a summer bridge program in one urban school in the San Diego area, I taught predominantly Latinx high school students English to prepare them for entry into the local community college. This classroom was located far from the center of the campus, right up against the fence, next to the main road. It had small windows in the upper wall area, much resembling a prison cell. In order to gain entrance into the classroom, I needed to seek the assistance of the vice-principal. I recall the chain of keys jingling from his waistband. I have found that physical marginalization is an important marker of the value placed on particular students as opposed to others.

The physical condition of the classroom is also important to analyze as compared to classrooms where other subjects are taught. For example, in the films *Freedom Writers*, *Dangerous Minds*, and *Stand and Deliver*, educational inequality is visibly depicted. We see a stark contrast between the Advanced Placement classes and Honors classes that are bright, clean, and well-resourced, and the other classes that have scratched-up desks and tattered books. The quality of resources and materials represented in these films resembles that of many schools across the country, predominantly in larger urban settings and those on the lower rung of the socio-economic strata. Needless to say, in such movies, the Advanced Placement and Honors courses predominantly serve privileged, white students, and the remedial classes are composed primarily of African American, Latinx, and East Asian students. Poor resources and materials in the latter send messages to students about their worth and belonging in schools. Students in my master's degree course for teachers on social justice and educational inequity identified similar patterns in real life. These teachers, who represent K-12 schools in national and international settings, conducted audits in their own schools, where they analyzed the demographic makeup of students and demographics represented in disciplinary referrals. They found, with only a few exceptions, more white students in the

advanced courses and fewer referrals of white students for disciplinary issues in comparison to students from other demographic backgrounds.

In addition to location and physical condition, policies and the inherent messaging within them can lend insight into beliefs about student languages and backgrounds. For example, if a school promotes an English-only policy, this sends a message to students about the hierarchy of languages and wherein their language is situated within that hierarchy. As shared earlier, the English-only policy at my school resulted in the loss of my own native language. As I reflected on this experience, I realized that I had become extremely fearful of speaking any language other than English. I know many users of English have experienced and continue to experience shame and loss of their cultural and linguistic heritage language due to these strong monolingual and assimilationist ideologies.

In contrast, Kubota (2016) argues for the invaluable ways in which students can mobilize their first language or bilingual/multilingual background in learning an additional language. Likewise, teachers can leverage student first languages through translanguaging and translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013a; 2013b; Jain, 2014) to support students in understanding grammar and vocabulary. Most importantly, the use of student languages in the classroom can support the affective and relational dimensions of learning. In several of my teaching assignments, I did not speak the language of my students, but I often invited them to bring their linguistic and cultural conceptualizations into the classroom and unpack these ideas together as we negotiated meaning.

Examining the Manifestation of Dominance in the Classroom

As we continue working towards an understanding of how the educational system privileges Western knowledge, discourse, and practices, we must consider ways to disrupt the system. We must question these systemic forms of dominance that dismiss the cultural and linguistic assets our students bring into the classroom. We have seen numerous examples of teachers stripping cultural names from students, replacing them with Anglicized names, thereby making it easier for monolingual English teachers to pronounce (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012). Students have also begun replacing their own cultural names with Anglicized names to save themselves from the butchering that happens to their sacred names. The next series of guiding questions take us through a critical examination of our practice and the ways complicities with coloniality in our pedagogical practice can manifest.

Examining My Pedagogy

1. In what ways has coloniality influenced my students' goals for learning the English language?
2. What is the English variety and accent privileged in my classroom? Is this the variety I speak or the variety I know holds power?
3. What are my institutional and personal policies around the use of student languages in the classroom?
4. Do I recognize coloniality in the materials used in my curriculum or classroom or in my own selection of instructional materials?
5. In what ways do the topics in my course syllabus and assignments reinforce racist ideology or coloniality in my pedagogical practice?
6. What is the relationship of my assessments in understanding student proficiency and competency in relation to standard academic English?
7. How do I talk about student home languages, English varieties, and academic English in my classroom?

In 2013, I worked with my TESOL graduate students and our Kenyan partners to develop an online Business English program for youth in Kenya. They were part of a non-profit organization that sought to provide the youth with professional development opportunities as a means out of poverty. As we delved into our work with our Kenyan students, we realized that we were grossly underprepared to navigate the complex multidimensional linguistic influences on the English they spoke, particularly in our feedback practices where we were unsure what standards or norms to use. For example, without recognizing that Kenyan English was deeply influenced by British colonial history, one teacher candidate corrected the order in which a Kenyan student wrote the date in one of the assignments. While the Kenyan student included the date, month, and year, my teacher candidate shared in her feedback that dates are written with the month first, followed by the date, and year. There were many similar examples where American English was imposed upon Kenyan English norms, and we recognized this in our weekly debriefing meetings. I reflect in Molina (2021a),

> Even in this postcolonial era, where we consider English as an international language, we were cognizant of the complex political history of the English language which includes ideological questions around the role of linguistic imperialism (Canagarajah, 1999), and linguicide (Hassanpour, 2000; Van Dijk, 2000) and racialized practices that undergird the hierarchical power (native/non-native; standard/nonstandard). (p. 168)

Though we conducted needs assessments and listened deeply to the students' goals, we fell short in our assessment and feedback practices that continued to be influenced by American white middle-class linguistic norms, the demographic makeup of most of the teacher candidates who worked on this project.

In a more recent course focused on tutoring refugee-background students, my TESOL teacher candidates noted the lack of sensitivity for refugee-background students in the curriculum observed at the local high schools in the area. For example, one teacher candidate recounted an experience where his tutee shared that she hated English class because the focus was on grammar and spelling and not on her ideas. Some assignments on freedom of speech and freedom of religion also proved to be uncomfortable for some of the refugee-background students. Similar to the experiences of many minoritized students in the classroom, refugee-background students are also often tokenized and called upon to represent the refugee experience in the classroom. This became taxing as they expressed that the recollection of these experiences made them relive the pain they had undergone. We learned that the pedagogical decisions shared in the examples above risked retraumatizing these students.

Textbooks are another critical area. Though publishers have begun to recognize the centering of whiteness in their language textbooks, I continue to have students engage in textbook analysis. For example, in an assignment for our TESOL teacher candidates, they were asked to analyze English language textbooks and audio and video materials from their observation sites. Our candidates found that much of the language, accent, images, and models of speech were characterized by whiteness and American cultural values. One example included a section on yard sales, where my international teacher candidates were appalled to learn that garage sales and yard sales were common in America. They could not understand how people could put their personal belongings out for sale. In another example, there was a white American father carrying a baby on his back and cooking a meal. A Japanese student commented that this image was not very common in Japan, where men were often seen in the role as the head of the households and the women were seen as the primary caretakers of children. It is important to note that the analyses of these textbooks generated wonderful conversations around cultural norms and shifts. As English language teachers, consciousness raising exercises such as these help to engage students in dialogical discussions where they learn about other cultures and reflect on their own cultural values not as norms, but as one of many cultural conceptualizations.

In addition to textbook analysis, the teacher candidates reviewed English language textbook authors and publishers and found that most books used in their practicum settings were from the United Kingdom and the United States (e.g., Macmillan, Pearson, Cambridge, Oxford, Heinle & Heinle). In newer textbooks that have adopted an English as an International Language framework, multiple models of English speakers from a variety of different linguistic backgrounds are featured. However, the notion of variety or vernacular presupposes a standard, which again defaults to the English language associated with whiteness. In order to bring in representation of English users worldwide, Peden (2018) suggests that English language teachers curate classroom readings and materials to reflect the indigenous scholars of the land "representing their linguistic repertoires and cultures" (Kalyanpur et al., forthcoming). As the field moves toward valuing multilingualism and plurilingualism through translanguaging and translingual practices, it is also important to question whether it is for the right reasons: Are student assets centered, or is the valuing done to promote the neoliberal agenda, which results in the commodification of the linguistic repertoires of certain languages for economic benefit?

Conclusion

This critical reflection essay provides insights on the ways I have navigated coloniality as an English language teacher and teacher educator in our field. As a woman of color who has worked as an English language teacher and language teacher educator in a variety of different contexts, settings, and roles, I witnessed firsthand how anti-racism work pushes the pendulum forward, but the hegemonic force makes continual attempts to pull it back to the center until systems stabilize once again. This reflection shares ways to continue to push the pendulum forward, no matter the resistance, through transforming our pedagogies and practices and those of others in our care. I have learned that this work of transformation requires a deep sense of humility, curiosity, compassion, patience, and persistence so as to continue to move towards elevating humanity into a new kind of consciousness. This work is never done. We must work together and continue to engage in discourse. We must challenge one another to delve deeper into interrogating our policies, pedagogies, and practices so that we can continue to slowly unearth and transform the field that is, and remains to be, very much entrenched in the remnants of coloniality.

Author

Sarina Chugani Molina is the Associate Dean and an Associate Professor at the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. Her research interest focuses on critical language teaching, the intersection of language, race, and culture, and transnational identities in the field of English language education.

References

Alim, H. S., & Smitherman, G. (2012). *Articulate while Black: Barack Obama, language, and race in the US*. Oxford University Press.

Baker-Bell, A. (2017). I can switch my language, but I can't switch my skin: What teachers must understand about linguistic racism. In E. Moore Jr., A. Michael, and M. W. Penick-Parks (Eds.), *The guide for white women who teach black boys: Understanding, connecting, respecting* (pp. 97-107). Corwin.

Canagarajah, S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Canagarajah, S. (2013a). *Literacy as translingual practice: Between communities and classrooms*. Routledge.

Canagarajah, S. (2013b). *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. Routledge.

Canagarajah, S. (2018). Transnationalism and translingualism: How they are connected. In Q. You (Ed.), *Transnational writing education: Theory, history, and practice* (pp. 41-60). Routledge.

Chang, H. (2007). Autoethnography: Raising cultural consciousness of self and others. In G. Walford (Ed.), *Methodological developments in ethnography*: *Studies in educational ethnography* (pp. 207–222). Elsevier.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersections of race and sex: A black feminist critique of anti-discrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*(1), 139–167.

Dei, G. J. S. & Jaimungal, C. (2018). Indigeneity and decolonial resistance: Alternatives to colonial thinking and practice. Myers Education Press.

Dixson, A. D. & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 7–27.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory.* New York University Press.

Drago-Severson, E. & Blum-DeStefano, J. (2016). *Tell me so I can hear you: A developmental approach to feedback for educators.* Harvard Education Press.

Flores, N. & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(2), 149–171.

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, *106*(8),1707–1791.

Hassanpour, A. (2000). The politics of a-political linguistics: Linguists and linguicide. In R. Phillipson (Ed.), *Rights to language: Equity, power, and education* (pp. 33–39). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410605603

Jain, R. (2014). Global Englishes, translinguistic identities, and translingual practices in a community college ESL classroom: A practitioner researcher reports. *TESOL Journal*, *5*(3), 490–522.

Kachru, B. B. (1988). The spread of English and sacred linguistic cows. In P. H. Lowenberg (Ed.), *Language spread and language policy: Issues, implications and case studies* (pp. 207-228.). Georgetown University Press.

Kalyanpur, M., Boruah, P., Molina, S. C., & Shenoy, S. (forthcoming). *English language education and education for all: Social inequality and schooling challenges in the Indian context.* Routledge.

Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development.* Harvard University Press.

Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life.* Harvard University Press.

Kendi, I. (2019). *How to be an antiracist.* Random House.

Kohli, R., & Solórzano, D. G. (2012). Teachers, please learn our names!: Racial microaggressions and the K-12 classroom. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 15*(4), 441–462. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.674026

Kubota, R. (2016). A critical examination of common beliefs about language teaching: From research insights to professional engagement. In Y. N. Leung (Ed.), *Epoch making in English language teaching and learning* (pp. 348–365). English Teachers Association Republic of China (ETA-ROC).

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate W. F., IV (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record, 97*(1), 47–68.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies, 2*(2/3), 240–270.

McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School, 49*(2), 31–36.

Medrut, F. (2022). *65 great Rumi quotes to give you a more positive outlook on life.* Goalcast. https://www.goalcast.com/rumi-quotes/

Mignolo, W. (2013). Geopolitics of sensing and knowing: On (de)coloniality, border thinking, and epistemic disobedience. *Confero, 1*(1), 129–150. http://doi.org/10.3384/confero.2001-4562.13v1i1129

Molina, S. C. (2020). '*I'm from foreign*': Reconstructing transnational identity and positionality as an ESOL educator. In S. Canagarajah, B. Yazan, & R. Jain (Eds.), *Transnational identities, pedagogies, and practices in English language teaching: Critical inquiries from diverse practitioners*. Multilingual Matters.

Molina, S. C. (2021a). Creating authentic contexts for transnational language learning and teaching in TESOL teacher education: Online ELT for Kenyan youth. In S. Anwaruddin & O. B. Barnawi (Eds.), *TESOL Teacher education for a transnational world.* Routledge.

Molina, S. C. (2021b). Growing emerging researchers in a TESOL teacher education program: Implications for feedback practice. *CATESOL Journal, 32* (1), 145–159.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 132–141.

Motha, S. (2014). *Race, empire, and English language teaching: Creating responsible and ethical anti-racist practice*. Teachers College Press.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 85–100.

Peden, J. (2018). Decolonizing the geography classroom: A call to action for educators to reimagine pedagogy of place. In G. J. Sefa Dei & C. Jaimungal (Eds.), *Indigeneity and decolonial resistance: Alternative to colonial thinking and practice* (pp. 77-94). Myers Education Press.

Solorzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 24* (2), 5–19.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Colonization, and Society, 1*(1), 1–40.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2000). New(s) racism: A discourse analytical approach. In S. Cottle (Ed.), *Ethnic minorities and the media* (pp. 33–49). Open University Press. https://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.203737

Wilkerson, I. (2020). *Caste: The origins of our discontents.* Penguin Random House.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69–91.