

---

## DECOLONIZING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CURRICULUM: BEYOND EUROCENTRIC PARADIGMS: A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

**Prof. Langat Christopher Andrew (PhD)**  
Kenya Commission for University Education

<https://doi.org/10.59009/ijlllc.2025.0162>

*Received Date: 20 October 2025 / Published Date: 30 November 2025*

---

### ABSTRACT

The decolonization of English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula has emerged as a critical concern in applied linguistics, addressing the persistence of Eurocentric norms that marginalize local languages, knowledge systems, and cultural identities. This study employs a critical literature review methodology to synthesize scholarship published between 2023 and 2025, examining theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical interventions aimed at curriculum reform. Using systematic searches of Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar, studies were selected and analyzed through thematic coding using NVivo software, focusing on major themes including Eurocentric dominance, World Englishes, trans-languaging, teacher education, assessment, and policy. Findings reveal that conventional curricula continue to privilege native-speaker norms, perpetuating linguistic hierarchies and limiting learner agency, while decolonial strategies such as translanguaging and integration of World Englishes foster inclusivity, validate learners' sociolinguistic identities, and enhance engagement. The study further highlights the critical roles of teacher preparation, culturally responsive materials, assessment reform, and participatory curriculum design in supporting systemic change. Implications for policy, pedagogy, and future research are discussed, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive, socially just, and sustainable approaches to ELT curriculum development. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on decolonial education by providing evidence-based insights and practical recommendations for transforming English language education in multilingual and postcolonial contexts.

**Keywords:** Decolonizing ELT, World Englishes, Trans-languaging, Eurocentric norms, culturally responsive pedagogy, Curriculum reform.

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The global dominance of English has positioned it as a pivotal medium for communication, education, and economic advancement. However, this widespread adoption has often been accompanied by the imposition of Eurocentric norms and values, marginalizing local languages, knowledge systems, and cultures. English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula in many postcolonial and multilingual contexts still prioritize Anglo-American standards as the benchmark for linguistic legitimacy, often overlooking the diverse cultural and linguistic realities of learners (Canagarajah, 2023; Kim, 2023). This dominance reinforces historical power asymmetries and shapes learners' perceptions of language and identity.

In many educational settings, English is taught as a standardized, monolithic language, disregarding the plurality of Englishes that exist worldwide. The prioritization of "native-speaker" norms creates a hierarchy in which local varieties of English, or even indigenous

languages, are devalued (Schissel, 2024). This imbalance contributes to linguistic insecurity among learners and positions Western cultural norms as aspirational, which can alienate students from their own cultural and linguistic heritage.

The persistence of Eurocentric models in ELT curricula raises critical questions regarding inclusivity and relevance. To what extent do current curricula reflect learners' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds? How effectively do they empower students to engage with English in ways that honor their linguistic identities? Addressing these questions is essential for developing curricula that are not merely functional but transformative, fostering equitable learning environments (Lo, 2024).

Decolonizing ELT curricula involves challenging entrenched Western paradigms and embracing a more pluralistic approach that acknowledges the legitimacy of multiple Englishes. This process requires rethinking pedagogical strategies, assessment frameworks, and materials design to ensure that they reflect the diverse sociolinguistic realities of learners (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). A decolonized curriculum prioritizes inclusivity, learner agency, and the validation of local languages and knowledge systems.

Historically, English language instruction was deeply intertwined with colonial agendas, which sought to impose European linguistic norms on colonized populations. This imposition was not merely linguistic but cultural, as English became a tool of governance, assimilation, and social control. Indigenous languages and knowledge systems were marginalized, creating lasting legacies that continue to shape contemporary ELT practices (Poudel, 2025).

Recent scholarship highlights the critical need to challenge these Eurocentric legacies in ELT. The World Englishes paradigm emphasizes the recognition and validation of diverse English varieties shaped by local sociocultural contexts (Türkiye Study, 2024). This perspective encourages curricula that move beyond rigid native-speaker norms and reflect the rich plurality of English usage globally, empowering learners to engage with English authentically.

Pedagogical innovations such as trans-languaging have emerged as transformative tools for decolonizing ELT. Trans-languaging allows learners to use their full linguistic repertoire, integrating local languages with English to facilitate deeper comprehension and meaningful learning (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). This approach challenges monolingual ideologies and validates learners' identities, fostering an inclusive classroom culture.

Critical pedagogy further complements decolonial efforts by encouraging learners to interrogate the social and political dimensions of language use. By questioning linguistic hierarchies and power structures, learners develop critical awareness of how language can perpetuate social inequities (Canagarajah, 2023). Integrating critical pedagogy into ELT helps cultivate agency, empowering learners to use English as a tool for social participation rather than cultural assimilation.

Teacher education plays a central role in implementing decolonial curricula. Educators trained in Eurocentric frameworks may unconsciously reproduce colonial ideologies, limiting their ability to foster inclusive classrooms (Poudel, 2025). Transforming teacher education to include decolonial perspectives, trans-languaging practices, and critical pedagogy equips teachers to design and deliver curricula that are responsive to learners' diverse needs and cultural contexts.

Assessment practices in ELT often reinforce Eurocentric norms. Standardized tests such as IELTS and TOEFL prioritize native-speaker norms, marginalizing local linguistic varieties (Schissel, 2024). Redesigning assessment models to value learners' multilingual and intercultural competencies is essential for creating equitable educational outcomes, ensuring that learners are evaluated based on meaningful communication rather than conformity to Western standards.

Digital technologies present both opportunities and challenges for decolonizing ELT. While online platforms can replicate Eurocentric content and methodologies, they also provide access to global linguistic resources and diverse cultural perspectives (Lo, 2023). Leveraging technology for inclusive pedagogy requires critical curation of content and the promotion of digital literacy skills that allow learners to navigate and challenge dominant narratives effectively.

Institutional policies significantly shape the feasibility of decolonial ELT. Policies mandating standardized English or prescribing rigid methodologies can entrench colonial legacies (Kim, 2023). Advocating for policy reforms that support linguistic diversity, local knowledge integration, and inclusive teaching practices is vital for institutionalizing decolonial approaches within educational systems.

Community engagement is critical for creating culturally responsive curricula. Collaborating with local communities in curriculum design ensures that content reflects learners' lived experiences and local realities (Türkiye Study, 2024). Community-based approaches foster relevance and authenticity in teaching materials, which can increase learner engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

The need to decolonize ELT is not only a pedagogical issue but also a matter of social justice. Marginalizing local languages and cultural perspectives perpetuates inequalities and restricts learners' opportunities for empowerment (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Inclusive curricula promote linguistic equity, enabling learners to engage with English while affirming their identities and cultural heritage.

Decolonization requires a multi-dimensional approach that addresses content, pedagogy, assessment, teacher training, and policy. Studies show that integrating local languages, culturally relevant materials, and critical approaches enhances learners' engagement and fosters a more inclusive educational environment (Lo, 2024). This comprehensive perspective ensures that decolonial reforms are systemic rather than superficial.

Theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial theory and critical applied linguistics provide essential tools for analyzing and challenging the dominance of Western paradigms in ELT (Canagarajah, 2023). These frameworks emphasize power relations, context, and the value of marginalized voices, guiding the development of curricula that are equitable and responsive to diverse learners.

Empirical research in various contexts demonstrates the benefits of decolonizing ELT. For instance, studies in Pakistan and Türkiye reveal that when learners' languages and cultures are integrated into the curriculum, motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes improve significantly (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024; Türkiye Study, 2024). These findings underscore the importance of contextually grounded and culturally relevant pedagogies.

Collaborative curriculum development involving educators, learners, and communities enhances inclusivity and relevance. By incorporating multiple perspectives and lived experiences, curricula can better reflect learners' realities and foster meaningful engagement (López-Gopar & Sughrua, 2023). Such participatory approaches challenge the traditional top-down imposition of Eurocentric norms.

Professional development programs are essential for equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to implement decolonial pedagogies effectively. These programs should focus on awareness of linguistic diversity, critical examination of biases, and strategies for inclusive teaching (Poudel, 2025). Supporting educators in this way ensures sustainability of decolonial curriculum reforms.

Integrating Indigenous knowledge systems and local languages into ELT curricula enriches learning by connecting students with their cultural heritage (Kim, 2023). Such integration

challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies and promotes epistemic justice, allowing learners to engage with English without compromising their cultural identities.

Assessment should be reconceptualized to recognize learners' linguistic and cultural assets. Portfolio-based assessments, performance tasks, and contextually relevant evaluations provide a more holistic view of learners' competencies (Schissel, 2024). These approaches align with decolonial objectives, valuing learners' full linguistic repertoires.

The inclusion of World Englishes in curricula fosters awareness of linguistic diversity and challenges native-speaker-centric norms. Pedagogies that highlight global varieties of English encourage learners to see English as a pluralistic, flexible tool for communication rather than a monolithic standard (Türkiye Study, 2024).

Technological integration, when carefully designed, can support decolonial approaches. Digital platforms can be used to expose learners to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, creating opportunities for collaborative, intercultural learning experiences (Lo, 2023). Critical engagement with technology ensures that it serves inclusive educational purposes rather than reproducing inequalities.

Curriculum reform also necessitates reconsidering the hidden curriculum the implicit messages about language, culture, and power that are conveyed through teaching materials and classroom interactions (Canagarajah, 2023). Recognizing and addressing these implicit biases is crucial for fostering truly inclusive learning environments.

Ultimately, decolonizing ELT curricula is a transformative process aimed at fostering equity, inclusivity, and empowerment. By challenging Eurocentric paradigms and validating diverse linguistic and cultural experiences, ELT can become a tool for social justice and learner agency rather than a mechanism for reproducing historical hierarchies (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024; Poudel, 2025).

### **Problem of the Study**

English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula in many postcolonial and multilingual contexts continue to be dominated by Eurocentric norms. These curricula often prioritize Anglo-American linguistic standards and cultural values, marginalizing local languages, knowledge systems, and sociocultural identities (Canagarajah, 2023; Poudel, 2025). The continued dominance of Eurocentric paradigms perpetuates historical inequalities, shaping learners' linguistic insecurity and limiting opportunities for inclusive education. Despite growing theoretical discourse on decolonization, there is a paucity of empirical research examining how curricula can be systematically transformed to integrate local knowledge, validate diverse English varieties, and implement inclusive pedagogical practices. This gap underscores the need for critical analysis and practical frameworks to guide curriculum reform that moves beyond Eurocentric models.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it provides a comprehensive and critical examination of contemporary scholarship on decolonizing ELT curricula, highlighting gaps, challenges, and opportunities for reform (Lo, 2024; Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Second, it contributes to educational practice by informing curriculum developers, policymakers, and teacher educators about strategies to create inclusive, culturally responsive, and equitable curricula. Third, the study amplifies the voices of marginalized linguistic and cultural communities, emphasizing the importance of validating local knowledge systems within ELT. Finally, the findings of this research have implications for broader pedagogical innovation,

including trans-linguaging, World Englishes integration, and critical pedagogy, which collectively foster learners' agency, engagement, and identity affirmation (Türkiye Study, 2024).

### Research Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To critically examine the persistence of Eurocentric paradigms in ELT curricula.
2. To analyze current strategies, including World Englishes and translanguaging, for decolonizing ELT curricula.
3. To identify the challenges and barriers to implementing decolonial pedagogical practices in diverse educational contexts.
4. To explore the role of teacher education, assessment practices, and digital technologies in facilitating inclusive and culturally responsive ELT curricula.
5. To provide evidence-based recommendations for curriculum reform and future research.

### Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do Eurocentric paradigms manifest in contemporary ELT curricula?
2. What strategies have been proposed or implemented to decolonize ELT curricula, and how effective are they?
3. What challenges and barriers hinder the implementation of decolonial pedagogical practices in ELT?
4. How can teacher education, assessment practices, and digital technologies support the creation of inclusive, culturally responsive ELT curricula?
5. What gaps exist in current literature, and what directions should future research take to advance decolonial approaches in ELT?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The decolonization of English Language Teaching (ELT) extends beyond superficial curricular adjustments, necessitating a profound interrogation of the historical, sociopolitical, and epistemic foundations of teacher education. Kim (2023) emphasizes the importance of preparing teachers to navigate linguistic and cultural complexities. However, a critical question arises: can such preparation be meaningful when the structures of teacher education themselves are entrenched in colonial epistemologies? Without systemic restructuring, teacher preparation risks reproducing the very hierarchies it seeks to dismantle, revealing the tension between individual agency and institutional inertia.

Policy reforms promoting curricular flexibility (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024) offer one pathway toward context-sensitive education. Flexibility, in theory, empowers teachers to tailor instruction to learners' sociocultural realities. Yet critical scholarship highlights that such reforms can be co-opted by neoliberal agendas, shifting responsibility for reform onto educators while leaving structural inequities intact. This indicates that the debate surrounding curricular design is not merely about standardization versus flexibility but about whose knowledge is validated and whose interests underpin curricular legitimacy.

Culturally responsive teaching has been widely cited as a strategy for validating learner identities and enhancing engagement (Quintero, 2023). However, critical perspectives question whether identity representation alone is sufficient. Without interrogating the global dominance of English and its role in reproducing linguistic hierarchies, representation risks becoming a

superficial gesture that commodifies diversity rather than fostering genuine linguistic equity. True decolonial pedagogy, therefore, requires combining identity-affirming practices with critical engagement that addresses structural power imbalances.

Digital tools offer additional pedagogical opportunities while presenting their own contradictions. Lo (2023) suggests that technology can amplify marginalized voices and facilitate intercultural collaboration. However, these same tools are embedded within what has been termed digital colonialism: English-dominant platforms, algorithmic biases, and uneven access globally. Learners' digital literacy must extend beyond technical proficiency to include critical awareness of how knowledge circulates and whose perspectives are privileged, framing technology as a contested site rather than a neutral enabler.

The inclusion of indigenous narratives and local epistemologies provides another potential site for decolonial innovation (Poudel, 2025). While these narratives resist Eurocentric hierarchies, tokenistic approaches treating indigenous knowledge as supplemental rather than central—risk undermining transformative potential. Genuine inclusion necessitates restructuring curricular authority to validate multiple knowledge systems as legitimate contributors to learning and knowledge production.

Pedagogical frameworks such as translanguaging and World Englishes directly contest linguistic hierarchies by legitimizing multiple varieties of English and enabling learners to utilize their full linguistic repertoires (Canagarajah, 2023; Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Despite their theoretical promise, institutional acceptance remains uneven. High-stakes assessments continue to privilege standardized forms of English, limiting the practical implementation of these frameworks. Schissel (2024) highlights the resulting contradiction: translanguaging may be celebrated in pedagogical literature but remains aspirational in the absence of aligned assessment and policy reforms.

Textbooks and digital learning materials further exemplify the ideological work of educational content. Quintero (2023) observes that textbooks often foreground Western histories and cultural narratives under the guise of neutrality, while Lo (2023) demonstrates how digital platforms perpetuate Eurocentric dominance. These findings emphasize the need for epistemic vigilance: decolonial ELT requires careful consideration of how materials shape learners' understandings of language, culture, and power.

Teacher reflection and participatory curriculum design are frequently promoted as central to decolonial practice. Canagarajah (2023) asserts that reflective practices help educators identify and counteract implicit biases. Yet, reflection without institutional support risks privatizing responsibility for systemic inequities. Similarly, participatory curriculum design (Quintero, 2023), while theoretically empowering, may be tokenistic in contexts where student voices have historically been marginalized. Meaningful decolonial reform demands sustained structural support to enable transformative co-construction of curricula that redistributes authority and validates diverse knowledge systems.

At the heart of decolonial ELT is the recognition that language, identity, and power are inseparable (Türkiye Study, 2024). English should be reconceptualized not as a gatekeeping mechanism but as a tool for critical engagement, identity negotiation, and social justice. Achieving this requires collaboration among educators, policymakers, researchers, and communities (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Yet the literature cautions that even collaborative processes may reproduce hierarchies if academic expertise is privileged over community knowledge, highlighting the delicate balance between guidance and co-authorship in participatory reforms.

Despite these insights, the literature reveals significant gaps. Empirical evidence on operationalizing decolonial teacher education remains limited, leaving questions about how

programs can embed decolonial philosophies beyond rhetorical commitments. Similarly, alternatives to high-stakes assessments that balance local adaptability with global recognition are underexplored. While indigenous narratives are increasingly incorporated into curricula, strategies for avoiding tokenism and positioning local epistemologies as central remain underdeveloped. Furthermore, although digital colonialism is recognized as a critical concern, research is sparse on how learners and teachers navigate algorithmic bias, unequal access, and platform dominance. Participatory curriculum design, while celebrated in theory, requires further study to understand how power can be genuinely redistributed across academic, institutional, and community actors.

In synthesis, the literature collectively asserts that decolonizing ELT is not simply additive; it requires a fundamental restructuring of knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, and institutional governance. The project is fraught with tensions between local and global demands, representation and tokenism, and innovation and structural inertia. Addressing these tensions demands critical, empirically grounded scholarship that explores how decolonial principles can be enacted sustainably and ethically, without being subsumed by neoliberal or Eurocentric frameworks. Only through such systemic, multi-level engagement can ELT move toward truly inclusive, contextually relevant, and socially just educational practices.

The decolonization of English Language Teaching (ELT) extends beyond superficial curricular adjustments, necessitating a profound interrogation of the historical, sociopolitical, and epistemic foundations of teacher education. Kim (2023) emphasizes the importance of preparing teachers to navigate linguistic and cultural complexities. However, a critical question arises: can such preparation be meaningful when the structures of teacher education themselves are entrenched in colonial epistemologies? Without systemic restructuring, teacher preparation risks reproducing the very hierarchies it seeks to dismantle, revealing the tension between individual agency and institutional inertia.

Policy reforms promoting curricular flexibility (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024) offer one pathway toward context-sensitive education. Flexibility, in theory, empowers teachers to tailor instruction to learners' sociocultural realities. Yet critical scholarship highlights that such reforms can be co-opted by neoliberal agendas, shifting responsibility for reform onto educators while leaving structural inequities intact. This indicates that the debate surrounding curricular design is not merely about standardization versus flexibility but about whose knowledge is validated and whose interests underpin curricular legitimacy.

Culturally responsive teaching has been widely cited as a strategy for validating learner identities and enhancing engagement (Quintero, 2023). However, critical perspectives question whether identity representation alone is sufficient. Without interrogating the global dominance of English and its role in reproducing linguistic hierarchies, representation risks becoming a superficial gesture that commodifies diversity rather than fostering genuine linguistic equity. True decolonial pedagogy, therefore, requires combining identity-affirming practices with critical engagement that addresses structural power imbalances.

Digital tools offer additional pedagogical opportunities while presenting their own contradictions. Lo (2023) suggests that technology can amplify marginalized voices and facilitate intercultural collaboration. However, these same tools are embedded within what has been termed digital colonialism: English-dominant platforms, algorithmic biases, and uneven access globally. Learners' digital literacy must extend beyond technical proficiency to include critical awareness of how knowledge circulates and whose perspectives are privileged, framing technology as a contested site rather than a neutral enabler.

The inclusion of indigenous narratives and local epistemologies provides another potential site for decolonial innovation (Poudel, 2025). While these narratives resist Eurocentric hierarchies,

tokenistic approaches—treating indigenous knowledge as supplemental rather than central—risk undermining transformative potential. Genuine inclusion necessitates restructuring curricular authority to validate multiple knowledge systems as legitimate contributors to learning and knowledge production.

Pedagogical frameworks such as translanguaging and World Englishes directly contest linguistic hierarchies by legitimizing multiple varieties of English and enabling learners to utilize their full linguistic repertoires (Canagarajah, 2023; Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Despite their theoretical promise, institutional acceptance remains uneven. High-stakes assessments continue to privilege standardized forms of English, limiting the practical implementation of these frameworks. Schissel (2024) highlights the resulting contradiction: translanguaging may be celebrated in pedagogical literature but remains aspirational in the absence of aligned assessment and policy reforms.

Textbooks and digital learning materials further exemplify the ideological work of educational content. Quintero (2023) observes that textbooks often foreground Western histories and cultural narratives under the guise of neutrality, while Lo (2023) demonstrates how digital platforms perpetuate Eurocentric dominance. These findings emphasize the need for epistemic vigilance: decolonial ELT requires careful consideration of how materials shape learners' understandings of language, culture, and power.

Teacher reflection and participatory curriculum design are frequently promoted as central to decolonial practice. Canagarajah (2023) asserts that reflective practices help educators identify and counteract implicit biases. Yet, reflection without institutional support risks privatizing responsibility for systemic inequities. Similarly, participatory curriculum design (Quintero, 2023), while theoretically empowering, may be tokenistic in contexts where student voices have historically been marginalized. Meaningful decolonial reform demands sustained structural support to enable transformative co-construction of curricula that redistributes authority and validates diverse knowledge systems.

At the heart of decolonial ELT is the recognition that language, identity, and power are inseparable (Türkiye Study, 2024). English should be reconceptualized not as a gatekeeping mechanism but as a tool for critical engagement, identity negotiation, and social justice. Achieving this requires collaboration among educators, policymakers, researchers, and communities (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Yet the literature cautions that even collaborative processes may reproduce hierarchies if academic expertise is privileged over community knowledge, highlighting the delicate balance between guidance and co-authorship in participatory reforms.

Despite these insights, the literature reveals significant gaps. Empirical evidence on operationalizing decolonial teacher education remains limited, leaving questions about how programs can embed decolonial philosophies beyond rhetorical commitments. Similarly, alternatives to high-stakes assessments that balance local adaptability with global recognition are underexplored. While indigenous narratives are increasingly incorporated into curricula, strategies for avoiding tokenism and positioning local epistemologies as central remain underdeveloped. Furthermore, although digital colonialism is recognized as a critical concern, research is sparse on how learners and teachers navigate algorithmic bias, unequal access, and platform dominance. Participatory curriculum design, while celebrated in theory, requires further study to understand how power can be genuinely redistributed across academic, institutional, and community actors.

In synthesis, the literature collectively asserts that decolonizing ELT is not simply additive; it requires a fundamental restructuring of knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, and institutional governance. The project is fraught with tensions between local and global demands,

representation and tokenism, and innovation and structural inertia. Addressing these tensions demands critical, empirically grounded scholarship that explores how decolonial principles can be enacted sustainably and ethically, without being subsumed by neoliberal or Eurocentric frameworks. Only through such systemic, multi-level engagement can ELT move toward truly inclusive, contextually relevant, and socially just educational practices.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a critical literature review methodology, carefully designed to synthesize and analyze contemporary scholarship on the decolonization of English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula. The critical literature review is particularly suitable for examining complex intersections of language, culture, pedagogy, and sociopolitical structures, enabling the researcher to move beyond mere descriptive summary to interrogate underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and epistemic hierarchies embedded in ELT research (Hart, 2023; Torraco, 2023). By adopting a critical perspective, the methodology foregrounds issues of equity, inclusivity, and social justice, situating the study within postcolonial and critical applied linguistics frameworks.

#### Theoretical and Epistemological Grounding

The study is grounded in **critical applied linguistics and postcolonial theory**, which emphasize the socio-political dimensions of language education and the historical legacies of colonialism. This orientation facilitates a nuanced examination of how curricula, pedagogical strategies, and assessment frameworks reproduce or challenge Eurocentric dominance (Canagarajah, 2023). By prioritizing epistemic justice and the recognition of local knowledge systems, the study evaluates not only what is taught but also how and why certain forms of English, knowledge, and cultural content are privileged.

#### Data Sources and Selection Criteria

A systematic and rigorous search strategy was implemented to identify relevant scholarship published between 2023 and 2025. Peer-reviewed journal articles, edited book chapters, and authoritative reports were sourced from databases including Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Keywords and Boolean search strings included: “decolonizing ELT,” “World Englishes,” “translanguaging,” “Eurocentric norms,” “culturally responsive pedagogy,” and “multilingual education.”

**Inclusion criteria** mandated that studies explicitly address ELT curriculum design, pedagogical interventions, teacher education, assessment practices, or policy reforms with a focus on decolonial or inclusive frameworks. Studies were further filtered to include empirical research, theoretical analyses, and systematic reviews relevant to multilingual, postcolonial, or culturally diverse educational contexts. Exclusion criteria removed studies lacking critical reflection, monolingual approaches without decolonial engagement, or research not peer-reviewed.

#### Analytical Framework and NVivo Integration

The study employed a multi-stage thematic analysis, facilitated by NVivo qualitative data analysis software. NVivo enabled systematic coding, hierarchical organization of themes, and visualization of relationships among concepts. Initial coding identified recurring conceptual, thematic, and methodological patterns. Major themes included: Eurocentric dominance in curricula, translanguaging pedagogy, World Englishes integration, teacher education and professional development, assessment strategies, policy implications, digital pedagogies, and

community participation. Sub-themes, such as learners' sociolinguistic identity, local knowledge representation, and multilingual classroom practices, were further delineated.

The use of NVivo was justified due to its capacity to manage large datasets, enhance transparency in coding decisions, and support cross-referencing among studies. The software also allowed for visual mapping of thematic networks, illustrating the interconnections between dominant paradigms, decolonial interventions, and pedagogical outcomes. This approach not only increases analytical rigor but also facilitates the identification of research gaps and areas of consensus or tension.

### Critical Evaluation and Synthesis

The review employed a critical appraisal process, assessing each study's methodology, theoretical orientation, context, and contribution to decolonial discourse. Methodological rigor, data validity, sample characteristics, and analytical approaches were examined to ensure reliability and relevance. Studies were critically interpreted to identify biases, such as the reproduction of native-speaker norms or the marginalization of local epistemologies, as well as innovative practices that promote inclusive pedagogy (Lo, 2023; Poudel, 2025).

The synthesis integrated findings across diverse studies, combining conceptual, empirical, and contextual insights. Triangulation across sources enhanced the credibility of conclusions, highlighting patterns and divergences in approaches to decolonizing ELT curricula. For example, converging evidence emphasized the importance of translanguaging and World Englishes, while divergent findings highlighted context-specific challenges such as policy constraints or teacher preparedness.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical rigor was maintained throughout the review. All sources were accurately cited according to APA 7th edition, ensuring intellectual honesty and avoiding misrepresentation. Reflexivity guided the analysis, acknowledging the researcher's positionality and potential interpretive biases. The study also emphasized cultural and contextual sensitivity, recognizing that curriculum practices and reforms must be evaluated within their sociopolitical and linguistic environments, rather than assuming universal applicability.

Conceptual Diagram of the Thematic Analysis Process The thematic analysis followed a structured process, illustrated in the conceptual diagram below:

### Thematic Analysis Process in Critical Literature Review

- **Literature Identification** – Systematic database search with defined inclusion/exclusion criteria.
- **Preliminary Coding** – Initial identification of concepts, patterns, and recurring themes.
- **Thematic Categorization** – Grouping of codes into broader thematic clusters (e.g., Eurocentric dominance, translanguaging, World Englishes).
- **Hierarchical Mapping** – Organizing sub-themes under main themes using NVivo.
- **Critical Appraisal** – Evaluation of methodological rigor, theoretical grounding, and contextual relevance.
- **Synthesis and Interpretation** – Integrating findings, identifying gaps, and highlighting implications for pedagogy, policy, and research.

This process ensured that the review was systematic, transparent, and reproducible, providing a robust foundation for deriving findings, discussions, and recommendations.

### **Rationale for the Methodology**

The chosen methodology aligns with the study's aim to critically analyze contemporary research on decolonizing ELT curricula. By employing a systematic and critical approach, the study is able to:

- Identify persistent Eurocentric norms and structural inequities in curricula.
- Evaluate innovative pedagogical strategies such as translanguaging and World Englishes.
- Examine systemic barriers including policy constraints, assessment practices, and teacher preparedness.
- Generate actionable insights for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers.

In conclusion, this advanced critical literature review methodology integrates rigorous database selection, thematic coding, NVivo-supported analysis, critical appraisal, and ethical reflexivity. It provides a comprehensive, scholarly, and context-sensitive framework for synthesizing contemporary research on the decolonization of ELT curricula, ultimately supporting evidence-based recommendations for educational reform and further scholarly inquiry (Hart, 2023; Torraco, 2023; Canagarajah, 2023; Lo, 2024).

## **4. FINDINGS**

The critical analysis of recent scholarship on decolonizing ELT curricula reveals several consistent findings. First, Eurocentric paradigms remain deeply embedded in English language teaching. Curricula and instructional materials continue to privilege native-speaker norms, marginalizing local languages and cultural practices (Canagarajah, 2023; Poudel, 2025). This perpetuates hierarchical notions of linguistic competence and undermines learners' confidence and identity.

Second, the integration of World Englishes is emerging as a widely endorsed approach for enhancing linguistic inclusivity. World Englishes frameworks recognize multiple legitimate English varieties, fostering cultural awareness and validating students' sociolinguistic identities (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Empirical studies demonstrate that curricula reflecting these diverse varieties increase learner engagement and motivation, particularly in multilingual contexts.

Third, translanguaging practices are shown to be effective in promoting comprehension, learner agency, and identity affirmation (Lo, 2023). Allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire enhances classroom participation and enables learners to negotiate meaning across languages. Translanguaging also challenges monolingual ideologies and facilitates the integration of local languages in formal instruction.

Fourth, the critical review of teaching materials highlights the persistence of colonial ideologies. Textbooks, syllabi, and supplementary resources often foreground Western narratives while omitting local knowledge, histories, and cultural perspectives (Quintero, 2023). Decolonizing curricula requires scrutinizing materials to ensure inclusivity, representation, and relevance to learners' lived experiences.

Fifth, teacher education and professional development are pivotal for successful curriculum reform. Teachers must be trained to recognize Eurocentric biases, implement inclusive pedagogical strategies, and facilitate culturally responsive classrooms (Canagarajah, 2023; Kim, 2023). Without adequate preparation, efforts to decolonize curricula are unlikely to be sustainable.

Sixth, policy constraints and standardized assessment systems act as barriers to decolonial reform (Kim, 2023). Many national and international assessments enforce native-speaker

benchmarks, limiting the ability of educators to implement inclusive practices. Advocacy for policy reform is therefore essential to create systemic support for decolonial initiatives.

Seventh, digital technologies offer both opportunities and challenges. Online resources can expand access to global linguistic and cultural content, but without critical curation, they may reproduce Eurocentric dominance (Lo, 2023). Effective integration of digital platforms requires attention to accessibility, diversity, and critical digital literacy.

Eighth, integration of indigenous knowledge systems enriches curricula and fosters epistemic justice (Poudel, 2025). Recognizing local ways of knowing alongside global English norms validates learners' cultural heritage and strengthens connections between formal education and community practices.

Ninth, culturally responsive pedagogy is crucial for addressing the intersection of language, identity, and power. Inclusive curricula empower learners to critically navigate linguistic hierarchies and engage with English as a tool for social participation rather than cultural assimilation (Türkiye Study, 2024).

Tenth, the literature highlights the importance of participatory curriculum design, involving learners, educators, and community stakeholders (Quintero, 2023). Collaborative approaches ensure that curriculum content is relevant, context-sensitive, and reflective of students' experiences, enhancing engagement and educational outcomes.

Finally, the research underscores that decolonizing ELT curricula is a multifaceted and ongoing process, requiring interventions across pedagogy, assessment, policy, teacher training, and materials development (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). Achieving meaningful decolonial reform necessitates systemic commitment and cross-sector collaboration.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that Eurocentric dominance remains a central challenge in ELT curricula. The persistent privileging of native-speaker norms limits learners' agency and marginalizes local languages, highlighting the urgent need for decolonial interventions. Recognizing English as a global, pluralistic language through World Englishes and translanguaging frameworks presents a significant shift in curriculum design, validating diverse linguistic and cultural identities.

The integration of World Englishes is not merely symbolic; it reflects a broader reconceptualization of language learning that embraces diversity and challenges hegemonic norms. Empirical evidence suggests that learners exposed to curricula incorporating multiple English varieties demonstrate greater engagement, confidence, and communicative competence (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024). This supports arguments for moving beyond monolithic representations of English in educational policy and practice.

Translanguaging practices play a complementary role by allowing learners to bridge linguistic boundaries, fostering deeper comprehension and critical thinking (Lo, 2023). By legitimizing students' home languages, translanguaging challenges entrenched monolingual ideologies and positions multilingualism as a pedagogical resource rather than an obstacle.

The role of teacher education emerges as critical in operationalizing decolonial principles. Teachers must be equipped to interrogate Eurocentric biases, apply culturally responsive strategies, and create inclusive classroom environments (Canagarajah, 2023; Kim, 2023). Professional development initiatives that integrate decolonial theory, translanguaging, and World Englishes are essential for embedding these principles in practice.

Curriculum materials remain a persistent site of colonial influence, often reflecting Western-centric worldviews and excluding local perspectives (Quintero, 2023). Decolonizing materials

requires critical evaluation to ensure balanced representation, incorporation of indigenous knowledge, and alignment with learners' cultural and linguistic realities.

Policy and assessment frameworks further influence the feasibility of decolonial reforms. Standardized testing regimes often reinforce Eurocentric benchmarks, limiting the potential for inclusive evaluation (Schissel, 2024). Reforming assessment practices to recognize multilingual competencies, critical thinking, and cultural knowledge is essential for creating equitable educational outcomes.

Digital technologies offer promising avenues for amplifying marginalized voices and facilitating access to diverse linguistic resources (Lo, 2023). When thoughtfully integrated, digital platforms can support collaborative and intercultural learning, extending the reach and impact of decolonial pedagogy. However, careful attention is needed to avoid reproducing global inequalities in digital access and representation.

The integration of indigenous knowledge systems into curricula promotes epistemic justice and fosters connections between formal learning and local cultural practices (Poudel, 2025). These practices enhance learners' engagement, reinforce cultural identity, and demonstrate that English can coexist with local languages and epistemologies.

Culturally responsive pedagogy and participatory curriculum design are mutually reinforcing. By involving learners, teachers, and community members in curriculum decisions, educators can ensure that instruction is contextually relevant, inclusive, and empowering (Türkiye Study, 2024; Quintero, 2023). This participatory approach not only increases engagement but also encourages learners to critically reflect on the sociopolitical dimensions of language use.

Finally, the synthesis of current literature underscores that decolonizing ELT curricula is a complex, systemic endeavor. Achieving meaningful transformation requires coordinated interventions across pedagogy, materials, assessment, policy, and teacher education. The success of these reforms depends on sustained commitment, critical reflection, and active collaboration among all stakeholders (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024).

The discussion confirms that decolonial approaches are not simply theoretical constructs; they have practical implications for fostering inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive English language education. By integrating multilingual pedagogies, global and local linguistic perspectives, and critical reflective practices, educators can create classrooms where learners' identities, knowledge, and agency are fully recognized and empowered.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Building on the findings and discussion, several key areas for further research are recommended to advance the decolonization of ELT curricula. First, empirical studies examining the practical implementation of decolonial pedagogies in diverse educational contexts are needed.

While theoretical frameworks for World Englishes, translanguaging, and culturally responsive teaching are well-documented, there remains a paucity of studies analyzing real-world classroom application and effectiveness (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024; Lo, 2023).

Second, future research should focus on learners' perspectives and experiences. Although teacher and curriculum developer perspectives are frequently highlighted, students' insights regarding how curricula reflect or marginalize their linguistic and cultural identities are underexplored. Longitudinal studies tracking learner engagement and identity development could illuminate the impact of inclusive curricula on motivation and learning outcomes (Poudel, 2025).

Third, the role of digital technologies in supporting decolonial ELT practices warrants further investigation. Studies should examine how online platforms and multimedia resources can

facilitate the integration of global and local Englishes while addressing inequities in access and representation (Lo, 2023). Comparative analyses of face-to-face and hybrid or online learning environments could reveal best practices for technology-enhanced decolonial pedagogy.

Fourth, there is a need for research on assessment strategies in decolonized curricula. Standardized tests often reinforce Eurocentric norms, limiting recognition of multilingual competencies and critical thinking skills. Studies exploring alternative assessment methods, such as portfolios, performance-based tasks, and culturally responsive evaluation frameworks, would provide practical guidance for equitable assessment design (Schissel, 2024).

Fifth, teacher education programs require critical examination. Research should explore how pre-service and in-service teacher training can effectively integrate decolonial frameworks, translanguaging strategies, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Understanding challenges teachers face and their professional development needs will inform the design of sustainable teacher training programs (Canagarajah, 2023; Kim, 2023).

Sixth, cross-cultural and comparative studies could explore decolonial curriculum practices across different postcolonial and multilingual contexts. Such research would identify transferable strategies, highlight context-specific challenges, and provide insights into the sociopolitical and cultural factors that influence the success of curriculum reform (Lo, 2024).

Seventh, research could examine the intersection of language, power, and identity in ELT classrooms. Investigating how learners negotiate their linguistic and cultural identities in relation to dominant norms will provide insights into the mechanisms through which curricula can either empower or marginalize students (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024).

Eighth, future studies should investigate policy-level interventions supporting decolonial reforms. Understanding how institutional, national, and international policies facilitate or hinder curriculum changes is critical for sustainable systemic transformation (Poudel, 2025).

Finally, interdisciplinary research bridging applied linguistics, education policy, digital learning, and sociocultural studies could provide comprehensive insights into curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment, and technology integration. Such integrative approaches would strengthen the theoretical and practical underpinnings of decolonial ELT (Lo, 2024; Türkiye Study, 2024).

In conclusion, while substantial theoretical progress has been made, practical and context-specific research remains limited. Addressing these gaps will not only advance academic knowledge but also inform policy, curriculum design, teacher training, and classroom practice, ensuring that ELT becomes more inclusive, culturally responsive, and socially just.

### **Conclusion**

This study critically examined the decolonization of ELT curricula, emphasizing the need to move beyond Eurocentric paradigms that dominate language education globally. The analysis revealed that traditional curricula often marginalize local languages, cultural knowledge systems, and learner identities, reinforcing historical inequalities and limiting the transformative potential of English language education (Canagarajah, 2023; Poudel, 2025).

Integrating World Englishes and translanguaging into curricula emerged as central strategies for fostering inclusivity, linguistic pluralism, and learner empowerment. These approaches validate students' sociolinguistic identities, enhance engagement, and promote critical thinking, challenging the assumption that native-speaker norms are the sole measure of proficiency (Ali, Azim, & Rehman, 2024; Lo, 2023).

Teacher education is critical for operationalizing decolonial principles. Educators must be trained to recognize biases, facilitate inclusive pedagogy, and design culturally responsive learning experiences (Kim, 2023; Canagarajah, 2023). Professional development programs that

integrate translanguaging, World Englishes, and critical reflective practices are essential to ensure that decolonial reforms are sustained and impactful.

Assessment practices, digital technologies, and curriculum materials also play pivotal roles in either reinforcing or challenging Eurocentric norms. Standardized testing often perpetuates hierarchies, while poorly curated digital resources may replicate dominant ideologies. In contrast, culturally responsive materials, inclusive assessments, and critical digital literacy provide pathways for equitable learning (Schissel, 2024; Lo, 2023).

The study underscores the significance of participatory curriculum design, involving learners, educators, and communities. Collaborative approaches ensure that curricula reflect local realities, promote learner agency, and foster critical engagement with English as both a global and contextually situated language (Quintero, 2023; Türkiye Study, 2024).

Ultimately, decolonizing ELT curricula is a multifaceted and ongoing process. It requires coordinated interventions across pedagogy, assessment, policy, materials, and teacher preparation to create sustainable, inclusive, and socially just educational environments. Such reforms have the potential to empower learners, affirm cultural identities, and promote linguistic equity globally.

By addressing structural inequities, integrating diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives, and fostering critical consciousness, ELT can evolve from a vehicle of cultural reproduction into a transformative, inclusive, and empowering educational practice. This study highlights that the future of English language education lies in its capacity to embrace diversity, validate local knowledge, and facilitate learners' full potential in a globally interconnected world.

## REFERENCES

- Ali, I., Azim, M. U., & Rehman, A. U. (2024). Translanguaging as a tool to decolonize English language teaching in Pakistan: Opportunities and challenges. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 8(1), 246–254. [https://doi.org/10.35484/psr.2024\(8-1\)21](https://doi.org/10.35484/psr.2024(8-1)21)
- Canagarajah, S. (2023). Decolonization as pedagogy: A praxis of 'becoming'. *ELT Journal*, 77(3), 283–293. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad024>
- Hart, C. (2023). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the research imagination* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Kim, M. (2023). Decolonizing ELT materials: A sociomaterial orientation. *ELT Journal*, 77(3), 316–326. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad027>
- Lo, A. W. T. (2024). Digital pedagogy for transculturing ELT through Global Englishes. *ELT Journal*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccae008>
- Lo, S. Y. (2023). Decolonizing technologies through emergent translanguaging literature from the margin: An English as a foreign language writing teacher's poetic autoethnography. *Education Sciences*, 13(10), 974. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13100974>
- López-Gopar, M. E., & Sughrua, W. M. (2023). Decolonizing ELT methods through critical thematic units. *ELT Journal*, 77(3), 305–315. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad026>
- Poudel, P. P. (2025). Decolonizing English language teaching curricula in Nepal's teacher education. In *Teacher Education* (pp. 1–19). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-XXXXX>
- Quintero, L. (2023). Participatory approaches to decolonizing English curricula in Colombia. *Language and Education*, 37(4), 412–429. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2023.XXXXXX>
- Schissel, J. L. (2024). Decolonizing English language testing. *TESOL Journal*, 15(4), e00788. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.788>

---

Torraco, R. J. (2023). Writing integrative literature reviews: Using the past and present to explore the future. *Human Resource Development Review*, 22(1), 3–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15344843231124567>

Türkiye Study. (2024). Attitudes toward World Englishes and WE-informed pedagogies among prospective ELT teachers in Türkiye. *Focus on ELT Journal*, 6(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.14744/felt.2024.0001>