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Editorial

## Critical Issues in ELT- Thematic Issue

### Aspectos críticos en la enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

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Welcome to this Thematic Number of our Ñemityra Journal on Critical Issues in English Language Teaching (ELT). In this edition, we explore topics that go beyond the teaching, learning or proficiency of the language and have an impact on the development of students or teachers in ELT.

Not everybody likes changes or innovation, however, change is a constant element in all aspects of human life. Language teaching and learning have also changed and evolved, now teachers and students get involved in a more globalized world. This fact makes them realize of other realities and they can engage in dialogues that can open up their personal and professional perspectives. Innovation is the way educators engage in creating new ways to do what they have doing but adapting these actions to new situations and new contexts. In these new contexts is that Critical Issues emerge in ELT. According to Kubota (2020), criticality engages with several aspects related to culture, gender, identity, and intercultural skills. The incursion of criticality in ELT, for some decades now, has had an effect on the efforts that scholars around the world have made in order to raise awareness on issues that still try to maintain certain ideologies as the dominant ones in our field. (Canagarajah, 2020). Some of these topics are reflected in this Thematic Issue of Ñemityra.

The first article titled **Grappling with Power and Privilege in the United States**. Housel talks about the vital importance for educators to reflect on oppressive dynamics and how they manifest and impact professionally. This autoethnographic inquiry focuses on the prevalence of racism and sexism in American society.

Another critical issue in ELT is the still going on discussion between native and non-native speakers of English. The article focuses on the complexities of identity development through language and agency. In their article: **To be the person who is not the native speaker**, Steffanell and Méndez-Rivera discuss intercultural communicative competence as a goal for cross-cultural experiences in EFL. This topic has increased its complexity as a result of critical considerations on interculturality and language learning.

Naturally, gender and gender roles emerged in this thematic issue. In their article: **The emotional journey of female novice researchers in Mexico**, Salas and Flores, aboard the social-emotional aspects of female novice researchers. The article presents the findings of a qualitative narrative inquiry that explored the emotional landscape of a group of Mexican female language teachers who were entering the field of research. The transition from teaching

to research involves a process of insights and awareness of the factors that affect the emotional status of female novice researchers.

Innovative methodologies make students take agency on their own learning. In their article: **Student task engagement in remote language learning during the pandemic**, González Muñoz and Canese explore a critical time and its effects on young students. However, their results indicated that having well-defined perspectives and the development of several strategies, teachers could promote language task engagement during remote instructions.

Finally, as a reminder that English has been considered as a lingua franca and may serve as a uniting element among different life perspectives. Aldana presents her powerful article: **Amplifying English Language Teachers' in-betweenness of their experiences in peace construction**, which makes readers reflect on the wide scope that ELT can offer not only within, but beyond the classroom. Aldana's inquiry approached English language teachers' experiences in peace construction from diverse Colombian territories where dehumanizing practices prevail. ELT is then, an effort to recognize language as a tool for reconciliation, understanding, and conflict resolution. Through language education, the members of the ELT community aim to cultivate empathy and promote peaceful coexistence.

We invite readers to join us on this intellectual journey as we explore these critical issues, by implementing more inclusive and harmonious practices through the transformative power of English Language Teaching.

## References

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- Kubota, R. (2020). Confronting epistemological racism, decolonizing scholarly knowledge: Race and gender in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(5), 712-732.