

INDELIBLE COLONIALITY AND EMERGENT DECOLONIALITY IN COLOMBIAN-AUTHORED EFL TEXTBOOKS: A CRITICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

COLONIALIDAD INDELEBLE Y DECOLONIALIDAD EMERGENTE EN LIBROS DE TEXTO DE EFL DE AUTORÍA COLOMBIANA: UN ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO DE CONTENIDO

COLONIALIDADE INDELÉVEL E DECOLONIALIDADE EMERGENTE NOS LIVROS ESCOLARES DE ENSINO DE INGLÊS LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA DE AUTORES COLOMBIANOS: UMA ANÁLISE CRÍTICA DO CONTEÚDO

COLONIALITÉ INDELÉBILE ET DECOLONIALITÉ ÉMERGENTE DANS DES MANUELS SCOLAIRES D'ANGLAIS LANGUE ÉTRANGÈRE PAR DES AUTEURS COLOMBIENS : UNE ANALYSE CRITIQUE DU CONTENU

Astrid Núñez Pardo

Full Professor and associate researcher, Universidad Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia.
astrid.nunez@uexternado.edu.co
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6176-4520>

ABSTRACT

The use of Colombian-authored EFL textbooks as subalternation instruments, the instrumentalization of grammar and foreign methodologies, and the imperialism of a profit-driven publishing industry perpetuate colonial links. This article reports a critical content analysis of six Colombian-authored EFL textbooks from local and foreign publishers. It was framed within a sociocritical paradigm, which included interviews with four authors, six teachers, and two editors. Findings reveal three triads of decolonial criteria: (a) The triad of ontological criteria unsettles the reproduction of foreign beliefs, behaviours, values, and ideologies; (b) the triad of epistemological criteria subverts North and West dominant knowledge and culture, and (c) the triad of power criteria withstands globalised and neoliberal discourses imposed through teaching methods, curricula, materials, testing, training, and standardised English varieties. The findings also indicate that there are still colonial traces in the representation of gender, races, sexual orientations, capacities, and social classes. Thus, developing EFL materials from a decolonial perspective contests the commercial, standardised, and colonised textbooks to build contextualised and decolonised EFL materials otherwise that are sensitive to cultural diversity. This academic endeavour exhorts teachers to assume a critical stance towards EFL materials content, learning activities and strategies, underpinning language pedagogies, iconography, language policy, and assessment practices, and to exert their agency to contest hegemony and recreate situated EFL pedagogical practices.

Keywords: coloniality; critical interculturality; decoloniality; EFL materials otherwise; EFL textbooks.

702



Received: 2022-03-08 / Accepted: 2022-06-29 / Published: 2022-09-15

<https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v27n3a07>

Editors: Carmen Helena Guerrero Nieto, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia; Clarissa Menezes Jordão, Universidade Federal de Paraná, Curitiba, Brazil; Gabriela Veronelli, Center for Global Studies and the Humanities, Binghamton University, New York, United States.

Copyright, Universidad de Antioquia, 2022. This is an open access article, distributed in compliance with the terms of the Creative Commons license BY-NC-SA 4.0 International.



Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura

MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA, VOL. 27 ISSUE 3 (SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER, 2022), PP. 702-724, ISSN 0123-3432

www.udea.edu.co/ikala

RESUMEN

La explotación de los libros de texto de inglés de autores colombianos como instrumentos de subalternización, la instrumentalización de la gramática y los métodos foráneos, y el imperialismo de una industria editorial regida por intereses comerciales perpetúan las relaciones coloniales. Este artículo presenta un análisis de contenido crítico de seis libros de texto de ILE de autoría colombiana para editoriales locales y extranjeras. Se enmarcó en un paradigma sociocrítico e incluyó entrevistas con cuatro autores, seis profesores y dos editores. Los resultados revelan tres triadas de criterios decoloniales: a) la triada de criterios ontológicos desafía la reproducción de creencias, comportamientos, valores e ideologías foráneas; b) la triada de criterios epistemológicos subvierte los saberes y culturas dominantes del Norte y de Occidente, y c) la triada del poder resiste el discurso global y neoliberal impuesto mediante los métodos, el currículo, los materiales, las pruebas estandarizadas, las capacitaciones y las variedades estandarizadas de inglés. Los resultados también muestran la persistencia de huellas coloniales en las representaciones del género, las razas, las orientaciones sexuales, las capacidades y las clases sociales. La creación de materiales de ILE desde una perspectiva crítica confronta los libros de texto comerciales, estandarizados y, por lo tanto, colonizados, para construir materiales de ILE contextualizados y descolonizados otros que sean sensibles a la diversidad cultural. Esta empresa académica exhorta a maestros y a estudiantes a asumir una postura crítica frente a los materiales de inglés, su contenido, sus actividades y estrategias de aprendizaje, sus metodologías subyacentes, su iconografía, la política lingüística y las prácticas de evaluación, y a que ejerzan su agencia a fin de desafiar la hegemonía y de recrear prácticas pedagógicas situadas de ILE.

Palabras clave: colonialidad; interculturalidad crítica; decolonialidad; materiales didácticos de ILE otros; manuales de ILE.

703

RESUMO

O uso de livros escolares em inglês por autores colombianos como instrumentos de subalternização, a instrumentalização da gramática e dos métodos estrangeiros e o imperialismo de uma indústria editorial de orientação comercial perpetuam as relações coloniais. Este artigo apresenta uma análise crítica de conteúdo de seis livros-texto de inglês língua estrangeira de autoria colombiana para editoras locais e estrangeiras. Foi enquadrado dentro de um paradigma sócio-crítico e incluiu entrevistas com quatro autores, seis professores e duas editoras. Os resultados revelam três tríades de critérios decoloniais: a) a tríade de critérios ontológicos desafia a reprodução de crenças, comportamentos, valores e ideologias estrangeiras; b) a tríade de critérios epistemológicos subverte os conhecimentos e culturas dominantes do Norte e do Ocidente; e c) a tríade de poder resiste ao discurso global e neoliberal imposto através de métodos, currículo, materiais, testes padronizados, treinamento e variedades padronizadas de inglês. A análise também mostra a persistência de traços coloniais nas representações de gênero, raça, orientação sexual, habilidade e classe. A criação de materiais de inglês língua estrangeira a partir de uma perspectiva crítica confronta livros de texto comerciais, padronizados e, portanto, colonizados, a fim de construir materiais de ensino do inglês contextualizados e decolonizados que sejam sensíveis à diversidade cultural. Este empreendimento acadêmico insta professores e alunos a tomarem uma posição crítica em relação aos materiais em inglês, seu conteúdo, atividades e estratégias de aprendizagem, metodologias subjacentes, iconografia, política linguística e práticas de avaliação, e a exercer sua agência a fim de desafiar a hegemonia e recriar práticas pedagógicas situadas no ensino do inglês.

Palavras-chave: colonialidade; interculturalidade crítica; decolonialidade; materiais didáticos de ILE *otherwise*; livros didáticos de ensino de inglês.

RÉSUMÉ

L'utilisation des manuels d'anglais par les auteurs colombiens en tant qu'instruments de subalternisation, l'instrumentalisation de la grammaire et des méthodes étrangères, et l'impérialisme d'une industrie de l'édition à vocation commerciale perpétuent les relations coloniales. Cet article présente une analyse critique du contenu de six manuels d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) écrits par des Colombiens pour des éditeurs locaux et étrangers. Elle s'inscrit dans un paradigme socio-critique et comprend des entretiens avec quatre auteurs, six enseignants et deux éditeurs. Les résultats révèlent trois triades de critères décoloniaux : a) la triade des critères ontologiques remet en question la reproduction des croyances, des comportements, des valeurs et des idéologies étrangers ; b) la triade des critères épistémologiques subvertit les connaissances et les cultures dominantes du Nord et de l'Ouest ; et c) la triade du pouvoir résiste au discours global et néolibéral imposé par les méthodes, les programmes d'études, les matériaux, les tests standardisés, la formation et les variétés standardisées d'anglais. L'analyse montre également la persistance de traces coloniales dans les représentations du genre, de la race, de l'orientation sexuelle, des capacités et de la classe. La création de matériels d'apprentissage d'ALE dans une perspective critique confronte les manuels commerciaux, standardisés et donc colonisés, afin de construire des matériels d'apprentissage contextualisés et décolonisés, sensibles à la diversité culturelle. Cette entreprise académique incite les enseignants et les étudiants à adopter une position critique à l'égard des matériels d'anglais, de leur contenu, des activités et stratégies d'apprentissage, des méthodologies sous-jacentes, de l'iconographie, de la politique linguistique et des pratiques d'évaluation, et à exercer leur pouvoir afin de remettre en question l'hégémonie et de recréer des pratiques pédagogiques d'ALE situées.

Mots-clés : colonialité ; interculturalité critique ; décolonialité ; matériaux didactiques d'ALE *otherwise* ; manuels d'ALE.

Introduction

It is well known that commercial EFL textbooks have prevailed as the main resource for English teaching and learning. However, these resources have overlooked the changing and diverse complexity of historic, socio-cultural, political, economic, educational, and aesthetic realities and concerns of local contexts. For instance, their potential to promote comprehension of cultural diversity is arguable. In this framework, this study analyses instrumental, homogenised, decontextualised, and colonised EFL textbooks regarding the dimensions of being, knowledge, and power, with the supremacy of global culture. In this sense, it embraces desirable, contextualised, and decolonised EFL materials otherwise sensitive to cultural diversity.

The decolonial turn proposes a *thought otherwise* (*un pensamiento otro*) also known as a *border thought* (*pensamiento fronterizo*). This oppositional thought is not simply based on recognition or inclusion, but rather centred on a socio-historical structural transformation. For the context of this paper, this also implies teachers otherwise, students otherwise, and EFL materials otherwise. These latter are conceived from a reflective, critical, and emancipating stance to respond to diverse social dynamics and cultural patterns of local contexts where these resources are used to teach and learn English. They also relate to other cultural experiences of the world.

By the same token, curriculum, materials, assessment, language policy, and teaching and practices oriented by critical interculturality are vital for EFL and ESL teaching and learning. Thence, it is crucial to reassess them as “socio-cultural, pedagogical, didactic, and cognitive mediations that facilitate linguistic and cultural interactions” (Núñez-Pardo, 2020a, p. 114). These mediations have the potential to educate critical and interculturally aware citizens and nurture disruptive mindsets able to transform complex realities. In this vein, this article attempts to encourage English teachers to challenge the belief that they are consumers

of knowledge; instead, they should be seen as critical, political, knowledgeable, and transformative subjects (Freire, 1971; Giroux et al., 1988; Quiceno, 2003) who can add to the construction of knowledge. Said knowledge should respond to daily local community experiences and concerns. Contextualization allows us to rethink EFL materials from alternative ways of conceiving and representing the world vis-a-vis the dimensions of being, knowledge, and power. In this train of thought, the study unveils criteria inspired by the decolonial turn and grounded on critical interculturality as an alternative to guide the development of EFL materials otherwise. These criteria defy the pervasive decontextualization of standardised EFL materials, allow English teachers to resist mainstream materials development, and endorse teachers’ agency for knowledge construction.

The origins of this research trace back to several studies. Current research on EFL textbooks proves latent tensions and tendencies in national and international scenarios. A review of related studies (Núñez-Pardo, 2018a) revealed that textbooks present asymmetrical and hierarchised cultures with the predominance of Anglo-Saxon ones and the absence of experiential culture (Nguyen, 2015). Textbooks also show the prevalence of superficial culture at the expense of deep culture (Gómez, 2015), Eurocentric knowledge in detriment of local one (Aicega, 2007), stereotyped gender representations (Lee, 2014), and children as passive subjects without titularity of their rights (Herrera, 2012). Finally, literacy is regarded as a localised socio-cultural practice (Zhang, 2017). Nonetheless, research analysing EFL textbooks from a critical interculturality perspective is scarce and continues to incite tensions and controversy.

The current study also emerged from the author’s experience as a materials developer and teacher educator and researcher. As an EFL materials developer working for the local publishing industry for more than a decade, she has contributed to the production of commercial and standardised EFL textbooks. As a teacher educator and researcher,

she has oriented in-service EFL teachers in their postgraduate studies; she has also contributed to the development of otherwise institutional materials that respond to the local realities of their contexts of use and production.

This study problematised the *coloniality of being, coloniality of knowledge, and coloniality of power* in EFL textbooks. Coloniality of being denotes the construction or image of the cultural Other (Maldonado-Torres, 2008; Quijano, 2000; Walsh, 2010). Coloniality of knowledge regards European epistemes as the absolute origin of knowledge, disregarding and marginalising other forms of knowledges (Restrepo-Rojas 2010; Walsh, 2010). Coloniality of power is rooted in capitalist globalisation and materialised in multinational organisations (Quijano, 2014; Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992) that subordinate the individuals of the periphery (Castro-Gómez, 2007). Then, how do these sorts of coloniality permeate the textbooks in question?

706

First, textbooks are sub-alternation instruments with the preponderance of the hegemonic ideology of the native speaker (Faez, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Viáfara, 2016). It shows teachers as consumers of knowledge without voice and action, thus indicating coloniality of being. Second, textbooks promote language instrumentalisation, decontextualised cultural content, and uncritical use of foreign methodologies (Canagarajah, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Núñez-Pardo, 2020a; Phillipson, 2008). As ratified by Soto-Molina and Méndez's (2020) documentary analysis, the content of textbooks deals with "high levels of alienation burden, superficial cultural components and instrumentation to the submissive person who favours the dominant culture of English and does not offer possibilities to embrace interculturality in ELF teaching contexts" (p. 11). This converts teachers into technicians and reproducers of Eurocentric knowledge, demonstrating coloniality of knowledge. Third, the imperialism of a commercially oriented publishing industry is supported by a

bilingual policy that associates English with work, productivity, globalisation, and neoliberalism (González, 2012; Guerrero-Nieto & Quintero-Polo, 2021; Miranda & Valencia-Giraldo, 2019; Usma, 2009a). This condition makes teachers competitive and oppressed actors, suggesting coloniality of power. In short, the content of EFL textbooks replicates and perpetuates ways of being, knowing, and exerting power that conceal, subdue, or misrepresent the plurality of socio-cultural realities of local contexts. Hence, EFL textbooks play a key role in disseminating colonialist and neoliberal agendas that omit or distort societal differences.

This documentary research was guided by the main research question: What ontological, epistemological, and power criteria grounded on critical interculturality as a decolonial alternative orient the development of the English textbook to overcome its decontextualisation from the voices of local authors, teachers, and editors? The analysis was also led by the following three subsidiary research questions: (a) What traces of coloniality are observed in the content of readings, their iconography, and learning activities proposed in the most utilised English textbooks in the Colombian context during the period 2004-2016? (b) What possible transformations have been experienced by the content of readings, their iconography, and learning activities proposed in the most utilised English textbooks in the Colombian context during the period 2004-2016?

Theoretical Foundations

School textbooks have played a central role in language teaching and learning throughout history. These also have offered a prolific field for analysing their philosophical dimension (Grupo Eleuterio Quintanilla, 1996). In this light, textbooks deserve critical examination to challenge their industrial development and thus encourage teachers and students to fight globally distributed biases. In doing so, research on textbooks comprises their *evaluation* and *analysis*. The former focuses on accurately

determining whether a set of parameters is fulfilled or not in textbooks to recommend alternatives for their improvement (Littlejohn, 2012). This process can be done before, during, or after their use. In turn, analysis of textbooks centres on recognising latent messages present in their content to make inductive inferences (Krippendorff, 2004), within a socio-cultural, geographic, and historic context. This study opted for the critical content analysis of textbooks to uncover their decontextualisation and propose disruptive ways of developing EFL materials.

Concerning the theoretical foundations of the study, school textbooks conceived as geographically, historically, culturally, and politically situated artefacts (Choppin, 2001; Escolano, 2012) were explored. Second, textbooks were also viewed as ideological resources that create stereotypes and disseminate North and Western cultures (Apple, 1992). Third, textbooks were understood as tools for curricular support (Moya, 2008). Fourth, they were considered commercial and profitable products (Martínez, 2008). All in all, these views substantiate the fact that textbooks are fruitful objects of study prone to be further explored to contest their decontextualisation, uniformity, and marketisation.

EFL textbooks, which were born in the 1830s (Borre, 1996), have been conceptualised in four main categories. These are indispensable artefacts for the teaching of English (Davcheva & Sercu, 2005). Moreover, they are also socio-cultural mediators shaped by the changes in *zeitgeist* (Littlejohn, 2012; Rico, 2012). Furthermore, EFL textbooks are propagators of racial, gender, and class colonial bias and knowledge-based ideologies (Granda, 2004; Gray, 2013; Núñez-Pardo, 2018a). Finally, they are mediations whose socio-cultural, pedagogical, didactic, and cognitive nature fosters both teaching and learning processes and teachers' and students' critical social and political awareness and transformation. The foregoing categories offer a look at the range of connotations EFL textbooks encompass and inform this study regarding their adaptability, complexity, and bias. Likewise, they ratify the need to critically analyse

these artefacts in search of their contextualisation and, thus, their decolonisation. Having discussed EFL textbooks as the first theoretical foundation of this research, their relation to critical interculturality is argued next.

Critical interculturality is a decolonial alternative that contributes to negotiating socio-cultural diversity and the conciliation of the difference between the local and the foreign (Walsh, 2010; Tubino, 2005). It aims at tracing European colonialism to stop perpetuating and naturalising subordinated socio-cultural relations. In this vein, critical interculturality contests Eurocentric visions of knowledge and the imperialism of the commercial publishing industry of textbooks since they conceal and misrepresent the multiplicity of socio-cultural realities of local contexts. The decolonial turn, as a shift in knowledge construction (Maldonado-Torres, 2008) implying epistemic diversity (Grosfoguel, 2007), impels "emancipating critical thinking, reducing Eurocentric-knowledge dependence, and resisting the supremacy of political and socio-economic agendas that legitimate the interests of the dominant social order" (Núñez-Pardo, 2018b, p. 3). Accordingly, critical interculturality and the decolonial turns advocate for more symmetric and diverse sociocultural representations and relationships in EFL materials, enabling individuals' critical socio-cultural and political awareness, transformation, and construction of local knowledge.

Method

This documentary research comprehended EFL textbooks as objects of study and aimed to critically scrutinise them based on their socio-cultural context through the qualitative content analysis method. This is because such content analysis seeks to understand the hidden messages present in written texts (Krippendorff, 2004). Likewise, this choice was made since, in this avant-garde framework of empirical approximation, quantification is not a definite criterion to analyse content (Krippendorff, 2004). All in all, the critical content analysis proposed departed from the

qualitative nature of texts and privileged verbal and descriptive procedures that separate it from a quantifying perspective.

By the same token, the study was framed within the qualitative approach as it fostered the emergence of alternative epistemologies from subaltern subjects and loci. It also rescued subjectivity to make sense of complex human phenomena in social interaction (Sandoval, 1996). Furthermore, the socio-critical paradigm informed this research. This paradigm reclaims subjectivities understood as individuals' perceptions, opinions, arguments, and discourses, which in interaction with others, lead the researcher to acknowledge the social construction of knowledge. In this vein, this paradigm paved the path for this study to advocate interpretation and emancipation to make sense of reality (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

Regarding methodological strategies, the unit of analysis was English textbooks. Six EFL textbooks made up the sampling unit; the paragraph was the recording unit; 86 passages and their reading comprehension activities and accompanying iconography constituted the unit of context. Additionally, comprehension matrices for interpretation and critical analysis of the content of readings were designed.

Besides, since qualitative content analysts contemplate the voices of readers, critics, and users of the texts (Krippendorff, 2004), the perceptions of Colombian English teachers, authors, and editors were brought up to enrich the analysis. Thus, they used these textbooks in their English classes in secondary state-funded schools, authored them, or performed the role of editors in both a local and a foreign publishing house. Their insights were gathered through a focus group with six Colombian English teachers and in-depth interviews with four Colombian authors and two editors; all of them signed the informed consent to participate in the study. For the focus group, the participant teachers expressed themselves freely without much intervention from the moderator since the

interest was to collect as much information as possible. Likewise, the qualitative and dialogic nature of in-depth interviews allowed for building the experience of the participants authors and editors in a horizontal relationship (Robles, 2011). These genuine encounters granted a conjoint construction of the meaning participants attributed to the cultural content of readings, comprehension activities, and accompanying iconography, in tandem with the researcher's interpretation. Finally, theory triangulation was employed, confronting the emergent categories with existing theory.

Findings

The findings below are presented in relation to the research questions posed. The first question addressed the formulation of a set of criteria to disrupt the coloniality found in the EFL textbooks.

The critical analysis revealed three triads of decolonial criteria that respond the main research question of this study (see the Introduction). They stemmed from the perspective of critical interculturality as a pedagogical alternative to unsettle the current representations in EFL textbooks that were found during the process of analysing their content. The subsidiary questions aimed at identifying those current representations in EFL textbooks that are still engaged in colonial views, and also to observe whether there were elements of decoloniality in the textbooks analysed. Therefore, the categories of indelible coloniality traces and emergent decoloniality signs in EFL textbooks answered these questions (Table 1).

The three triads of decolonial criteria emerged from the researcher's interpretation and analysis of the meaning that Colombian teachers, authors, and editors attribute to the dimensions of being, knowledge, and power present in the textbooks they use, write, or edit. Thus, the nine criteria derived from the data obtained from the voices of the participants and the author's experience as a materials developer and teacher educator who mentors in-service EFL teachers' pedagogical interventions for their studies.

Table 1 Research Categories

Research question	Research objectives	Categories	Subcategories	Criteria
What ontological, epistemological, and power criteria grounded on critical interculturality as a decolonial alternative orient the development of the English textbook to overcome its decontextualization from the voices of local authors, teachers, and editors?	To unveil some ontological, epistemological, and power criteria, based on critical interculturality, as a decolonial alternative, that guide the development of the English textbook otherwise to overcome its decontextualization based on the voices of Colombian authors and editors.	Decolonial criteria	Ontological dimension	<p>Students' life experiences regarding deep culture of human beings constitute the content of contextualised materials otherwise in dialogue with other experiences of the pluricultural universe, which can be presented in multimodal texts of diverse genres.</p> <p>Students' life projects as unique subjects within their context, with capacities and particular ways of being, feeling, dreaming, doing, acting, and inhabiting construct shared visions to generate other possible worlds.</p> <p>The iconography of subjects, the school context, and communities in their local setting allows for inclusion, recognition, identity, cohesion, and generation of bonds.</p>
			Epistemological dimension	<p>Empowerment of teachers and students fosters decision-making about curricular and contextualised materials otherwise.</p> <p>Learning activities involve interpreting, comparing, contrasting, discerning, reflecting, discussing, and transforming human realities and require the conscious use of learning strategies and technological resources.</p> <p>The generation of context-sensitive methodologies rooted in critical pedagogies responds to local realities where English is taught and learnt with contextualised materials otherwise and with the Others to foster reflective, meaningful, and constructive learning settings.</p>
			Power dimension	<p>Collective action favours an educational policy that is agreed with the subjects directly involved in the processes of teaching and learning (teachers and students).</p> <p>The creation contextualised materials otherwise by teachers and students as citizens with social and political awareness contributes to the struggle for a critical and democratic and freedom-based education.</p> <p>The institutionalisation of contextualised EFL materials otherwise supports teachers' and students' sense of belonging, commitment, and personal and professional growth.</p>

Table 1 Research Categories (Cont.)

Research question	Research objectives	Categories	Subcategories	Criteria
<p>What traces of <i>coloniality</i> are observed in the content of readings, their iconography, and learning activities proposed in the most utilised English textbooks in the Colombian context during the period 2004-2016?</p>	<p>To characterize the contents in the reading passages, comprehension activities and the iconography of the most utilised textbooks in the Colombian context during the period 2004-2016 to identify traces of coloniality.</p>	<p>Indelible coloniality traces</p>	<p>Coloniality of being Coloniality of knowledge</p>	<p>Uneven gender representation. Colonial vision of gender and sexual diversity. Ethnic hierarchy. Supremacy of discriminating and oppressing ableism. Social class at the core of marginalisation, inequality, submission, and underestimation of the human being from the Epistemological South. Perpetuation of cultural detachment and bias, invisibility of diverse local cultural content, and dissemination of Anglo-Saxon values and ideologies. Construction of the reader as an object focused on bare decoding and literal reading of predetermined knowledge, not as a subject of critical multiliteracy and multimodal processes. Adopting the bilingual global policy and discourse. Global features of textbooks.</p>
<p>What possible transformations have been experienced by the content of readings, their iconography, and learning activities proposed in the most utilised English textbooks in the Colombian context during the period 2004-2016?</p>	<p>To identify the transformations in the reading passages, comprehension activities and iconography of the books of English texts most utilised in the Colombian context during the period 2004-2016 to determine aspects related to decoloniality.</p>	<p>Emergent coloniality signs</p>	<p>Relational interculturality</p>	<p>Teaching English for citizens' academic quality, professional development, and economic success. Colombian authored English textbooks under the consulting services of a foreign publishing house.</p>

* These criteria were the result of a study entitled "Decolonizar el libro de texto de inglés: una apuesta desde la interculturalidad crítica" (Núñez-Pardo, 2020b), carried out within the doctoral programme in Sciences of Education at Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC).

Decolonial Criteria

The *ontological criteria* challenge the hegemonic reproduction of beliefs, behaviours, values, and ideologies. In doing so, there exist three possibilities. First, there is a need for developing EFL materials that advocate for an ethical, political, and community project of social transformation in vulnerable local contexts in which English is learnt and taught with these socio-cultural mediations. This entails ridding them off the idealised aspirational context commonly shown in global textbooks. Second, generating reflection spaces for the construction of students' life projects could boost assertive decision-making related to their future positioning in society and contributes to emancipatory education. Third, it is important to provide EFL materials as mediations that regard iconographic representation of subjects in their local context through constant dialogue with the pluricultural universe. This is because iconography in EFL materials takes part in the visual and spatial design of texts, supporting their attributes of being coherent, understandable, and corresponding (Levin & Mayer, 1993).

The *epistemological criteria* disrupt futile content and hegemonic cultural representations of a peaceful world, fostering the construction of knowledge from and out of our vulnerable local communities. Three procedures could be implemented. The first one is to cast doubt on decontextualisation of knowledge. This is because it restrains the recovery of ancestral knowledge and obstructs the construction of local knowledge (Canagarajah, 2002; Giroux et al., 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Núñez-Pardo, 2020a, 2021), widening the gap between school, home, and community. In this vein, teachers need to articulate students' knowledge of their context in school curricula, materials, and pedagogical practices. Thus, reclaiming and positioning teachers and students as curriculum and materials producers generate discerning, meaningful, and transformative learning environments. Second, to unsettle the uncritical tradition that prevents students to think critically (Giroux,

2014), EFL materials need to include thought-provoking activities that cultivate students' critical thinking (Facione, 2011) and lead to alternatives that solve community problems. Third, hegemonic knowledge ought to be overcome through historic, geographic, political, and socio-cultural thought of the voiceless in periphery countries. For instance, critical pedagogies, which are emanated from social radical thinking and students' and teachers' experiential culture, challenge banking and oppressive education and disturb the reproduction and naturalisation of hegemonic materials and methodologies. Thereby, EFL materials development should be based on context-bound pedagogies (Apple, 2004; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Núñez-Pardo, 2020a, 2020b; Núñez-Pardo & Téllez-Téllez, 2021), fostering situated and constructive learning settings in search of cultural changes in local realities.

The *power criteria* contest the tendency of bilingualism policy to legitimise imperative global and neoliberal circulating discourses through standardised English varieties, teaching approaches, materials, testing, and training programmes (Block, 2017; Núñez-Pardo, 2020a; Phillipson, 2008, 2016; Usma, 2009a). In Colombia, the top-down bilingualism policy renders disparities (Cruz-Arcila, 2017; Usma, 2009b) and broadens the gap between the powerful and the powerless (Guerrero, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial to take three actions. First, educational initiatives should endorse a bottom-up approach to bilingual education policy (Levinson et al., 2009) that relies on the expertise of local teachers (Shohamy, 2009) and fosters the appropriation of a context-responsive policy. Second, emancipatory education ought to ask teachers and students to critically ponder, interpret, and interrogate their multifaceted individual subjectivities and the world around them. Third, to institutionalise contextualised and decolonised EFL materials otherwise, they should be culturally situated. At its core, contextualisation "destabilises mainstream ways of developing standardised, homogenised, decontextualised and meaningless materials" (Núñez-Pardo, 2019, p.19).

Accordingly, the localisation of EFL materials otherwise fosters students' free decision-making and recreation of their realities in search of a dignified and egalitarian life.

The aforementioned criteria aim to guide the construction of contextualised and decolonised EFL materials otherwise. To defy bias in global EFL textbooks and avoid introducing a local one, these decolonial criteria entail that critical interculturality seeks a dialogical relationship between received hegemonic knowledges and local knowledge.

The criteria draw on the *cultural circuit* (Du Gay et al., 1997) that is consistent with the colonialities of EFL textbooks as their cultural representations shape students' and teachers' construction of individual and collective identity. These representations are incorporated into the industrial production of global textbooks since, as claimed by Phillipson (2008), this production serves a worldwide linguistic market of a dominant language. Thence, EFL textbooks become consumption goods with exchange and use values related to an instrumental and hegemonic operationalisation of the ministerial regulation, encouraging economic interests of the editorial industry (Usma, 2009). This consumption is backed by ideological agendas of governments whose goal is to increase the dissemination of ideas (Gray, 2013) and consolidate EFL education as a profitable market. The criteria also build on Kumaravadivelu's (2003) post-method parameters of particularity (being sensitive to students and teachers' socio-cultural context), practicality (building theory through practice), and possibility (recognising students' and teachers' subjectivities).

This unsettling endeavour stems from a local initiative that deems English teachers as critical political subjects of knowledge and culture. In other words, teachers can use their voice and agency to transform their harsh realities in search of democratic education (Freire, 1971; Núñez-Pardo, 2020a). This initiative also conceives materials development as a reflective, theoretical, culturally and politically

situated, and transformative undertaking carried out by teachers *otherwise*¹ who produce their materials in association with students *otherwise* in local contexts. The outcomes of such a defiant process are contextualised, desirable, decolonised EFL materials otherwise aimed at educating political subjects who are critically aware of their own culture and others' and develop an understanding of cultural diversity. This implies a critical approach to developing EFL materials that considers the particularities of the rural and urban school, home, and community contexts, as spaces for the social construction of knowledge.

Having discussed the criteria, the next section presents the remaining categories of analysis that respond the subsidiary research questions.

Indelible Coloniality Traces

This category analyses the coloniality traces found in the textbooks, as posed in the first subsidiary research question. It encompasses three subcategories *coloniality of being*, *coloniality of knowledge*, and *coloniality of power* that are addressed respectively as follows. The first subcategory is evident in traditional representations of identity markers in content and iconography. It stereotypes and discriminates homogenising and concealing individual differences and maintaining asymmetry in human relations. Within it, five recurrent patterns were identified.

The first pattern comprises uneven gender representations with the predominance of male images (Guijarro, 2005; Porreca, 1984) as observed in the iconography and content of readings. However, regarding the iconographic aspect, teachers, authors, and editors asserted there is gender balance. Besides repeatedly referring to graphic gender evenness, they also mentioned the Williams sisters as female representations of leadership, which could result alien to

1 This expression refers to local teachers that defy conventional EFL textbooks, make curricular decisions, and develop their materials for their pedagogical settings.

Figure 1 Uneven Gender Representation



Source: *Teenagers New Generation 9* (pp. 31, 87).

the local users of these textbooks as they do not consider women from local contexts. This incongruent aspect is shown in the excerpts below.²

There is gender balance, the use of iconography shows people of ages, including children, adult women and men and mostly students (FG – T3).

There is a news report that describes the entire sports career of the Williams sisters who are professional tennis players and who are also of colour; they are black American (FG – A2).

We try to keep a graphic gender balance; we search for a balance of female and male genders [...] For instance, the Williams sisters appeared in one of the books (II – E1)

As opposed to what the participants expressed, the iconographic representation of readings mostly includes males of all ages as exemplified in the illustrations in Figure 1.

The second pattern shows the prevalence of a colonial binary vision of gender and sexual diversity that imposes heteronormativity. No procreative sex is stigmatised; emotions and human bodies are regulated, naturalising the colonial sexual difference that hides and condemns the diversity of sexual practices and orientations as they are deemed abject (Domínguez, 2016). This perpetuates the stigma of sexuality. The Other is condemned because they

do not fit reductionist binary standards, as though there was not a considerable LGBTQ+ community in our local context and our country in general. Teachers, authors, and editors corroborated that non-traditional sexual orientation is regarded as taboo. Thus, EFL textbooks examined evade these topics since they also target religious schools, where these themes generate resistance, according to what one of the editors expresses in the in-depth interview. This reductionist vision of gender and sexual orientation can be seen in these extracts:

The books do not show contemporary families made up of two men or two women as a parental nucleus (FG – T4).

In one of the readings, a homosexuality issue is presented in a superficial way. (FG – T2).

Sexual orientations are taboo, so we avoid them [...] Editors sustained that these textbooks are addressed to religious schools where these themes are not well received (FG – A4).

Authors included themes on sexual diversity; however, officials from the MEN asked us to withdraw content on sexual diversity because it could generate some sort of resistance from users [school communities that use the textbooks]. Including it would be like taking our own product off the market ourselves (II – E1).

In addition, the pictographic representation in readings maintains heterosexuality as the photographs in Figure 2 demonstrate.

The third pattern indicates the dominance of White population and ethnic hierarchy based on phenotype that governs the identity construction of those without European standards (Fanon, 1986; Marín, 2003; Mbembe, 2017). This supremacy exists

2 The excerpts were selected from the focus group (FG) conducted with teachers (T) as well as from in-depth interviews (II) held with authors (A) and the editors (E). All the excerpts were translated from Spanish into English by the author.

Figure 2 Colonial Vision of Gender and Sexual Diversity



Source: *English, Please, 1*, module 3 (pp. 84, 102).

because race is a socio-cultural construct resulting from naturalising and perpetuating historic, religious, and biological discriminating discourses that stigmatise and make ethnic diversity invisible. Since human beings share a common origin, biological races do not exist; then, they belong to the same genetic repertoire. Nonetheless, the analysed textbooks promote a racial construction of identity in which white ethnicity is ideal and thus, it is not questioned. Teachers, authors, and editors ratified the inclusion of people that fit the White American or European dominant cultural standards. Authors and editors also mentioned that publishing houses resort to stereotyped iconography offered by expensive image banks that present a hierarchy of models with an idealised physical appearance of White people for diverse societies. The excerpts below describe this:

There is no reference to the indigenous race. Instead, we see people with the standard of European countries or from the United States that are far away from our students' reality (FG – T2).

There is not a single image of Colombian people (FG – T1).

Almost everything in this textbook is American or British. It is quite linked to the editorial directions based on an available bank of images (FG – A2).

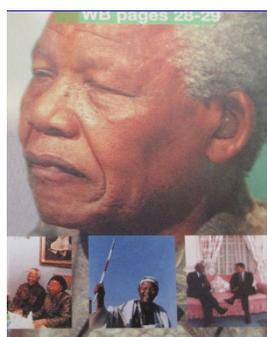
In general, images are very expensive; we use an American bank of images that are already stereotyped and hierarchised based on models of ideal aspect (II – E1).

The Black people included are famous, wealthy, successful, or emblematic figures; for instance, Will Smith and the Williams sisters, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and the like. The iconography displays people of privilege who do not experience the same racialisation as others may, as observed in Figure 3.

The fourth pattern entails the supremacy of discriminating and oppressing ableism that conceals people with disabilities, maintaining the binary category abled-disabled (Asch, 2001; Bogart & Dunn, 2019; Hahn, 1988). It is imperative to understand that context is what handicaps people, not the

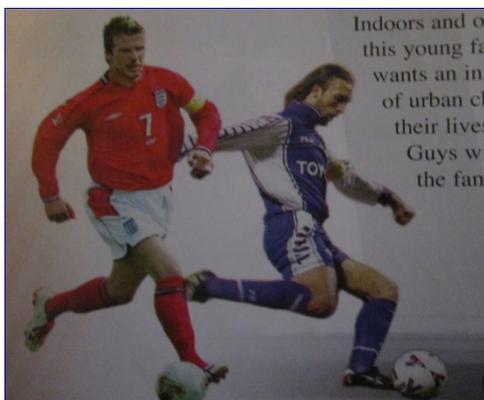
714

Figure 3 Ethnic Hierarchy



Source: (Left) *Teenagers New Generation 10* (p. 59). (Right) *Viewpoints 10* (pp. 14, 15, 40, 41).

Figure 4 Supremacy of Ableism



Source: (Left) *Teenagers New Generation 10* (p. 30). (Right) *Teenagers New Generation 11* (p. 73).

physical, cognitive, or mental variation they experience. Teachers, authors, and editors affirmed that the representation of diverse capacities is completely absent in the readings of the EFL textbooks they use. They also admitted that people with diverse capacities and their realities should be included. Ableism predominance can be observed in the following fragments:

These types of aspects are not represented in any of the book units (FG – T5).

In this book, one would not find people using crutches or a wheelchair; honestly, this population should be included, but they are not in these books (FG – A2).

Here we try to make it appear, although it does not really appear to the extent to which we would have liked (II – E2).

Likewise, the graphic representation of the readings maintains the binary category abled-disabled. The photographs show abled-bodied people that are healthy and strong like football players or cyclists, as portrayed in Figure 4.

The fifth pattern reveals that social class constitutes the core of marginalisation, inequality, submission, and underestimation of the human being from the Epistemological South (Santos, 2014; Fanon, 1986; Van Dijk, 1994). Teachers, authors, and editors contended that there are no explicit references to social class in the textbooks. Instead, they said that these show well-off people practicing

sophisticated sports that are not compatible with the experiences of the text users in the Colombian school communities. They also asserted that the content of these materials alludes to people with economic means to afford luxuries, which is quite distant from the purchasing power of local users in Colombia’s state-funded schools. These extracts account for this situation:

Exceptionally, this book presents the prototype of an African, but that person is not a common individual; on the contrary, the character represents someone successful and wealthy (FG – T1).

In general, they show people of affluent social classes (FG – T3).

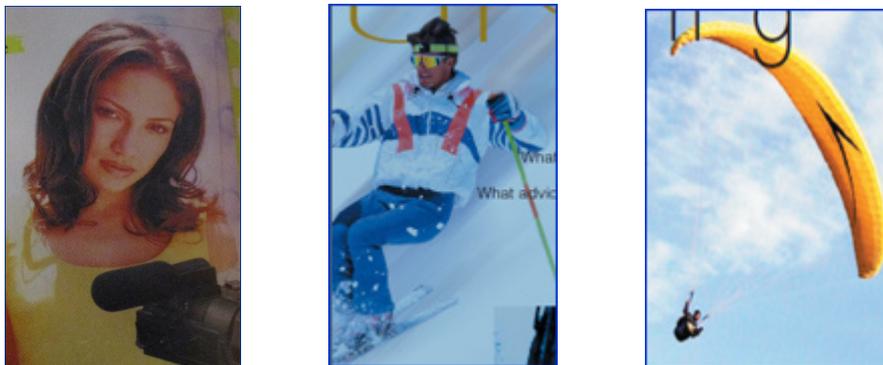
In this textbook, you will never see a poor person, or someone begging or asking for help in the streets. Instead, you will see people practicing horse riding, skiing, surfing, or rock climbing, which are not congruent with the students’ realities (FG – A2).

Social classes are not usually dealt with in images (II – E2).

Additionally, the iconography of the readings portrays this incongruent feature (see Figure 5).

The second subcategory (coloniality of knowledge) involves the persistence of intellectual, cognitive, and cultural European colonialism, cultural hegemony, and replication of Western and Northern predominant knowledge. This colonialism favours an aspirational view of a visible, admiring, and uniform culture. Three recurring patterns were recognised.

Figure 5 Representation of Upper Social Classes



Source: (Left) *Teenagers New Generation 10* (p. 30). (Right): *Teenagers New Generation 11* (pp. 65, 70).

716

The first pattern refers to the perpetuation of cultural detachment and bias, the invisibility of diverse local cultural content, and the dissemination of Anglo-Saxon values and ideologies (Dussel, 2007; Fanon, 1986; Granados-Beltrán, 2016; Núñez-Pardo, 2020b; Said, 1993; Phillipson, 2016). This means that cultural content and competence are based on hegemonic Western and Northern countries and their model of acculturation through the reproduction of Eurocentric knowledge as the unique source. As a result, ancestral knowledge like *círculos de palabra* [circles of words], *arrullos* [rocking babies], *alabaos* [dead praising], and *partear* [birthing] from the Colombian Pacific region seem unknown, exotic, and even magical to our population despite sharing the same territory. While teachers and authors remarked on topics from the North American, British, and Canadian stereotypical cultures, editors highlighted topics about Peru, Mexico, and Brazil due to their market impact. A salient feature is the absence of references to Colombia in both the readings and iconography. The subsequent excerpts depict biased cultural representations:

There are themes of the North American culture and some of the British (FG – T1).

Most of the topics are about foreign cultures: The Canadian, English, and North American cultures (FG – T3).

The Colombian culture is not represented in this textbook (GF– T5).

Besides the North American and British cultures, the Canadian culture is also represented (FG – A1).

Cultural content is an issue subject to the conditions and orientations that we, as authors, receive from the publishing house (FG –A2).

English teachers ask for textbooks that show students other world visions; for this reason, the local begins to prevail with content related to Peru, Mexico, and Brazil. It also responds to a market share (II – E2).

Decontextualised cultural content is mirrored in the iconography in Figure 6.

The second pattern encompasses the construction of the reader as an object (i.e., someone focused on bare decoding and literal reading of predetermined knowledge), not as a subject of critical multiliteracy and multimodal processes. Uncritical reading results from privileging descriptive or narrative texts that promote literal and intensive reading that leads to grammatical work. Plain decoding also derives from the reproduction of bottom-up and top-down reading comprehension approaches used in isolation and the omission of critical thinking-oriented activities, which hinders the possibility to develop high-order thinking skills (Apple, 2004; Canagarajah, 2002; Giroux et al., 1988; Gray, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2014; Rico, 2012). On the contrary, critical literacy processes should centre on textuality (attributes that make a text coherent and cohesive), intertextuality (the relationship with other texts produced previously), and sub-textuality (reading below the surface of words to recognise latent or hidden messages of the text) (Pennycook, 2001). These processes also raise critical multiliterate and multimodal readers that assume a critical stance on the text and

Figure 6 Dissemination of Anglo-Saxon Values and Ideologies



Source: *Teenagers New Generation 9* (pp. 58, 59)

value the multiple cultural differences (Álvarez-Valencia, 2016; Cassany & Castellà, 2010; Freire & Macedo, 1987; New London Group, 1996).

The textbooks analysed do not promote critical literacy practices or draw on multiliterate and multimodal texts since they do not transcend word comprehension in narrative texts. Teachers, authors, and editors sustained that these materials privilege narrative texts that neither foster controversy nor promote an association with students' experiences to generate debate or construction of arguments. The fragments below evince that reading comprehension activities proposed in the textbooks do not promote critical reading:

- Texts are rather descriptive and expositive; they do not generate controversial situations (FG – T1).
- Texts promote literal reading comprehension (FG – T2).

Comprehension activities are literal so the answers are there; activities that generate debate are absent. Reading comprehension does not promote interpretation nor critical reading (FG – T3).

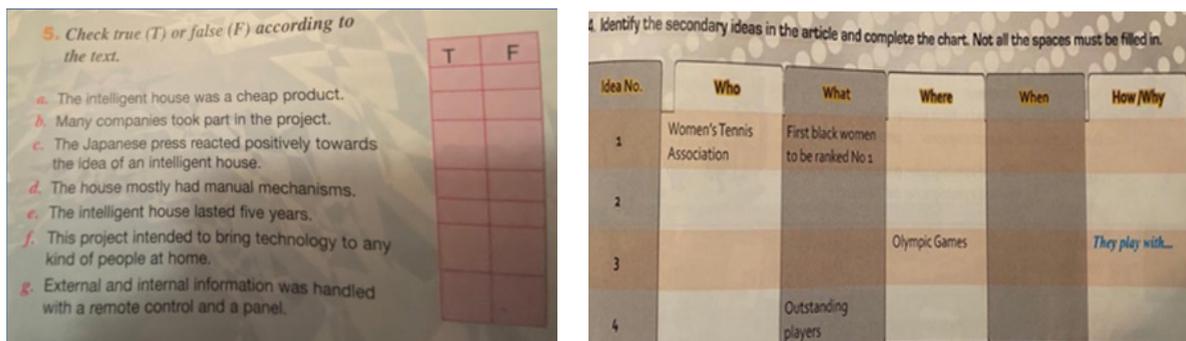
Most activities are to fill in gaps, conjugate a verb, or associate grammatical patterns (FG – T2).

Very rarely we invite students to reflect or to go beyond the text. Reading comprehension activities are linked to textual content. Readings do not offer students the possibility to connect with their own experience or to assume a critical stance on the text (FG – A2).

These activities foster intensive reading and grammatical work (FG – A3).

Reading comprehension activities aim at recycling, reviewing, or reinforcing linguistic contents. The grammatical component is very strong because the marketing department informed us that teachers want to have more grammar in the textbooks [...] Unfortunately, narrative and descriptive texts prevail, and critical thinking is hardly present (II – E2).

Figure 7 Literacy Focused on Bare Decoding and Literal Reading



Source: (Left) *Teenagers New Generation 10* (p. 44). (Right) *Viewpoints 5* (p. 15).

Similar reading comprehension activities boost literal reading as observed in the samples shown in Figure 7.

The third subcategory (coloniality of power) contains modern Eurocentrism i.e., world power controls the human life experience in all its dimensions of civilization (Walsh, 2007) and enslaves human beings to consumerism at a global level (Bauman, 2007; Giddens, 2018;). Two interrelated patterns were recognised. The first pattern comprises adopting a bilingual global policy and discourse that focuses only on the learning of English for the sake of economic competitiveness, neglecting other languages (González, 2009; Guerrero, 2008; Usma, 2015), which perpetuates the knowledge-based economy (Fairclough, 2006). The second pattern tackles the global text features and promotes individualistic productivity, entrepreneurial skills, and economic success as the pillars of pervasive phenomena such as capitalism, globalisation, and neoliberalism. These conditions enslave human beings to consumerism on a global scale, precluding cultural, social, and pedagogical values, and regularising misery and injustice (Bauman, 2007; Block, 2017; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Ulum & Köksal, 2019). Teachers and authors manifested that references to North American celebrities, the ideal family, and successful young people constitute not only an untrue

dream for our students in their local contexts but also a detached referent that associates the learning of English to wealthiness, affordability and luxury. Editors acknowledged that the profitable interest of publishing houses responds to globalisation, the hegemony of the Northern and Western cultures, obstructions imposed by publishing conglomerates, the users of the textbooks, the bank of images, and the editor. The next excerpts illustrate the previous aspects:

The book includes a reading about Shakira as an international celebrity and as a model to follow. It also includes famous personalities like Jennifer Lopez, Nicole Kidman, and Brad Pitt (FG – T2).

Readings about celebrated personages engender unattainable dreams for our students (FG – T1).

In this textbook, the perfect family, the happy person, successful young people prevail, far from the local reality [...] The topics include tourism, technology, fictional literature (FG – A2).

Topics like planning a holiday involve selecting the country, requirements to fulfil before travelling, and the budget (FG – A4).

Editorial production is subject to a market logic and it responds to the global market. Unfortunately, the hegemony of the North American culture [...] We look for global referents (II – E1).

There are obstacles imposed by the company, the public, the banks of images, and the editors (II – E2).

The samples in Figure 8 corroborate the previously mentioned conditions.

718

Figure 8 Adopting the Bilingual Global Policy, Discourse, and Textbooks Features

Colombian singer Shakira is famous for her beauty, hip shaking and her voice, but she also works tirelessly for good causes. When she was just eighteen and starting to make money as a singer, she decided to use that money to create the Barefoot Foundation, named after the children who lived on the streets in her local community. The organisation aims to provide an education for poor and disadvantaged children, with the hope of lifting them out of poverty. She knows what it is like to have no money as, when she was seven, her father's jewellery business went bankrupt. Her family had to sell a lot of their belongings, including the air conditioner and their television. When she complained to her father about the heat with no air conditioner, her father took her to see the 'barefoot' children, who lived in the dirt, with tattered clothes and bare feet, and she realised that many families had less than they did. This made a lasting impression on her. In April 2004, she was appointed the youngest ever UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

David Beckham, an English footballing hero, has played for Manchester United, England, Real Madrid and LA Galaxy, and is one of England's wealthiest sportsmen. He came into the news in 2013, however, for a different reason. On signing for Paris St-Germain, a French team, he promised to donate his £150,000 weekly salary to a French Children's charity. He has always worked tirelessly for good causes and is passionate about helping children. In January 2005, he became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. Since then, he has played a very important role in UNICEF's work. In 2012 he took part in a Save the Children campaign to persuade the UK Prime Minister David Cameron to take action to help children affected by malnutrition around the world. In 2015 he launched his own David Beckham UNICEF fund to help protect children in danger.

9. Look at the pictures. Do you know what they show? Where is this place?
Why is this place important? Read the text quickly to check your answers.

In the Palm of Dubai

(1) _____ It's incredible, burning, often over 40 degrees Celsius in the summer months. Part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dubai is a city in the middle of the desert. Where the pavement ends, sand begins and it stretches for kilometres and kilometres into the distance. Despite this harsh climate, the people of Dubai have turned their city into one of the world's most popular tourist resorts.

(2) _____ There are five star hotels that you need special permission to visit. If you want to buy souvenirs, you can buy gold jewellery from a vending machine. The shopping malls are enormous palaces with every luxury product you could think of.

(3) _____ One of the most famous is the Palm Island. This is an artificial island built in the sea right next to the city. It is the site of luxury homes and hotels, although it's not actually the best place to go sightseeing. It's only possible to see the palm shape from the air.

Source: *English, Please! 11*, module 2, unit 3, lesson 7 (pp. 74-75)

Emergent Decoloniality Signs

Emergent decoloniality signs in EFL textbooks constitute the second category that responds to the second subsidiary question. This question concerns possible transformations of EFL textbooks content and holds a sole subcategory labelled *relational interculturality*. It is important to note that this sort of interculturality has remained in a basic form of exchange among cultures in conditions of inequality, without referring to its causes or the purposes of social struggle for equal rights and opportunities (Tubino, 2005; Walsh, 2010). The analysis revealed two associated decoloniality patterns. First, the regulation pattern since one of the textbooks analysed responds to the country’s bilingual policy of teaching English for citizens’ academic quality and professional development oriented towards productivity, profitability, globalisation, and neoliberalism. Second, the pattern of having Colombian-authored English textbooks is evident, it is reliant on consulting services from a foreign publishing house, though. Despite being locally developed, decoloniality is recognised in the topics included in these textbooks. Out of 86 readings, only six passages address adolescents’ emotions and concerns regarding engagement, future careers, a gay couple, bullying, school sexism, child labour, and environmental care. Although the readings indicate changes vis-a-vis traditional content, all of them are descriptive texts followed by literal comprehension activities

that preclude reflection, debate, and critical thinking as displayed in the next extracts:

The-his textbook, students read part of a story and then, they should create the end (II – E2).

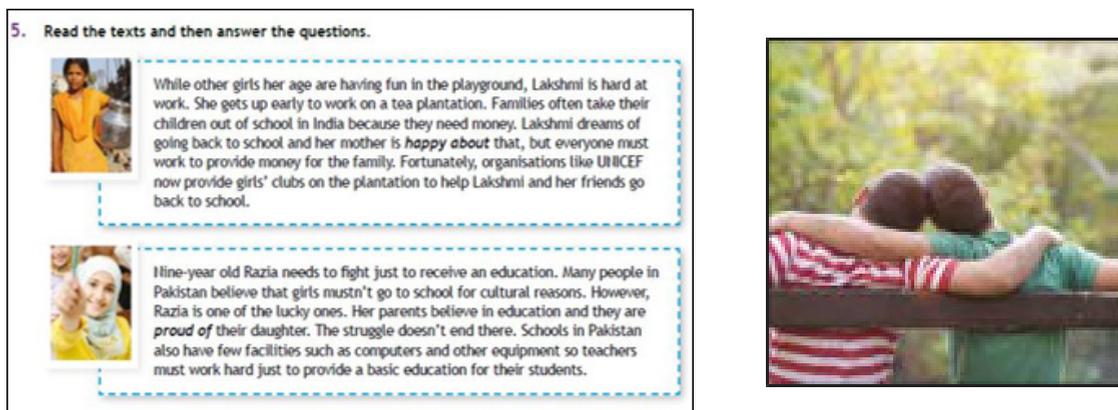
In addition to narrative texts that unsettle conventional content but normalise mere decoding, iconography and reading passages evidence the foregoing emergent change in textbooks (Figure 9).

The former results offer tangible possibilities for teachers to contest colonialised EFL textbooks and take counter-hegemonic actions, which demands critical socio-cultural and political consciousness and discourse in both students and teachers. It also endorses actions in favour of democratic transformation of EFL curricula, materials, teaching, language policy, and assessment practices. After arguing the findings, the next section presents the conclusions drawn from the study.

Conclusions

This qualitative documentary research unveiled three triads of decolonial criteria: a triad of ontological criteria, a triad of epistemological criteria and a triad of power criteria. They emerged to orient the creation of desirable EFL materials otherwise, as summarised in Table 1. The critical

Figure 9 Teaching English for citizens’ academic quality, professional development, and economic success



Source: *English, Please! 11*, module 3, unit 1, lesson 1 (p. 91)

analysis also revealed colonial representations of gender, races, sexual orientations, capacities, and social classes in EFL textbooks, as well as references to an essentialist and static vision of culture. Also, emerging signs of decoloniality were evinced in response to the Colombian bilingual policy of teaching English for citizens' academic excellence and professional growth.

Research on EFL materials needs to reach beyond traditional evaluation, analysing their content critically. This article argued against EFL textbooks' ontological, epistemological, and power hegemony. It also questioned the adoption of a global policy and discourse in EFL textbooks that relates English to individualistic efficiency, entrepreneurial skills, and economic progress. These power forces control EFL curricula, materials, cultural content, standardised English varieties, and teaching and assessment practices replicated and naturalised in global EFL textbooks, which makes it tough to defy them. Although globalised and neoliberal discourses circulate the ideals of freedom and growth, these practices reduce teachers and students to consuming knowledge instead of producing it.

The results of the critical analysis of textbooks' content reported here uncovered the need for rethinking EFL materials from a critical interculturality stance. It is then, time to resist and disrupt a series of colonial binaries (e.g., White-Non-White) that imply a so-called biological superiority among human beings, ranking them from savages to Europeans. Critical interculturality also demands unsettling the colonial sexual difference that perpetuates and naturalises Eurocentric Judeo-Christian categories on sex and gender, maintaining heteronormativity. Likewise, it urges to challenge the abled-disabled binary that has been made up by a medicalised notion of the normal body and supported by a pattern of normative beauty, paving the way for the reproduction of capitalist values. Similarly, Western and Northern dominant knowledge and homogeneous culture should be withstood. This is because they nurture

an essentialist view of a static culture that conceals evolving cultural practices, hindering the possibility to build cultural and critical intercultural awareness. Finally, adopting the globalised discourse in language policy and EFL textbooks reduces the human experience to rampant consumption, preserving asymmetrical relations between hegemonic and periphery communities.

Creating EFL materials from a decolonial perspective compels teachers to become more critical of EFL materials content, learning activities and strategies, underpinning language pedagogies, iconography, language policy, and assessment practices. This reflective, localised, theoretical, and applicable endeavour allows them to ponder, question, re-signify, and transform their pedagogical praxis as they exert agency to contest hegemony in EFL materials. As a result, teachers empower themselves to recreate situated EFL education practices.

Some limitations of this research comprised: an analysis centred on the content of the reading lessons, not on complete textbooks; not all the authors and editors agreed to participate in the study; and some of them insisted on answering the questions regarding the whole textbook.

References

- Aicega, D. (2007) Los libros de texto para la enseñanza de inglés: Una mirada crítica. *Puertas Abiertas*, 3(3), 99 – 102.
- Álvarez-Valencia, J. A. (2016). Meaning making and communication in the multimodal age: Ideas for language teachers. *Colombian Applied Linguistic Journal*, 18(1), 98–115. <https://doi.org/10.14483/calj.v18n1.8403>
- Apple, M. (1992). The text and cultural politics. *Educational Researcher*, 21(7), 4–19.
- Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*. Routledge Falmer. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203487563>
- Asch, A. (2001). Critical race theory, feminism, and disability: Reflections on social justice and personal identity. *Ohio State Law Journal*, 62, 391–423.
- Bauman, Z. (2007). *Consuming life*. Polity.

- Block, D. (2017). Neoliberalism, the neoliberal citizen in English language teaching materials: A critical analysis. *Ruta Maestra*, 21, 4–15.
- Bogart, K. R., & Dunn, D. S. (2019). Ableism special issue introduction. *Journal of Social Issues*, 75(3), 650 – 664. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12354>
- Borre, E. (1996). *Libros de texto en el caleidoscopio* [Textbooks in the kaleidoscope]. Editorial Trotta S. A.
- Canagarajah, S. (2002). Globalization, methods, and practice in periphery classrooms. In D. Block, & D. Cameron (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp. 134 – 450). Routledge.
- Canagarajah, S. (2005). Accommodating tensions in language-in-education policies: An afterword. In A. Lin & P. W. Martin (Eds.), *Decolonisation, globalisation: Language-in-education policy and practice* (pp. 194–201). Multilingual Matters Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598265-013>
- Cassany, D., & Castellà, J. M. (2010). Aproximación a la literacidad crítica [Approaching critical literacy]. *Perspectiva*, 28(2), 353–374. Florianópolis.
- Castro-Gómez, S. (2007). Decolonizar la Universidad: La hybris del punto cero y el diálogo de saberes [Decolonising university: The hybris of the zero point and the dialogue of knowledges]. In S. Castro-Gomez, & R. Gossroguel (Comps.), *El giro decolonial: reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global* (pp. 79-91). Universidad Javeriana-Instituto Pensar, Universidad Central-IESCO, Siglo del Hombre.
- Choppin, A. (2001). Pasado y presente de los manuales escolares. (Trans. M. Soto Lucas). *Revista Educación y Pedagogía*. XIII (29-30), 209 – 229.
- Cruz-Arcila, F. (2017). Interrogating the social impact of English language teaching policies in Colombia from the vantage point of rural areas. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 27(2), 46 – 60.
- Davcheva, L., & Sercu, L., (2005). Culture in foreign language teaching materials. In L. Sercu (Comp.), *Foreign language teachers and intercultural competence. An international investigation* (pp. 76-90). Multilingual Matters Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598456-008>
- Domínguez, H. (2016). *Translating the queer. Body politics and transnational conversations*. Zed Books
- Du Gay, P., Stuart, H., Jones, L., Mackay, H., & Negus, K. (1997). *Doing cultural studies: The story of the sony walkman*. Sage.
- Dussel, E. (2007). *Materiales para una política de liberación* [Materials for a liberation policy]. Plaza y Valdéz Editores.
- Escolano, A. (2012). El manual como texto [The handbook as a text]. *Proposiciones*, 23(3), 33-50. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-73072012000300003>
- Facione, P. A. (2011). Critical thinking: what it is and why it counts. *Insight Assessment*, (1), 1-23. http://www.insightassessment.com/pdf_files/what&why2006.pdf
- Faez, F. (2011). Reconceptualizing the native/nonnative speaker dichotomy. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 10(4), 231 – 249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2011.598127>
- Fairclough, N. (2006). *Language and globalization*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203593769>
- Fanon, F. (1986). *Black skin, white masks*. Pluto Press.
- Freire, P. (1971). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder. (Original work published 1970).
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (2018). Globalization. In *Sociology of globalization*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429493089-3>
- Giroux, H. A., Freire, P., & McLaren, P. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Gómez, L. F. (2015). The cultural content in EFL textbooks and what teachers need to do about it. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 17(2), 167 – 187.
- González, A. (2009). On alternative and additional certifications in English language teaching: The case of Colombian EFL teachers' professional development. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14 (22), 183 – 209.
- González, A. (2012). *On English language teaching and teacher education. Academic disagreements in a developing country*. The Future of Education Conference Proceedings, Florence, Italy.
- Granados-Beltrán, C. (2016). Critical interculturality. A path for pre-service EFL teachers. *Íkala Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 21(2), 171 – 187.
- Granda, S. (2004). *Textos escolares e interculturalidad en Ecuador* [School textbooks and interculturality in Ecuador]. Serie Magíster.

- Gray J. (2013). *Critical perspectives on language teaching materials*. Palgrave Macmillan Publishers Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137384263>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2007). The epistemic decolonial turn. Beyond political-economy paradigms. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), 211 – 223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162514>
- Grupo Eleuterio Quintanilla. (1996). *Libros de texto y diversidad cultural*. Talasa
- Guijarro, J. R. (2005). La representación axiológica del género y la orientación sexual en libros de texto de inglés para Secundaria [Axiological gender representation and sexual orientation in Secondary English textbooks]. *Porta Linguarum* (4), 151 – 166. <https://doi.org/10.30827/Digibug.29873>
- Guerrero, C. H. (2008). Bilingual Colombia: What does it mean to be bilingual within the framework of the national plan of bilingualism? *Profile: Issues on Teachers' Professional Development*, 10, 27–45.
- Guerrero-Nieto, C. H., & Quintero, A. (2021). Elementary school teachers in neoliberal times: The silent voices that make educational policies work. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 23(1), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n1.83052>
- Hahn, H. (1988). The politics of physical differences: Disability and discrimination. *Journal of Social Issues*, 44(1), 39–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1988.tb02047.x>
- Herrera, D. M. (2012). Children as subjects with rights in EFL textbooks. *Colombian Applied Linguistic Journal*. 14(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.3812>
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 303–342). Sage Publications.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage Publications Inc.
- Kubota, R., & Lin, A. (2006). Race and TESOL: Introduction to concepts and theories. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(3), 471–493. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40264540>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: macro strategies for language teaching*. Yale University Press.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2014). The decolonial option in English teaching. Can the subaltern act? *TESOL Quarterly*, 14(1), 66–85. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.202>
- Lee, J. F. (2014). A hidden curriculum in Japanese EFL textbooks: Gender representation. *Linguistics and Education*, 26, 39 – 53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2014.07.002>
- Levin, J. R., & Mayer, R. E. (1993). Understanding illustrations in text. In B. K. Britton, A. Woodward, & M. Binkley (Eds.), *Learning from textbooks: Theory and practice* (pp. 95–113). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Levinson, B., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power: Theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy*, 23(6), 767–795. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904808320676>
- Littlejohn, A. (2012). Language teaching materials and the (very) big picture. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 9(1), 283–297.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2008). On the coloniality of being contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies*, 21, 2-3, pp. 240–270.
- Marín, J. (2003). Las “razas” biogenéticamente no existen, pero el racismo sí, como ideología [Biogenetically races do not exist, but racism does, as an ideology]. *Revista Diálogo Educativo*, 4(9), 107–113. <https://doi.org/10.7213/rde.v4i9.6545>
- Martínez, B. (2008). Los libros de texto como práctica discursiva [Textbook as discursive practice]. *Revista de la Asociación de Sociología de la Educación*. 1, 62–73.
- Mbembe, A. (2017). *Critique of black reason*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv125jgv8>
- Miranda, N., & Valencia-Giraldo, S. (2019) Unsettling the ‘Challenge’: EFL policy ideology and the new breach amongst state-funded schools in Colombia. *Changing English*, 26(3), 282 – 294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2019.1590144>
- Moya, C. (2008). Aproximación al concepto y tratamiento del texto escolar [Approaching the concept and handling of the school textbook]. *Cuadernos de Lingüística Hispánica*, (11), 133–152.
- Nguyen C. T. (2015). An evaluation of the textbook English 6: A case study from secondary schools in the Mekong Delta Provinces of Vietnam (Doctoral dissertation). University of Sheffield.
- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2018a). The English textbook. Tensions from an intercultural perspective. *Gist Education and Learning Resource Journal*, 230-259. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.402>

- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2018b). Critical interculturality to disrupt coloniality in the English textbook. *Cuestiones Educativas*. <https://cuestioneseducativas.uexternado.edu.co/critical-interculturality-to-disrupt-coloniality-in-the-english-textbook/>
- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2019). A critical reflection on developing and implementing in-house EFL textbooks. *Revista Papeles*, 11(21), 11 – 31. <https://doi.org/10.54104/papeles.v11n21.581>
- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2020a). Inquiring into coloniality of knowledge, power, and being in EFL textbooks. *HOW Journal*, 27(2), 113 – 133. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.566>
- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2020b). Decolonizar el libro de texto de inglés en el contexto colombiano. Una apuesta desde la interculturalidad crítica. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia].
- Núñez-Pardo, A. (2021). Rethinking the EFL textbook from a critical interculturality stance. In J.A. Álvarez-Valencia, A. Ramírez-Espinosa, & O. Vergara-Luján (Eds.), *Interculturality in language teacher education: Theoretical and practical considerations* (pp. 141 – 166). Universidad del Valle.
- Núñez-Pardo, A., & Téllez, M. F. (2021). Tracing the cultural component in teacher generated EFL materials. In A. Núñez-Pardo, & M. F. Téllez-Téllez (Eds.), *Defying culture hegemony through teacher generated materials* (pp. 28 – 102). Departamento de Publicaciones Universidad Externado de Colombia.
- Pennycook, A. (2001). The politics of the text. In *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410600790>
- Phillipson, R. (2008). *Linguistic imperialism continued*. Routledge.
- Phillipson, R. (2016). Myths and realities of 'global' English. *Language Policy*, 16(3), 313 – 331. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-016-9409-z>
- Porreca, K. (1984). Sexism in current ESL textbooks. *TESOL Quarterly*, 18(4) 705 – 724. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586584>
- Quiceno, H. (2003). Foucault, ¿pedagogo? *Revista Educación y Pedagogía*, 37, 201 – 216.
- Quijano, A. (2000). Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social [Coloniality of power and social classification]. *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 2, 342 – 386. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2000.228>
- Quijano, A. (2014). *Cuestiones y horizontes: de la dependencia histórico-estructural a la colonialidad/descolonialidad del poder*. CLACSO. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2000.228>
- Quijano, A., & Wallerstein, I. (1992). La americanidad como concepto, o América en el moderno sistema mundial [American as a concept]. *RICS* 134, 583–591.
- Restrepo, E., & Rojas, A. (2010). *Inflexión decolonial. Fuentes, conceptos y cuestionamientos [Decolonial inflection. Sources, concept and questioning]*. Universidad del Cauca, Instituto de Estudios Sociales y Culturales Pensar; Maestría en Estudios Culturales, Universidad Javeriana.
- Rico, C. (2012). Language teaching materials as mediators for ICC development: A challenge for materials developers. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 30, 130 – 154. <http://revistas.javeriana.edu.co/index.php/signoypensamiento/article/view/2416>
- Robles, B. (2011). La entrevista en profundidad: una técnica útil dentro del campo antropofísico [In-depth interview: A useful technique in the anthropophysical field]. *Cuicuilco*, 18(52), 39 – 49.
- Said, E. W. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. Vintage Books, Random House Inc.
- Sandoval, C. A. (1996). *Investigación cualitativa*. Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior (ICFES).
- Santos, B. de S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge.
- Shohamy, E. (2009). Language teachers as partners in crafting educational language policies? *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14(22), 45 – 67.
- Soto-Molina, J. E., & Méndez, P. (2020). Linguistic colonialism in the English Language textbooks of multinational publishing houses. *HOW Journal*, 27(1), 11 – 28. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.27.1.521>
- Tubino, F. (2005). La praxis de la interculturalidad en los estados nacionales latinoamericanos. *Cuadernos Interculturales*, 3(5), 83 – 96.
- Ulum, Ö, y Köksal, D. (2019). *Ideology and hegemony of English foreign language textbooks. Globally and locally written practices*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35809-9>
- Usma, J. A. (2009a). Education and language policy in Colombia: Exploring processes of inclusion, exclusion and stratification in times of global reform. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(1), 123 – 142.

- Usma, J. (2009b). Globalization and language and education reform in Colombia: A critical outlook. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 14(22), 19 – 42.
- Usma, J. (2015). *From transnational language policy transfer to local appropriation: the case of the national bilingual program in Medellín, Colombia*. Deep University Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1994). Discourse and inequality. *Lenguas Modernas*, 21, 14 – 27.
- Viáfara, J. J. (2016). “I’m missing something”: (Non) nativeness in prospective teachers as Spanish and English speakers. *Colombian Applied Linguistic Journal*, 18(2), 11–24.
- Walsh, C. (2007). Son posibles unas ciencias sociales/culturales otras. Reflexiones en torno a las epistemologías decoloniales [Are sociocultural sciences possible? Reflections on decolonial epistemologies]. *Nómadas* (Col), (26), 102 – 113
- Walsh, C. (2010). Interculturalidad crítica y educación intercultural [Critical interculturality and intercultural education]. In J. Viáfara, L. Tapia, & C. Walsh (Eds.), *Construyendo interculturalidad crítica* (pp. 75-96). Instituto Internacional de Integración del Convenio Andrés Bello.
- Zhang, X. (2017). A critical review of literature on English language teaching textbook evaluation: What systemic functional linguistics can offer. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 5(1), 78 – 102. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jolace-2017-0005>

How to cite this article: Núñez-Pardo, A. (2022). Indelible coloniality and emergent decoloniality in Colombian-authored EFL textbooks: A critical content analysis. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 27(3), 702–724. <http://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v27n3a07>