

An-other* Reading of Peace Construction in ELT

[Artículos]

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Abstract

Someone recently suggested to me: “war is more profitable than peace” (J. Rodríguez, personal communication, October 24th, 2017). This prompted my consideration of the idea that peace construction in multiple settings could entail purposes other than the taken-for-granted and literal ones (Aldana, in press). In this reflective article, within the journal’s language and conflict theme, I will discuss discourses related to the handling of peace construction in order to examine its transformation in governmental, academic and media documents up to 2019. Documents containing the word *peace* in various contexts were selected, and as such the period varied. The work is approached from my

* *An-other*: This concept is proposed in decolonial studies, such as those by Mignolo, to define alternatives to canonical perspectives, without enacting their inner logic and assumptions.

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position as a mixed-race educator and researcher with a decolonial and critical epistemological perspective. This qualitative exploratory study approaches peace construction in ELT from a field of methodological uncertainties and a creative toolbox. Both historicizing and critical discourse analysis resources are employed in an inclusionary manner to achieve the eventualisation (Restrepo, 2008) of multiple ways of understanding and referring to the construction of peace in ELT. In this sense, the role of language appears as an underlying starting point. The results discuss the discourse about pacification for progress in ELT as a discursive event with different universal and market interests. It constitutes an alternative reading of peace construction in ELT as linked to seemingly disperse discursive events mediated by language in real documents.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, historization, English language teaching, peace construction, decolonial perspectives.

Una lectura otra sobre la construcción de paz en la enseñanza del inglés

Resumen

Alguien expresó en mi pasado reciente: “la guerra es más rentable que la paz” (J. Rodríguez, comunicación personal, octubre 24 de 2017). Este comentario me hizo pensar en que la construcción de paz en múltiples escenarios implicaría otros propósitos más allá de lo literal (Aldana, en prensa). En este artículo de reflexión, en la línea temática de lenguaje y conflicto de la revista, se discuten algunos discursos subyacentes al tratamiento dado a la construcción de paz, para comprender su transformación desde documentos gubernamentales, académicos y periodísticos recuperados hasta el año 2019. Como criterio para su selección, se tuvo en cuenta la aparición de la palabra *paz* en diversos contextos, lo que implicó una consecuente variación en los periodos de cada tipo de documento. Esta aproximación tiene lugar desde la

perspectiva de una mujer educadora e investigadora mestiza, cuyo posicionamiento epistemológico es decolonial con elementos críticos. Esta investigación de corte cualitativo-exploratorio estudia la construcción de paz en la Enseñanza del Inglés (EI), desde un *campo de incertidumbres* metodológicas que retan la rigidez de los diseños metodológicos prescriptivos. Por esto, acudimos a una caja de herramientas que posibilitó la selección de recursos metodológicos para la historización y el análisis crítico del discurso. Con la eventualización (Restrepo, 2008) realizada, se rastrearon diferentes maneras de entender y referirse a la construcción de paz. En este sentido, el uso del lenguaje jugó un papel importante. Los resultados reflejan el discurso de pacificación para el progreso en ELT como un evento discursivo con diferentes intereses universales bajo las lógicas del mercado. Constituye una lectura alternativa de la construcción de la paz en ELT, en tanto ligada a eventos discursivos aparentemente dispersos y mediados por el lenguaje en documentos reales.

Palabras clave: análisis crítico del discurso, historización, enseñanza del inglés, construcción de paz, perspectivas decoloniales.

Um lendo outro sobre a construção da paz no ensino de Inglês

Resumo

Alguém expressou no meu passado recente: "a guerra é mais lucrativa do que a paz" (J. Rodríguez, comunicação pessoal, 24 de outubro de 2017). Esse comentário me fez pensar que a construção da paz em múltiplos cenários implicaria outros propósitos além do literal (Aldana, na imprensa). Neste artigo de reflexão, na linha temática de linguagem e conflito da revista, são discutidos alguns discursos subjacentes ao tratamento dado à construção da paz, para compreender sua transformação a partir de documentos governamentais, acadêmicos e jornalísticos recuperados até o ano de 2019. Como critério para a seleção,

foi levada em conta o aparecimento da palavra *paz* em diversos contextos, o que implicava uma conseqüente variação nos períodos de cada tipo de documento. Essa abordagem se dá na perspectiva de uma educadora e pesquisadora mestiça, cujo posicionamento epistemológico é decolonial com elementos críticos. Esta pesquisa qualitativa-exploratória estuda a construção da paz no Ensino de Inglês (EI), a partir de um campo de incertezas metodológicas que desafiam a rigidez dos desenhos metodológicos prescritivos. Por essa razão, recorreremos a uma caixa de ferramentas que possibilitou a seleção de recursos metodológicos para historização e análise crítica do discurso. Com a eventualização (Restrepo, 2008) realizada, diferentes formas de compreender e referir-se à construção da paz foram traçadas. Nesse sentido, o uso da linguagem teve um papel importante. Os resultados refletem o discurso de pacificação para o progresso na ELT como um evento discursivo com diferentes interesses universais sob as lógicas do mercado. Constitui uma leitura alternativa da construção da paz na ELT, pois está ligada a eventos discursivos aparentemente dispersos e mediados pela linguagem em documentos reais.

Palavras-chave: análise crítica do discurso, historização, ensino de inglês, construção da paz, perspectivas decoloniais.

Introduction

Language use and the colonial mechanisms behind phenomena mediated through language in different scenarios and resources may incorporate stories underlying the emergence of discursive formations which refer to diverse phenomena in real life. From my perspective as a mixed-race language teacher and educator, I have explored certain situations and statements referring to peace construction in order to understand the intricacies, emergences and changes which point towards a transformation in terms of the emerging *pacification for progress in ELT*.

To this end, I historicized the construction of peace in Colombia, while making connections to the ELT field. In this sense, I combined historicizing strategies with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as part of the ongoing toolbox – in a field of uncertainties – which I created for methodological purposes during 2019, while interacting with teachers participating in this project. Indeed, for some sections I chose a narrative style in order to include my experience and learning experiences within the PhD program, whilst epistemologically reflecting upon the methodological tensions in my research and work.

It is worth mentioning that both intellectual intra- and inter-personal reflections made previously provided me with further perspectives from which to understand and address peace construction in ELT. Therefore, this manuscript constitutes an-other reading, articulating different stages in this research. In addition, some documents were selected and filtered, as they showed the occurrence of the word ‘peace’ in particular statements. As a result, different periods of time have been analysed, according to the type of documents retrieved. As a result, this historicizing resource produced an archive in a nonlinear timeline. In particular, National Development Plans in Colombia that were chosen were produced within the presidential terms of Belisario (1982-1986), Uribe (2002-2010), Santos (2010-2018), and Duque (2018-2022). Language policies considered here involved the 2004 National Bilingualism Plan, along with related policies issued in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Another educational policy consulted, “Lineamientos para la atención educativa a la población vulnerable” (*Guidelines for the education of vulnerable populations*, National Ministry of Education [MEN], 2014) was more general and not exclusively for ELT. Additionally, selected academic documents’ time frames were 2007, 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2018. These

documents included theses, articles, and one online educational submission. Finally, some selected news articles were published in 2017 and 2018.

This article reflects upon the eventualization of certain discourses employed for referring to peace construction in ELT and the possible role of teachers. More precisely, the study explores and unveils hidden meanings, interests and resignifications of peace construction when transformed within different discursive events seemingly responding to the *pacification for progress discourse*, taking into account multiple documents produced in real-life scenarios.

A major challenge in this work was to transform my own mind-set in order to acknowledge the relevance of certain factors and sources, such as news articles or theses, as valuable information, which may contribute to an alternative account regarding peace construction in ELT.

With this in mind, I encountered multifaceted phenomena concerning the emergence of peace construction in ELT. I will refer to them from an eclectic (Navarrete, 2009) epistemological position linking post-structuralist and decolonial stances, as I expressed in PhD classes based on a reflective paper submitted on June 23rd, 2019. Diverse connections were identified between seemingly disperse events that illustrated the complexity behind *peace construction*, and its relational appearance in Colombian ELT settings. Some conceptual background information informed these understandings. Among the major theoretical concepts, peace construction, English language teaching, and neoliberalism supported this reflection. The analysis was informed by these concepts rather than being constrained by them.

Conceptual framework

Notwithstanding this is a reflection article rather than a scientific one, a theoretical clarification around certain concepts that may inform this reflection deserve attention. It is worth clarifying that this work has not been undertaken to validate these theories. In effect, I clarify these concepts' theoretical meanings to identify how *certain* or given categories (macro categories) may reflect some discontinuities or continuities in linear teleological progress (Cerruti, 2012; Foucault, 1971).

More particularly, this reflection article considers, but is not constrained to, the overall discussion of the following conceptual definitions, which constitute permanently transformed theories. Indeed, the methodological decisions explained in the next section point to the possibility of problematizing 'certain' or taken-for-granted categories in the historicizing practice which describes the world. Thus, discursive events suggested by theoretical concepts may not constitute the only conditions for the emergence of the pacification for progress discourse within the search for peace construction in ELT.

Firstly, peace as a single lexical unit stems from the Latin word *pax*, meaning "a subtle panoramic concept that denotes ideal social, cultural, economic and ecological relationships among all life forms in nature" (Miller, 2005. Cited in Gebregeorgis, 2017, p. 57). Although there may be a universalizing discourse behind this definition, I highlight the integration of different dimensions and social institutions. For this reason, peace and its construction may be human and complex rather than monolithic and abstract (Maldonado, 2009; Aldana, in press).

At the same time, I consider Galtung's ideas regarding peace in relation to PC. He is considered one of its principal promoters since 1969. In fact, some sources mentioned here cite Galtung's perspectives. This author

theorized and coined the term peace research. Specifically, he expresses one of the key “*simple principles*” that “*peace is absence of violence*” (Galtung, 1969, p. 167), and particularly the direct one, i.e. the warlike and physical one (Roa-Suarez, 2012). In this work, Galtung (1969) proposes both negative and positive peace. In the former, conflict presence is denied in PC, while the latter assumes conflict as part of everyday life with PC existing as a way of solving it (Galtung, 1969).

Another concept to clarify here corresponds to English language teaching or ELT. To understand it, we may refer to Pennycook (2001), as this author challenges the structural and instrumental understanding of Applied Linguistics (AL) to ELT, and proposes it as an educational field more concerned with critical pedagogy than structural teaching. This author relates critical applied linguistics to ELT, and in this case links language to political phenomena as part of everyday life. As a result, concerns in AL in relation to ELT offer broader possibilities of action in that field, such as: micro and macro relationships in the language class; critical social inquiry; self-reflexivity; and critical theory, among others, explained by Pennycook (2001). Overall, language appears as a mediator or a means, rather than a linguistic system and the main objective of the language teaching practice.

Along these lines, neoliberalism constitutes the final concept to be clarified in this reflection. Firstly, as a political and economic theory, according to which liberation was principally focused on the economic dimension of life, rather than sociocultural or other humanistic ones. Hence, capitalism emerges as the frame through which we examine all societal institutions’ goals and human action. According to de Sousa (2018), neoliberalism “*proclaims that capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy are the natural way of life*” (p. 32). In so doing, neoliberalism acquires a universalizing

nature in which global capitalism becomes the regulating model for development, even in reference to the sphere of education.

Methodological considerations

This exploratory qualitative research is concerned with possible discursive links between peace construction and ELT, manifested in actual documents.

Rather than a normative approach to reality, I chose an interpretive panorama of methodological contribution, beginning in 2019 from a decolonial perspective supported by some critical elements, such as the focus on power abuse. Specifically, I manifested this proposal and interest in both oral presentations in 2019, and in a written reflection on methodological tensions within a *field of uncertainties* (p. 10) submitted at the beginning of last year¹. In my PhD studies, these presentations and the text I produced constituted relevant spaces to discuss a preliminary set of methodological assumptions identified during 2019. Within them, diverse discursive tensions and dilemmas encountered during research were addressed, and my locus of enunciation as a mixed-race educator and researcher was more prominent. In other words, I am referring to a permanent epistemological reflexivity (Vasilachis, 2009) which paved the way for constantly transformed methodological decisions which in turn led to my conclusion. As a consequence, I felt able to challenge a constraining frame when encountering an established and compartmentalized discourse around how to do research in ELT. Taken-for-granted discourses behind peace construction in general, and in Applied Linguistics to ELT in particular, were more visible through this methodological transformation.

¹ This paper was the product of epistemological reflexivity in a research seminar during 2019 in the PhD program. It was a contribution inspired by these research participants who interacted with me in different co-learning scenarios.

A multifaceted strategy as part of a toolbox for everlasting construction of methodology became possible. Within qualitative research, there are diverse designs (Creswell, 2007), but an interpretive one was selected to integrate a combination of historicizing and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) strategies. Identifying the historical conditions for the emergence of enunciations through multiple statements found in these documents revealed an alternative approach to history and its role in research (Foucault, 1996).

Rather than considering the submission of space to time, typical in the modern concept of history (Foucault, 1996), the research methodology explores documents that locate events in spaces which are dynamically related to time. Therefore, rather than addressing a teleological continuity of progress within a linear understanding of history, this historicizing strategy is characterised by discontinuities entailed by seemingly disperse events underpinning discursive enunciations *beyond* a continuous timeline.

These account for emergent knowledge of PC in ELT from and through actual documents. At this point, historicizing involved the concept of *event* beyond its literal meaning by acknowledging its discursive dimension. The process of analysis behind *eventualization* – in historicizing – maintains our distance from what seems evident through certain discourses (Foucault, 2002; Restrepo, 2008).

At the same time, Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) constitutes here an alternative to the interpretation of documents *beyond* and *with* the *linguistic* grammars which make *social* grammars visible. That particular methodological assumption guided the CDA application. Historicizing peace construction in ELT by tracing back discursive enunciations as events required the study of “the relationship between discourse,

domination, and dissent” (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 479). In other words, I refer to CDA as both a process and a perspective in order to unveil tendencies and hidden agendas of “power abuse” mediated by language (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 479). For instance, one strategy utilized in this research for applying CDA was that of Lexicometry (Wodak, 2013). Indeed, the high occurrence or frequency of lexical units facilitated the identification of discursive priorities in favour of certain ideological purposes in each enunciation related to peace construction in ELT.

Findings: An-other reading on peace construction from a multifaceted lens

Some phenomena appear discursively constituted to re-signify peace construction in ELT, even when this is not evident or legitimated at first glance. This aspect was a motivating force for the project, and the findings appear to support such a connection. On the one hand, a possible reification or objectification of peace construction in ELT seems to perpetuate a universalizing manner of understanding it (Aldana, in press). For example, peace education and peacebuilding seem to be applied through a general and universalizing list of contents, in relation to which teachers and students appear as consumers of global models of peace construction. In consequence, stereotypical comprehensions of peace construction may produce equally stereotypical images of those who embark on it. This was one of the contexts prompting me to explore further or alternative readings (referred to later.)

Certainly, assertions such as: “you are the model of peaceful behaviour from now on; if you are working on peace construction, you must display harmonious behaviour with no conflict at all”; “you are not applying the initiative or area of peace construction to your own life” (personal communication, September, 2019), among others, may reflect some

stereotypical images around those who construct peace in ELT. Some English teachers who have worked on peace construction told me they often hear such comments from others, even within the ELT field. This demonstrates how the multifaceted concept of peace construction seems understood only from certain angles, resulting in harmful or structurally violent (Galtung, 1969), and biased discourses around peace construction in ELT. Nevertheless, some teachers opt to transcend these discourses, which are part of truth regimes (Foucault, 1996), even when this choice may be at a significant emotional cost.

Peace within a marketing frame

When considering peace and its construction, various understandings can be traced through actual documents. From this retrospective exploration, there appears to be a marketing frame within which peace is positioned. In other words, a discourse about peace as an asset or resource to indirectly produce financial income emerges. As such, peace and its construction may be understood within a marketing and globalizing discourse of effectiveness and quality within an atmosphere of enterprise.

The current National Development Plan 2018-2022 (NDP, 2019) incorporates an *efficiency* discourse in education for referring to what this document calls *a challenge of efficient interventions in peace construction* (Excerpt 1). Thus, it seems to reproduce a neoliberal discourse of the school as an enterprise where conditions of *quality* supported by *efficiency* and other economic principles need guaranteeing, even through peace construction. Within a marketing frame, this also appears in the National Program of Bilingualism, launched in 2004, which focuses on, among other areas, the objectives of education and its quality in the XXI century (Excerpt 2), based on the target of the “*Plan decenal de educación.*” (10-year education plan).

Excerpt 1

Reto: Coordinar al Estado para intervenciones eficientes de construcción de paz (DNP, 2019, p. 150)

“Aim: Coordinate the State for interventions in the efficient construction of peace”

Excerpt 2

Asamblea Nacional: Fines de la educación y su calidad en siglo XXI (PNB, 2004-2019)

“National Assembly: Educational aims and quality in the XXI Century”

Similarly, the National program of English (MEN, 2015) refers to learning environments of *quality* along with its improvement (Excerpt 3). The Basic Learning Rights for both primary and secondary students (MEN, 2016c) promote the same *quality in education* discourse (Excerpt 3). The most important implication of this is that any reference to peace construction such as equity - as we will later discuss - apparently acquires an economic purpose. The previous government’s National Development Plan 2014-2018 (DNP, 2015) illustrates this when specifically communicating the idea of *economic development management* and *competitiveness* that also contains common enterprise-based language (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3

...Ambientes de aprendizaje de calidad El Programa Nacional de Inglés, COLOMBIA Very Well! es una iniciativa que se suma a los otros programas impulsados por el MEN para favorecer el mejoramiento de la calidad de la educación (MEN, 2015, p. 2).

...y que pueda invertir recursos en mejorar la cobertura y calidad de su sistema educativo

...Competitividad e infraestructura estratégicas (DNP, 2015, p. 4).

“‘COLOMBIA Very Well!’, a quality learning environment within the National English Program, is an initiative which, along with others promoted by the Ministry of Education, favours the improvement of educational quality.

... which can invest resources in improvements in the quality and coverage of its educational system

... Competitiveness and infrastructure strategies”

Indeed, the tendency to install neoliberal interests or objectives into educational proposals such as peace construction seems recurrent, even in news items. As an illustration, one Colombian magazine column in 2016 may trivialize and commodify peace construction in this country when designating it, along with other post-conflict sites, as potential territories for touristic and economic development (Excerpt 4). Furthermore, a modelling discourse behind the statement about Cartagena as an example for other cities may suggest a hierarchical approach for comprehending territories where peace-related issues and initiatives take place. The *quality in education* discourse is portrayed as the priority in this news item, and the lack of this is described as the cause of the public educational system’s weaknesses (Excerpt 5). With this statement, official or public education also seems marked as *weak* in relation to private, while perpetuating a dichotomy and an opposition between these contrasting types of educational scenarios. An elitist discourse may support this canonical boundary and division.

Excerpt 4

Cartagena podría ser el ejemplo de cómo una ciudad de Colombia se beneficia del proceso de paz; solo se requiere de cero corrupción y que quienes gobiernan puedan crear un sistema educativo de buena calidad y pertinente a su enorme potencial de desarrollo turístico, industrial y marítimo (Pérez, 2016, par. 1).

“Cartagena could be an example of how a Colombian city can benefit from the peace process. The only pre-requisite is zero-corruption and for those who govern to create a good-quality educational system, in line with its enormous touristic, industrial and maritime potential”.

Excerpt 5

Cartagena and the rest of the potential territories for touristic development in post-conflict Colombian have been affected by the weakness of the official educational system, and this is not only regarding its quality (Pérez, 2016, par. 3).

The economic interest behind peace and English teaching is reinforced in this news report when expressing that if students find it difficult to communicate with visitors in Cartagena – a place where the peace agreements would be signed, according to the article – the principal reason would be the lack of appropriate training for the purpose of economic development, as excerpt 6 suggests (Pérez, 2016).

Peace construction in educational settings and, particularly, in English language classes may emerge as a neoliberal objective (Hurie, 2018). In this news report, for example, the peacetime tourist sector represents an important source of capital for the English language teaching enterprise within a marketing frame. In the same vein, another news report in 2017 refers to the *Soledad Bilingüe* program as linked to this municipality’s

development plan that aims at more *quality* education for peace, along with English as a cultural element for *development* and *competitiveness* (Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 6

[...] ...but a lack of an appropriate education for economic development (Pérez 2016, par. 3).

Excerpt 7

The bilingualism initiative is considered in the “Soledad Confiable” Development Plan, which states among its aims, the achievement of an educated municipality and with quality for peace, promoting the English language use as a cultural element of development and competitiveness. (Patiño, 2017, par. 2).

A pertinent question is the role attributed to teachers in the construction of peace within this marketing frame. Again, a possible answer sheds light on a *must-be* discourse represented by the *instructor* role. What can we do from that role? What are the demands made on teachers? Although these questions will be discussed presently, it should be noted that *becoming* a particular *someone* when constructing peace from ELT constitutes a political decision, not only influenced by stakeholders through NDPs or bilingual policies with a neoliberal stance (teachers as market officials and state officials), but also the mass media. These embrace discourses that could impact on both teachers’ and others’ perceptions of their roles.

In the news article (excerpt 6), there could be a *deficit discourse* to understand both students and teachers who are thought of as having the *need* to become bilingual from a reductionist and imperialist position where a *monolingual bilingualism* (Aldana, 2019) is pursued, i.e.

acquiring and validating a standardized high English language level. Although in-service teachers are already educating students, their further pedagogical knowledge(s) and their bilingual status as speaking both Spanish and English seem undervalued. In this news article, teachers appear as beneficiaries of the language training too (Excerpt 8). Interestingly, the language use in those news articles includes the *maximization discourse*, which frequently employs high figures to provoke a sense of impact and certainty in readers, especially for economic purposes (Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8

The process also includes the training for 90 teachers from high school. The second phase, planned for 2018 and 2019, will benefit 25.000 students from 6th to 11th grades, and a further 85 teachers. (Patiño, 2017, par. 3)

Peace within a challenged modern frame

In my first (November 7th, 2018) and second (April 30th and October 16th, 2019) versions of the ongoing and changeable problematization (Restrepo, 2008) of the doctoral research proposal, along with the profiling work (June 18th, 2019), I examined relevant documents to contextualize the study. However, I had not considered the importance of further and, perhaps, seemingly non-informative documents, which could involve more discursive events surrounding peace construction in ELT. These documents include some National Development Plans in Colombia that tackled peace differently within a context of more than 55 years' armed conflict and various attempts at peace talks, national language policies connected to the previous ones, and some mass media communications.

In this section, I reflect upon the relevant documents and how modernity seems to shape peace, but also how tackling that peace has produced alternative responses in Colombia. For this, it is worth noting that monolithic and universal understandings of peace in colonial discourses may experience resignifications in some authentic teachers' actions and proposals traced back through academic abstracts, journals, Gruplacs², universities' curricula and repositories. I will contrast these to identify possible tensions or complementary relations amongst them. Overall, I shall express that peace and its construction within a modern frame appears through transforming or changing scenarios (Aldana, in press), inasmuch as this seems reshaped by some institutions and English language teachers who create discursive alternatives to instrumentalized peace in ELT.

De Sousa (2009) discusses the dominant and emergent paradigms as possibly demonstrating a different lens or direction in human history where these epistemological and methodological options may not necessarily be disconnected to each other, but they could interact within a dialogue of knowledge. The *pacification for progress* (Aldana, in press), discourse in the ELT field is present in certain discursive formations around peace construction in ELT that pursue its unlearning and re-learning. This is one of the major findings of this ongoing historicizing and CDA research. To support it, I refer to various discourses originating from documents, such as those already mentioned.

Firstly, the 'pacification for progress' discourse appears constituted by certain taken-for-granted values or principles which establish an abstract and, perhaps, *totalizing* citizenship to create a profile of an ideal subject

² This refers to a platform of the Colciencias organization, which systematizes information about research groups in Colombia.

for *all* societies or a *new* country, as the BLRs (MEN, 2016b) and the Educational guidelines for vulnerable populations state (MEN, 2014). Teachers and educational institutions are assigned a chief role in that task. Indeed, the school is portrayed as a protecting and protected setting for children and adolescents at risk (MEN, 2014). While we consider the transformation of who we are in society, there appears to be a homogenizing and idealizing mechanism that aims to shape our beings for the sake of peaceful societies within the frame of universal understanding. Specifically, one of those modern values characterizing what we can identify as the *modern peaceful subject* encompasses *equity* (Excerpt 9), which is sometimes linked to marketing interests and discourses. Another value corresponds to *pacific living* which has been presented as a goal of peace construction (Excerpt 10), and a compulsory *essential* theme for school curricula (Excerpt 11), as part of an underlying *standardization* discourse. Within it, a reiterative target regarding citizenship is suggested through a discourse of reintegration and reparation in which victims may display special educational needs that could be met by different pedagogies (Excerpt 12). It is worth considering the type of citizen these particular and legitimated ways of teaching initiatives are aimed at, in a kind of transformative peace construction, as Diazgranados et al. (2014) also assert when discussing the *Juegos de paz* ('peace games') program in Colombian rural areas which promote citizenship competencies.

Excerpt 9

Throughout the territory there is the possibility, in the medium term, to enjoy a future where legality is fulfilled, entrepreneurship is fostered and finally equity exists (Duque, 2018, p. 4)

Excerpt 10

Co-existence and social cohesion: Guaranteeing pacific coexistence and the access to the Schooling Coexistence (NDP, 2018-2022, p. 101)

Excerpt 11

For that reason, different essential topics are integrated through English teaching, such as health, and coexistence. ... (MEN, 2016b, p. 9)

Excerpt 12

[The victims]... these ones require a special process of reincorporation to the school, and they have special educational needs, and differential educative attention (MEN, 2014, p. 107)

The British Council in Colombia has similarly approached peace construction as social development through the *Active Citizens* program which they have promoted since 2009. This organization has proposed and carried out workshops helping participants become active citizens through social leadership and intercultural dialogue on a community level, even in rural areas (Excerpt 13). In this case, becoming an active citizen implies the development of actions for a more inclusive and just society, based on the guidelines taught in the program workshops (Excerpt 13). A possible *universalizing* - and thus modern - discourse may appear here, when presenting *workshops' teachings* as the source of practices to be applied by *all* people in the world (Excerpt 13).

Excerpt 13

The program employs the terms: “active citizenship” and “active citizen” to refer to those people, men and women, boys and girls, who put the teachings of this initiative into practice that is managed by the British

Council; this implements it together with other organizations of the civil society around the world. (BC, 2017, p. 8)

Certain works developed by teachers above take place in scenarios where the murder of social leaders have increased since 2019 during post-agreement times (Excerpt 14). In teachers' written works, there is an expressed interest in contributing to an education where students are able to solve conflicts and problems through alternative means, such as *reconciliation* (Westwood, 2014), without drawing necessarily on direct violence-driven notions (NDP, 2015; Yousuf and Shahbaz, 2010). Modern dichotomies around peace construction such as peace versus war are revisited.

Nevertheless, *security* has been cited as another possible principle in peace construction within a broader peace-war discourse in which both discourses appear as opposites. Various Colombian NDPs draw on the security principle, such as Belisario's Citizen Security (1982), Uribe's Democratic Security (2002-2010), Santos' statement: the dream of a secure peaceful country (2010), and Duque's peace contract through legality and security (2018). Peace construction through security mechanisms may imply a citizenship trusting in coercive devices for its achievement. This finding seems important here, given that war-driven discourses appear to remain and support statements about peace construction, from governmental proposals to educational ones, in ELT. Framing peace construction within *legality* and *security* discourses may distort the former, while using the latter two to justify, to a certain extent, direct violent practices (Galtung, 1969) for that purpose.

Excerpt 14

The Human Rights Office of the United Nations Organization cautioned about the increased number of murders of social leaders in Colombia, after noting that 51 cases have been registered during the first four months of 2019.

Along these lines, *democracy* emerges as another modern principle for peace construction, and it appears within the Pedagogical guidelines from the suggested curriculum for ELT (2016b). These guidelines support learning development in a linear fashion where the resolution of conflicts as problems suggests situations related to war and poverty.

While democracy and these aforementioned values may be relevant for post-agreement and post-conflict periods in certain communities, they seem to be represented as unquestionable universal values to be generalized for all contexts (Excerpt 15), replicating the modern logic as a canonical dominant paradigm (de Sousa, 2009), based on totalizing discourses, as this study's problematization explains³ (November 11th, 2018 and April 17th, 2020).

Excerpt 15

The English Basic Learning Rights, which identify key skills and knowledge that all students in grades transition to 11 must develop, have been designed (MEN, 2016c, p. 10).

Chiefly, those modern interests are manifested through the *good practices* and *must-be* discourses in peace construction in ELT, which look to shaping teachers' multiple pedagogical discourses by drawing upon

³ These versions of the problematization have been transformed throughout my studies in the PhD program, reflecting a dynamic epistemological positioning.

progress-based and capitalist frameworks. In the National English Language program (Programa Nacional de Inglés, PNI in its Spanish abbreviation), the MEN (2015) refers to teacher training aimed at progressive interventions for English and its teaching transformations (MEN, 2015, p. 12). Within it, teachers are situated in a workforce position from which *development* is part of the ultimate goal of this *training* to prepare them principally for labour (MEN, 2015, p. 21). What about educating teachers, rather than *recruiting* them (Excerpt 16), as a means of thinking, reflecting, or politically transforming our realities? Here, the word *politically* describes informed decisions in pedagogical practices (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

Excerpt 16

Support the appropriate inclusion of hours for English in the curriculum, and recruit teachers to cover them (MEN, 2015, p. 17)

Consequently, there seems to be an objectifying discourse on peace as content linked to the discourse of good practices in curricula promoted in various documents such as the above *Suggested curriculum for primary and secondary school* (MEN, 2016), which overlaps the *practical guide* for implementing it (MEN, 2016a), together with its *Pedagogical principles and guidelines* (MEN, 2016b).

This invites the question: Is it possible to teach peace as content or as an *essential topic*? What if teachers break the recipe-driven, rigid plan towards achieving it differently in the class, with and for students, rather than only adopting ‘must be’ and ‘good practices’ discourses? What *another* discourses would emerge to complement - instead of denying - formal ones through the work carried out by English language teachers?

At the same time, some theses in universities' repositories allowed me to trace alternative statements related to peace construction in ELT. These seem to transcend the *peace as content* discourse, with alternative resignifications of formal discursive formations (e.g. peace education, peacebuilding...). On the one hand, Cruz (2016) approaches peace construction as the development of curricula with a social sense in order to assist victims of the armed conflict in the process of becoming the "main actors of a new perspective of life" (Cruz, 2016, p. 29). On the other hand, there is a pair of undergraduate students who promote inner peace through cultural understandings within pedagogical intervention employing 'hippy' song lyrics. Even when there is a marked interest in communicative skills in that study, there is also an extracurricular objective based around solving and accepting "people's differences, ideologies and religions" as a principle from the 'hippy' philosophy (Garay and Segura, 2018, p. 17). Finally, there is a Master's thesis linked to a Gruplac that presents peace construction as peace education from which a strategy to foster secondary students' oral communicative ability derives (Merlo and Saenz, 2018).

In this sense, peace construction seems to be approached from multifaceted perspectives, complicating its understanding as a monolithic and mono-discursive phenomenon only inserted within a current temporality which has *finished*, according to some, because of governmental changes. Indeed, a major conclusion I have drawn from the present historicizing and CDA exploration is that inter- and trans-disciplinary dialogues through various types of documents may broaden our comprehension of peace construction in ELT. Moreover, as a life-driven and complex phenomenon this does not appear to be attached to one trivialized temporality, but rather deserves permanent attention in

order to respond to the multiplicity of types of violence we experience on a daily basis.

In addition, peace construction in ELT within a modern frame has been discursively constituted as *English for Peace*, deriving from the governmental strategy called *Tendiendo puentes*. *English for Peace* has been implemented by the Reincorporation and Normalization Agency (RNA) in Yopal. While this organization promotes English for peace for reconciliation purposes (RNA, 2017), there seems to be a colonial discourse in which English as a linguistic and communicative medium is still a principal goal that prevails over other languages and alternative or extra-linguistic contents. Indeed, the RNA's news report (2017) reproduces the discourse around the English language as a linguistic and notional system of content sequenced in the traditional design of language curricula, such as colours, body parts or days of the week, which are assumed to take children out of violent scenarios. Could languages other than English be integrated towards peace construction? Could peace construction be incorporated in the English class beyond canonical abstract contents, more in line with students' lifestyles? Once again, the *pacification for progress* discourse is enacted, reinforcing what is thought to lead students to an imagined progress in contemporary colonial Colombian society. In other words, I refer to communicative and structural competences in English, as the language for progress, with peace as a secondary instrument to achieve this. What if English were employed as the pretext and means to construct peace in classes in a manner more connected to students' and teachers' lives?

For this reason, *English for Peace* has been perceived as a neoliberal discourse in Colombia that actually expresses peace and conflict through a technical use of language and its teaching as a tertiary priority

(Hurie, 2018). From the documents' analysis here, *English for Peace* in Colombia appears as a strategy for constructing peace in different cities, such as Yopal (the strategy's pioneer department.) In the formal academic arena, *English for Peace* has been used previously within the proposals of *peace linguistics* (Gomes de Matos, 2014) and *peace sociolinguistics* (Friedrich, 2007). According to Friedrich (2007), *English for Peace* refers to the task of studying, "investigat[ing] and promot[ing] healthy peace-building and peace-maintaining practices within the realm of language" (p. 73). However, a discourse of peace/war or armed conflict oppositions is again reproduced by the linguistic violence or statement of war behind *English for Peace* (Friedrich, 2007). This peace/war discourse appears, indeed, within documents such as the National Development Plan 2014-2018 (DNP, 2015. Excerpt 17), and some teachers' research papers (Gebregeorgis, 2017) that perpetuate this dual discourse. This particular dichotomy of producing a closed system of statements to understand peace construction may reflect neoliberal interests in a closed conceptual system primarily concerned with its incontestability (Vergara, 2018).

Similarly, other organizations such as the Culture of peace news network (2015, Excerpt 18) enact this dual discourse in the interests of neoliberalism. Since dichotomies reduce the world to two possibilities, usually cancelling each other out, we could identify how peace construction in terms of peace/war is inserted into a neoliberal conceptual system. Concepts such as quality, effectiveness, training, management, and instructor are part of marketing-based discourses. These seem to reduce peace construction in ELT to modern capitalist options which refer to and practice it, regardless of the contexts and particularities of the experience. Documents presented here illustrate the appearance of modern dichotomies within a neoliberal system, suggesting the pacification for

progress discourse from *war to peace* conditions. Who and what are in the middle?

Excerpt 17

Based on the previous information, it is possible to identify 3 aspects that propose meaningful opportunities to promote a negotiated solution of the inner armed conflict as a key element of an integral peace strategy. (DNP, 2015, p. 40)

Excerpt 18

Peace has been viewed traditionally as the absence of war or direct violence between two or more parties. (Culture of peace news network, 2015, par. 2)

Interestingly, *English for Peace* as both an enunciation and a discourse may relate to an important background statement: *ESL for Peace* back in 2012. This organization with the same name understood “language learning as a tool for peacebuilding, fostering global citizenship, educating about universal human rights, and promoting democratic education” (ESLforPeace, 2012, par. 1). ESLforPeace, as a Colombian organization and an enunciation in itself about peace construction in ELT, may enact a modern/colonial *nativespeakerism* discourse (Philippson, 2000), when implicitly reinforcing the idea of volunteer native speakers as *key* participants in the promotion of English teaching for peace. On this organization’s website, something interesting takes place in relation to how Canadian and Colombian volunteer English teachers are presented, as indications of possible remaining inequalities. While the former group appears with their *own names* as individual human beings, the latter

group is introduced as institutions⁴. The privilege assigned to native speakers has been related to neoliberal aims of the economic interest implied by some English-speaking first-world countries.

This situation is also reflected in the Minga teachers' organization with various openings for international volunteers in Colombia as peace agents who *must have* a native-speaker accent or a C1 language level certificate (Excerpt 19). This requirement encompasses both the *nativespeakerism* and *standardization* discourses with neoliberal ends, even when proposals for peace construction in Colombia refer to teachers.

Excerpt 19

Native-English speaker or C1 English proficient 4-yr bachelor's degree in any field, EFL Teaching certifications preferred (TEFL, TESOL, CELTA) (Minga teachers⁵)

However, *English for Peace* as a formal governmental initiative has ended, according to a news report by the Corresponsables Foundation (2017), which describes it as an *innovative* communitarian project aiming to take children out of violent environments through English teaching, while simultaneously promoting citizenship empowerment and a culture of peace. Apart from the aforementioned discourses behind this strategy, there appears a linear, teleological or progressive discourse within a development model (Escobar, 2007). In other words, a continuous temporality appears to be embedded within peace construction, which emerged as an imagined option, but now as an outdated target in some contexts. This situation resembles the discourse of educational technology in the 1990s, which was proposed as being in one direction – towards

⁴ Visit this ESLforPeace web site: <http://www.eslforpeace.org/>

⁵ Minga site: <https://www.mingateachers.org/>

progress, in a neoliberal sense – and the feeling of being updated that was attributed as being the solution for everything (Litwin, 2005) in a kind of planned obsolescence.

In the case of peace construction in ELT as *peace education*, something similar occurs. The progressive or teleological discourse seems to position peace education, teachers and students within a 21st century citizenship seen as *competent* for *effective* conflict resolution, and as such becoming incorporated into the market (Martínez, 2017). In other words, peace construction as peace education in ELT has been proposed for achieving *progress* understood from a modern, neoliberal and global stance. We may ask ourselves: is this the type of existence teachers and students would wish for when constructing peace?

What also problematizes and produces tensions in my self is that only workers for the Colombian Agency for the Reintegration (CAR), and some teachers from a language institute, were involved in the *English for Peace* project (Excerpt 20). I thereby wonder about the absence of English teachers from other institutions (e.g. public or private schools and universities) in a collective educational effort. The possible disappearance of these agents could represent an epistemic and ontological displacement to a nonbeing zone (Fanon, 2010), representing another structural type of violence (Galtung, 2016).

Excerpt 20

The ARN professionals, supported by teachers from an English institute, developed contents throughout classes, and they could create a space for reconciliation with an educational component.

(Corresponsables, 2017, par. 3)

Furthermore, this historicizing strategy reveals another key statement, in reference to peace construction in ELT: *bilingualism for peace*. Various documents such as a news item in *La Prensa Web* (Excerpt 21), and a local online news site called *La Lengua Caribe* refer to *Bilingualism for Peace*. This is described as a current program by the Córdoba University that is framed within the *Plan Paz Córdoba* (Córdoba Peace Plan) with social projection (Excerpt 22, 2018). Bilingualism for peace is defined as English Language teaching taken to deprived sectors of Córdoba. Some discourses underlying this statement involve: *public or free education, English as the language of knowledge, maximization* discourses when drawing on high figures for persuading (Excerpts 21 y 22), and *language teaching as an instrumental service* (Excerpt 23). These show parallels with the neoliberal discourses behind the previous *English for peace* program and statement.

Excerpt 21

The Córdoba University that keeps strengthening its extension and social projection process, in the framework of Plan Paz Córdoba, increased the coverage of the Bilingualism for Peace program, and it is now benefiting 200 children more from educational institutions, such as Camilo Torres de Mocari and those from Aguas Negras and Garzones. The number of children benefited by Bilingualism for Peace has risen to 600. (La Prensa web, 2018, par. 1)

Excerpt 22

With the “Bilingualism for peace” program led by the Córdoba University, which was released this Friday on September 1st, 400 elementary school students from Cristóbal Colón and the Ribera will learn English for free. (La lengua Caribe, 2017, p. 1).

Excerpt 23

In the strategy about taking the languages centre to the South of the city, the institution would contribute with the methodology, instructors (preservice teachers) and the Mayor's office will have to account for installations (mega schools) and sponsor childrens' texts. (La razón, 2017, par. 6)

Previous phenomena and their associated discourses may reflect the instrumentalization of both peace construction in ELT and English teachers who find themselves in an operative-only role as instructors to achieve a colonial end (Excerpt 23). Indeed, when the *Bilingualism for Peace* program was first released in 2017, *economic* and *social class* discourses, such as a cost-free education for children of low socioeconomic status, and another about marketing-driven peace, were reproduced.

In a supporting role, the quality-for-education discourse (Excerpt 24) has served as a fruitful scenario for the enactment of previous discourses. In fact, *bilingualism for peace* as a statement within peace construction may also perpetuate *linguistic imperialism* (Philipson, 2000) and *monolingual* discourses around English language learning where exposure, production and overall processes exclusively in that language are canonically stated as sufficient and necessary for the process of becoming bilingual.

Teachers' reflections on language policies or didactic materials (Guerrero-Nieto, 2008; Aldana, 2014) have spurred the debate on monolingual perspectives of English learning and teaching, which may ignore the possibilities of being bilingual or plurilingual. In actual fact, none of the documents about PC in ELT mentioned here referred to students' first or mother languages as possible resources, even when they are attached to their cultures. Does this suggest another subtle and structural type of violence?

Excerpt 24

From the Córdoba University, the mentioned projects will be levered for more children to access assistance and quality education. (La Razón, 2017, par. 5)

Wrapping up: An emerging pacification for progress discourse which subdues and inspires resistance

A human connection is expressed through multiple interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. These are mediated by language whose use may work for different purposes such as conflict, violence, healing, reconciliation... (Aldana, in press). When exploring the connection between language and conflict, different options of being, becoming and relating to each other emerge. This means language may not only constitute a code *per se* to convey transparent messages, but a resource to enact modern violence-driven discourses.

Within this reflection article, I explored different documents through CDA and historicizing strategies selected from a methodological field of uncertainties within a toolbox. These methodological decisions allowed me to recognise and keep track of discourses referring to peace construction in ELT using available statements in a diverse archive. Multiple forces may interact for certain modern neoliberal objectives for peace construction within ELT. Language use underpinning that epistemological scenario and practice seems charged with structurally violent discourses, which circulate in certain documents appearing in daily life. Indeed, what seemed to be de-articulating was actually connected and explanatory for some problematic situations regarding peace construction in ELT.

The discourses identified and discussed in this research seem to reflect the emergent pacification for progress discourse as a modern one through an

instrumentalizing mechanism that supports the constitution of derived teleological discourses. Objectifying the English language *per se*, its teaching, and peace construction within ELT may position English language teachers not only as *effective* instructors (Excerpt 23), or facilitators *to become*, but as ideal targets to become possible sanitizers through a modern marketing-based citizenship (British Council, 2017). Discourses such as *quality in education* or *effectiveness in teaching* may reveal a hidden *marketing* discourse, which attempts to produce subjects within universalizing perspectives for neoliberal ends.

In reality, peace construction in ELT within a modern frame may install a temporality for teachers and students to live in. More precisely, this notion of time seems to connect both the present and future, particularly stressing the latter through a linear understanding of history in a teleological continuity where humans and their reality are subjected to an imminent idea of development or a legitimated lifestyle change with a specific purpose. That is why various documents, such as the Pedagogical Principles and Guidelines booklet for teachers (MEN, 2016), the National Bilingualism Plan (2004-2019), the suggested curriculum for primary and secondary plus the Active Citizens Program (British Council, 2017) insist on peace construction within *21st century* education with pre-defined challenges and abilities to develop in humans. Here, the English teacher appears as a continuous model for human *development*, who is asked to include certain content based around peace in the language class.

Another component of this emergent pacification for progress discourse in ELT could be illustrated by the transformation of understandings of peace construction within the previous and current National Development Plans. Notions of progress are similar and different to a certain extent In these

contrasting plans, while impacting on how peace construction is defined in each.

Although there are some similarities between these two Colombian governments' NDPs, such as the liaison of peace construction with justice and security, there are specific aspects that characterize each approach to it. On the one hand, peace construction was more oriented to conflict resolution as achieved through a culture of peace within a restorative frame in the previous NDP 2014-2018 (DNP, 2015), notwithstanding the aforementioned modern discourses. On the other hand, the current NDP (2018-2022) aims at a culture of legality for peace construction which focuses on the stabilization of victims and territories through financial support provided by diverse institutions such as the Peace Fund. My questions in regards to this situation are in reference to possible transformations and enactments by teachers in reference to those formal progressive proposals, when contributing to peace construction in ELT.

In conclusion, I suggest that peace construction is not a current interest either in the country or in the ELT field (Aldana, in press). Various documents mentioned here allowed for critical analysis of discursive events surrounding peace construction as related to multiple situations that characterise it as a dynamic field, practice and life experience. This in turn is mediated by language(s) in diverse scenarios and across disciplines. For this reason, historicizing peace construction in ELT also seems relevant. The discourse of pacification for progress appears as an emergent one that represents only one aspect of the dynamics behind diverse organizations' and teachers' proposals. More research regarding this version or alternative reading of peace construction in ELT deserves attention.

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