# Decolonizing ELT through Argentine legends and folktales with the aid of technology: a proposal

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## Abstract

From a decolonial and postmethod perspective, this article explores the integration of Argentine legends and folktales into English language teaching (ELT). Based on the theoretical contributions of Kumaravadivelu, Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh, Byram, and Kramsch, it argues that these cultural expressions can function as meaningful pedagogical resources to support language development and promote intercultural sensitivity. The proposal seeks to challenge Euro-American dominance in conventional teaching materials by incorporating local voices, identities, and knowledge systems that are often marginalized in the English language classroom. It outlines guiding principles and practical suggestions for working with Argentine traditional narratives with the support of a range of digital technologies, linking language practice and intercultural reflection. Finally, the article highlights the need for further classroom-based research to examine the impact of including these narratives and to continue strengthening decolonial and intercultural pedagogies in local ELT contexts.

**Keywords:** decolonial pedagogy, postmethod approach, Argentine traditional narratives, English language teaching (ELT), intercultural education

## Entkolonialisierung des Englischunterrichts anhand argentinischer Legenden und Volksmärchen unter Einsatz von Technologie: ein Vorschlag

## Abstract

Dieser Beitrag untersucht aus dekolonialer und postmethodischer Perspektive die Integration argentinischer Legenden und Volksmärchen in den Englischunterricht (ELT). Auf Grundlage der theoretischen Beiträge von Kumaravadivelu, Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh, Byram und Kramsch wird dargelegt, dass diese kulturellen Ausdrucksformen als wichtige pädagogische Ressourcen zur Förderung der Sprachentwicklung und der interkulturellen Sensibilität dienen können. Der Vorschlag hinterfragt die euroamerikanische Dominanz in konventionellen Lehrmaterialien durch die Einbeziehung lokaler Stimmen, Identitäten und Wissenssysteme, die im Unterricht oft vernachlässigt werden. Der Artikel präsentiert Leitideen und praktische Vorschläge für die Einbindung traditioneller argentinischer Erzählungen mit Hilfe verschiedener digitaler Technologien, wobei Sprachpraxis und interkulturelle Reflexion miteinander verbunden werden. Abschließend wird die Notwendigkeit weiterer klassenraumorientierter Forschung betont, um die Auswirkungen der Einbeziehung dieser Erzählungen zu untersuchen und dekoloniale und interkulturelle Pädagogik im lokalen Kontext des Englischunterrichts weiter zu stärken.

Stichwörter: Dekoloniale Pädagogik, postmethodischer Ansatz, traditionelle argentinische Erzählungen, Englischunterricht (ELT), interkulturelle Bildung

## Decolonizando la enseñanza de inglés a través de leyendas y relatos folclóricos argentinos con ayuda de la tecnología: una propuesta

### Resumen

Desde una perspectiva decolonial y postmétodo, este artículo explora la integración de leyendas y relatos folclóricos argentinos en la enseñanza del inglés (ELT). Sobre la base de los aportes teóricos de Kumaravadivelu, Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh, Byram y Kramsch, se sostiene que estas expresiones culturales pueden funcionar como recursos pedagógicos significativos para favorecer el desarrollo lingüístico y promover la sensibilidad intercultural. La propuesta busca

cuestionar la dominancia euroestadounidense en los materiales didácticos convencionales mediante la inclusión de voces, identidades y sistemas de conocimiento locales que a menudo quedan relegados en el aula. El artículo presenta ideas orientadoras y sugerencias prácticas para incorporar narrativas tradicionales argentinas con el apoyo de diversas tecnologías digitales, articulando la práctica de la lengua y la reflexión intercultural. Por último, el trabajo subraya la necesidad de realizar más investigaciones basadas en el aula para examinar el impacto de la inclusión de estas narrativas y continuar fortaleciendo pedagogías decoloniales e interculturales en contextos locales de enseñanza del inglés.

**Palabras clave:** pedagogía decolonial, enfoque postmétodo, narrativas tradicionales argentinas, enseñanza de la lengua inglesa (ELT), educación intercultural

### Décoloniser l'enseignement de l'anglais à travers des légendes et des récits du folklore argentin à l'aide de la technologie : une proposition

**Résumé**

Dans une perspective de décolonisation et post-méthodique, cet article explore l'intégration des légendes et des récits folkloriques argentins dans l'enseignement de l'anglais (ELT). Sur la base des contributions théoriques de Kumaravadivelu, Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh, Byram et Kramsch on soutient que ces expressions culturelles peuvent servir de ressource pédagogique significative pour favoriser le développement linguistique et promouvoir la sensibilité interculturelle. Cette proposition vise à remettre en question la domination euro-américaine sur les supports d'apprentissage conventionnels par l'inclusion des voix locales, des identités et des systèmes de connaissance qui sont souvent relégués dans la salle de classe. L'article présente des idées, des conseils pratiques et des suggestions pour intégrer des récits traditionnels argentins avec le soutien de diverses technologies numériques, articulant la pratique de la langue et de la réflexion interculturelle. Finalement, le travail souligne la nécessité de mener davantage de recherches en classe pour examiner l'impact de l'inclusion de ces récits et continuer à renforcer les pédagogies de décolonisation et interculturelles dans des contextes locaux d'enseignement de l'anglais.

**Mots-clés :** pédagogie de décolonisation, approche post-méthodique, récits traditionnelles argentins, enseignement de la langue anglaise (ELT), éducation interculturelle.

### Decolonizzando l'insegnamento dell'inglese attraverso le leggende e i racconti folcloristici argentini con l'aiuto della tecnologia: una proposta

**Riassunto**

Da una prospettiva decoloniale e postmetodologica, quest'articolo esplora l'integrazione di leggende e racconti folcloristici argentini nell'insegnamento dell'inglese (ELT). In base ai contributi teorici di Kumaravadivelu, Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh, Byram e Kramsch, si sostiene che queste prospettive culturali possono funzionare come risorse pedagogiche significative per favorire lo sviluppo linguistico e promuovere la sensibilità interculturale. La proposta punta a mettere in discussione la presenza dominante eurostatunitense nei materiali didattici convenzionali attraverso l'inclusione di voci, identità e sistemi di conoscenza locali, che spesso vengono relegati nell'aula. Quest'articolo presenta idee che orientano e suggeriscono pratiche volte a incorporare narrative tradizionali argentine con il supporto di diverse tecnologie digitali, articolando la pratica della lingua e la riflessione interculturale. Per ultimo, questo lavoro risalta la necessità di realizzare più ricerche basate nella pratica nell'aula per esaminare l'impatto dell'inclusione di queste narrative e continuare a rafforzare pedagogie decoloniali e interculturali nei diversi contesti locali dell'insegnamento dell'inglese.

**Parole chiave:** pedagogia decoloniale, prospettiva postmetodologica, narrative tradizionali argentine, insegnamento della lingua inglese (ELT), educazione interculturale.

### Descolonizando o ensino de inglês por meio de lendas e contos folclóricos argentinos com a ajuda da tecnologia: uma proposta

**Resumo**

A partir de uma perspectiva descolonial e pós-metodológica, este artigo explora a integração de lendas e contos folclóricos argentinos no ensino de inglês (ELT). Com base nas contribuições teóricas de Kumaravadivelu, Quijano, Mignolo, Walsh, Byram e Kramsch, sustenta-se que essas expressões culturais podem funcionar como recursos pedagógicos significativos para favorecer o desenvolvimento linguístico e promover a sensibilidade intercultural. A proposta busca questionar a dominância euro-

estadunidense nos materiais didáticos convencionais, por meio de vozes, identidades e sistemas de conhecimento locais que com frequência são relegados na sala de aula. O artigo apresenta ideias orientadoras e sugestões práticas para incorporar narrativas tradicionais argentinas com a ajuda de diversas tecnologias digitais, articulando a prática da língua e a reflexão intercultural. Por fim, o trabalho destaca a necessidade de realizar mais pesquisas baseadas na sala de aula para examinar o impacto da inclusão dessas narrativas e continuar fortalecendo pedagogias descoloniais e interculturais em contextos locais de ensino da língua inglesa.

**Palavras-chave:** pedagogia descolonial, abordagem pós-método, narrativas tradicionais argentinas, ensino da língua inglesa (ELT), educação intercultural

## Introduction

Since the late 20th century, the rapid development of global processes and the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have reinforced the adoption of more communicative and learner-centered approaches in English Language Teaching (ELT). Alongside this trend, growing academic attention has been directed toward the need to foster students' intercultural sensitivity, understood as essential for navigating today's globalized world.

A review article on ELT research in Argentina between 2014 and 2018 highlighted the importance of further exploring and strengthening the intercultural citizenship dimension of language instruction, particularly in relation to fostering democratic values grounded in ethical relationships with both human and non-human others (Porto, López-Barrios, & Banegas, 2021, p. 63). In this regard, traditional local narratives, such as legends and folktales, can serve as significant cultural reservoirs that language educators may work with to promote such values and to cultivate learners' engagement with their own cultural heritage. Despite their potential, the use of these texts as pedagogical resources in ELT remains largely unexplored in Argentine contexts.

The pedagogical potential of local narratives to support intercultural language teaching is considerable. These stories can invite learners to explore locally situated meanings and identities, while also supporting critical reflection on ethical and cultural values. Adopting them in ELT classrooms resonates with postmethod pedagogy, which emphasizes teachers' context-sensitive and adaptive approaches (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Furthermore, engaging with local narratives in ELT aligns with decolonial critiques of Eurocentrism and the coloniality of knowledge (Quijano, 1992, 2000; Mignolo, 2000, 2010; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) and with intercultural perspectives in language education that emphasize learners' cultural legacies and identities (Byram, 1997, 2020; Kramsch, 1998, 2014).

This article, therefore, examines the integration of traditional Argentine legends and folktales into ELT from a decolonial and postmethod perspective. It reviews key theoretical contributions from postmethod pedagogy, decolonial thought, and intercultural communication, and offers guiding ideas and practical suggestions for working with local narratives in ELT with the support of digital technologies. Rather than reporting classroom results, the article highlights possible ways of using culturally situated narratives for language learning and intercultural reflection.

## Theoretical framework

### Postmethod pedagogy

In response to concerns raised by scholars like Pennycook (2001) regarding the reproduction of colonial power structures in the teaching of English as a global language, Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2003) proposed the postmethod pedagogical framework. Rather than offering a prescriptive alternative method, postmethod pedagogy refers to the "search for an alternative method" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 544) and is based on three interrelated parameters: particularity, practicality, and possibility.

Within this framework, particularity underscores the need for English language programs to emerge from the specific realities of local educational settings. As Kumaravadivelu (2001) explains, this entails pedagogical proposals that are "sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular group of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu" (p. 544). In other words, it calls for educational practices that respond to learners' and teachers' sociocultural conditions and priorities, and that support the development of meaningful learning experiences.

Practicality bridges theory and practice in ELT and encourages language teachers to construct their own pedagogical theories from classroom practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). As a result, teachers gain greater autonomy from prescriptive and often decontextualized methods proposed by external theorists. This parameter positions teachers as active agents who make informed choices about materials and classroom work. In this context, local legends and folktales can function as pedagogically relevant resources because they enable teachers to select and adapt culturally familiar content for specific learning purposes and to evaluate how these decisions work with different groups. Their thematic variety also allows teachers to return to the same narrative with different groups and aims, adjusting tasks as needed.

The parameter of possibility, derived mainly from Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), highlights the role of language education as a socially and politically empowering practice by considering learners' lived experiences as central to how language is taught and learned. As Kumaravadivelu (2003) explains:

> their lived experiences, motivated by their own sociocultural and historical backgrounds, should help them appropriate the English language and use it in their own terms according to their own values and visions. Such an appropriation assumes greater importance in these days of economic and cultural globalization because classroom participants cannot afford to ignore the global sociocultural reality that challenges identity formation inside and outside the classroom. (pp. 544–545)

From this perspective, learners' identities and cultural experiences are treated as relevant dimensions of English language learning. Local traditional narratives in ELT can help connect English learning to learners' sociocultural backgrounds and encourage reflection on cultural references in globalized contexts, where dominant perspectives tend to overshadow local ones.

Using Argentine legends and folktales in ELT aligns with Kumaravadivelu's postmethod framework (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), as it allows teachers to make context-based decisions about content, language focus, and classroom work. However, context-sensitive pedagogy does not automatically translate into decolonial practice. A decolonial orientation depends on what teachers do with these narratives and on whether they challenge the predominance of universalist models of knowledge in education (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). The next section turns to these decolonial perspectives and their relevance to ELT.

**Decolonial perspectives**

In his article *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America*, sociologist Quijano (2000) argues that Eurocentric perspectives extended beyond economic control and came to dominate the global imaginary, historical memory, and knowledge production worldwide. As he explains:

> [A]ll of the experiences, histories, resources, and cultural products ended up in one global cultural order revolving around European or Western hegemony. Europe's hegemony over the new model of global power concentrated all forms of the control of subjectivity, culture, and especially knowledge and the production of knowledge under its hegemony (Quijano, 2000, p. 540).

These ideas are particularly relevant for the present discussion, as they help explain how educational fields such as ELT have historically reproduced Eurocentric knowledge frameworks. Research indicates that this dominance is still present in Argentine ELT

contexts, where there is widespread adoption of Euro-American-centric textbooks and teaching resources. Such materials often show little connection to local social and cultural contexts and contribute to the reproduction of colonial practices in language education (Pereyra, 2017; Baum et al., 2023).

This reliance on foreign-produced coursebooks reflects and helps reinforce a dominant logic in ELT. In practice, it often means that certain cultural references and ways of knowing are presented as the standard, while local perspectives remain secondary or absent. In this regard, Quijano (1992) argues that colonial repression and the Europeanization of culture are directed primarily at the "ways of knowing, of producing knowledge, and of creating perspectives, images, symbolic systems, and modes of meaning-making"[1] (p. 12). From this perspective, dominant groups impose their own patterns of expression and belief systems, which suppress the cultural production of colonized groups and function as powerful mechanisms of cultural and social control.

Building on Quijano's foundational contributions to decolonial thought, Mignolo and Walsh (2018) further develop theoretical approaches that support decolonial education. They emphasize the need for critical reflection and for decolonial cultural praxis aimed at transforming pedagogical practices within a pluriversal horizon, where multiple ways of knowing and being can coexist. In ELT, this means making deliberate choices about which stories to include and which cultural meanings to keep visible. It also affects task design: activities should invite interpretation and discussion, not merely comprehension.

In dialogue with Quijano's (1992) proposal of breaking away (*desprenderse*) from structures of domination in the production of knowledge, Mignolo (2010) introduces the concept of epistemic disobedience. He describes this as a necessary act of refusing compliance with colonial logics and of promoting epistemic alternatives, that is, other ways of knowing and understanding. Such alternatives, he argues, may contribute to forms of intercultural communication that are inter-epistemic and pluriversal, rather than universal or imperial (pp. 125–128).

Walsh (2009) focuses on the most commonly discussed dimensions of coloniality, namely power, knowledge, and being, and introduces the notion of cosmogonic coloniality. This fourth dimension refers to the colonial devaluation and dismissal of the spiritual and ancestral relationships that historically subalternized communities (that is, groups historically positioned at the margins of colonial power) maintain with nature, spiritual life, and the cosmos. From Walsh's perspective, these cosmovisions, philosophies, and ways of knowing have often been labeled as non-modern, "primitive," or "pagan" (pp. 3–4).

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[1] Translation from Spanish by the author.

From these decolonial perspectives, the inclusion of Indigenous local legends, folktales, and oral traditions in ELT may contribute to questioning Euro-American cultural dominance, often referred to by these scholars as Eurocentric hegemony. When approached through pedagogical practices that encourage reflection and dialogue, these narratives can help open pluriversal perspectives (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) by making visible forms of knowledge and ways of living that have traditionally been marginalized in Argentine educational contexts. Moreover, the cultural meanings embedded in these stories may offer learners opportunities to engage with alternative perspectives, that is, cultural ideas and beliefs that students may not usually encounter in mainstream English textbooks. Under these conditions, the foreign language classroom becomes a space for reflection and intercultural learning, rather than for language practice alone.

**Intercultural communication**

In the field of language teaching, it is widely acknowledged that mastery of purely linguistic aspects of a language does not guarantee successful communication between speakers of different cultural backgrounds.  In the updated version of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* – CEFR (2020), the pluricultural competence dimension in language teaching and learning has been further elaborated, and new descriptor scales have been added with the objective of contributing "to quality inclusive education for all, and to the promotion of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 11).  The increasing diversity of language education contexts has given rise to a broader view of language education and its goals. The Council of Europe (2020) primarily addresses diversity in relation to migratory movements. However, its statement that "[c]lassrooms can become a place for raising awareness of and further developing learners' plurilingual/pluricultural profiles" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 44) acquires particular relevance for the purpose of this article. Beyond migratory contexts, this perspective is especially meaningful in settings where learners bring their own local cultural repertoires into the classroom, while mainstream ELT materials tend to overlook them.

In this view, several specialists in culture and foreign language education have theorized extensively about the role of interculturality and its objectives in educational practices. Among the most influential ones are the contributions of Byram, Corbett, Kramsch, and Walsh.  In 1997, the theorist Byram proposed his influential model for teaching and assessing *Intercultural Communicative Competence* (ICC), emphasizing the idea that learning a foreign language involves the development of not only linguistic and sociolinguistic competencies but also of the intercultural dimension. This framework comprises five *savoirs* for ICC: *savoirs* (knowledge), *savoir comprendre* (interpreting/relating skills), *savoir*

*s'engager* (critical cultural awareness), *savoir apprendre/faire* (discovery/interaction skills), *savoir être* (attitudes). The notion of *savoir s'engager* is symbolically placed at the center of his model. This dimension is defined as "[a]n ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 2020, p. 66). This underlines the importance of learners' knowledge of their own cultural context in order to engage in successful intercultural interactions.

For each of the factors involved in ICC, Byram (2020) defines a series of objectives as a means of determining what educators and learners of a foreign language should aim to achieve. As a set of goals for the *savoirs* (knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal) dimension, Byram points out that the learner needs to know about "the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries" and about "the events and their emblems (myths, cultural products, sites of significance to the collective memory) which are markers of national identity in one's own country (...)" (p. 66). In the context of this article, Byram's emphasis on learners' knowledge of their own cultural memory and national narratives is particularly relevant, as it supports the inclusion of local legends and folktales as meaningful cultural references in ELT aimed at developing intercultural communicative competence.

Kramsch (1998) moved beyond Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence by foregrounding the symbolic power of language and its role in shaping identities and worldviews. Later, she defined language teaching as an act of *trans-lation*, understood not as the mere decoding of linguistic elements, but as a process of mediation between languages and cultures that involves the interweaving of identities and perspectives (Kramsch, 2014). As Kramsch and Zhu Hua (2016) state:

> English teachers must teach not English as it is spoken by monolingual nationals, but English as a social semiotic system that mediates between global form and local thought, national and transnational interpretations of history, collective and individual apprehensions of reality. (p. 50)

This perspective helps frame local legends and folktales as semiotic resources through which English language learning can be meaningfully related to learners' own histories, identities, and cultural references.

Extending Byram's and other theorists' contributions, Corbett (2003) argues that the development of intercultural communicative competence requires the incorporation of learners' own cultural contexts into the language teaching process. As he notes, "[t]he intercultural element of this kind of second language education also requires teachers and learners to pay attention to and respect the home culture and the home language. Learning materials have to incorporate aspects of the home culture" (p. 4). From this perspective,

language classrooms may become spaces for cultural reflection and negotiation when pedagogical materials engage with learners' cultural backgrounds in meaningful ways.

At this point, interculturality also intersects with decolonial concerns about whose knowledge is legitimized in education. Walsh (2009) advocates for critical interculturality as a decolonial endeavor and describes it as a political, social, epistemic, and ethical project that not only articulates differences and fosters dialogue within a framework of legitimacy, dignity, equality, equity, and respect, but also encourages the creation of alternative ways of thinking, being, learning, teaching, dreaming, and living (p. 13).

Together, these contributions support the integration of Argentine legends and folktales into ELT as a viable pedagogical option. They also point to an important condition: including local narratives is not sufficient on its own. Developing intercultural communicative competence, and moving toward a more critical orientation, requires guided pedagogical mediation through materials and tasks that help learners notice cultural meanings, reflect on them, and discuss them in English. The section that follows therefore considers local traditional narratives in ELT as resources that connect classroom work with learners' cultural contexts (Corbett, 2003) and open space for critical interculturality (Walsh, 2009).

**Local traditional narratives as pedagogical tools in ELT**

A review of available research highlights the positive outcomes of using local traditional narratives, such as legends and Indigenous folktales, as pedagogical resources in ELT. Some scholars report that the integration of these stories may support language development and foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (Lwin, 2015; Yumnam, 2023; Sa'ad & Subri, 2023). From a linguistic and structural analysis, Lwin (2015) argues that folktales can function as dynamic tools in ESL/EFL contexts. According to her analysis, they help students become aware of the importance of language forms for communicative purposes, as well as for raising cultural understanding (pp. 75–76). This intercultural dimension is developed through guided classroom work in which learners explore culturally specific meanings in the narrative and, when relevant, compare them with those found in other tales, using questions that prompt interpretation and justification in English (Lwin, 2015, pp. 78–79). Along similar lines, Soelistijowati and Erwanto (2016) claim that, in this global era, legends are crucial pedagogical tools to preserve local culture and wisdom while expanding students' English language awareness in a relevant and enriching atmosphere.

Building on these perspectives, Argentina offers an extensive repertoire of traditional narratives that teachers can use in ELT. The territory was once home to numerous Indigenous groups who, through oral traditions, transmitted their deep understanding of the

cosmos, their profound connection with the environment, spirituality, and social organization. Some Guaraní legends like that of *Yasí* and *Araí* and the birth of the *Yerba Mate*, or that of the *Pombero* – a mischievous creature believed to protect the northern forests – still echo in the collective imagination.  Others, like the Huarpe legend about the creation of the *Zonda* wind as a punishment from *Pachamama* – Mother Earth – to the predator *Gilanco*, need to be sought out since their presence is more regionally rooted.  However, the essence of these folktales has survived centuries of cultural change and offers valuable insights into the shared values, beliefs, and perspectives of local communities.

After the European colonization and subsequent waves of immigrations, especially from Europe and Africa, some Indigenous legends and myths blended with foreign narratives. A striking example of this folkloric fusion is the popular tale of the *Lobizón* – the Argentine werewolf. It draws elements from Guaraní mythology, Russian traditions, and other European tales.  Its enduring presence in the national imagination was so powerful that it resulted in the enactment of a godparenting presidential law issued to protect the seventh male children, who were believed to be cursed. At present, this law remains in force, and many people have made use of it over decades (Olivera, 2023).  This tale brings together different layers of Argentine history and constitutes a remarkable example of cultural syncretism, reflecting the interplay between ancient wisdom, migration processes, and national identity.

The breadth of traditional narratives across Argentina reflects the country's cultural hybridity. Myths and folktales constitute a connective structure within cultures, binding people together and connecting their past and present.  They combine normative and narrative elements that "create a basis of belonging, of identity, so that the individual can then talk of 'we'" (Assmann, 2011, p. 3).  They are not mere folkloric curiosities; they carry deep cultural values, identity, knowledge, meaning-making, and historical memory.  Everyday expressions, such as "*estar engualichado*" (to be cursed), or practices like devout believers leaving water bottles at roadside shrines for *La Difunta Correa* (a folk saint), are living traces of cultural syncretism.   In these common expressions and customs, ancient cosmovisions and contemporary reinterpretations blend to shape collective identity.  The introduction of legends and folktales into ELT can help learners understand and engage with this interwoven heritage and enhance their cultural awareness, a foundation for successful intercultural dialogue.

The integration of folkloric elements into the ELT classroom as carriers of cultural identity and memory is not merely a present-day concern. Professor and folklorist Colluccio firmly advocated for folkloric education at schools as a means of strengthening national identity. His opening words in *Folklore para la Escuela* read: "This book is intended for teachers

interested in addressing the gap in their academic preparation that has, at least until now, ignored, in almost the entire country, aspects related to our folklore, that is, our very roots"[2] (Colluccio, 1985, p. 5).  The author also expressed his concerns regarding the intrusion of foreign technological elements, which he described as "electronic pacifiers designed specifically for underdeveloped peoples" (Colluccio, 1985, p. 5), and the cultural erosion he perceived these technologies produced. Paradoxically, despite Colluccio's distrust of new technologies, their pervasive presence today can help bring "our very roots" into ELT contexts.

Recent technological developments offer language educators a variety of tools to incorporate traditional narratives into English language lessons in ways that support both language development and intercultural learning.  These theoretical considerations are translated into classroom-oriented practices in the section that follows, illustrating how Argentine legends and folktales can be used in ELT with the support of digital technologies.

**Classroom implementation**

*Text adaptation, lexis and grammar.* As argued above, Argentine traditional narratives offer rich possibilities for linguistic and cultural work in English language classrooms. When adapted for ELT contexts, these stories provide a range of topics and subthemes that can be selected in accordance with the interests, needs, and educational backgrounds of particular groups of learners.

In this proposal, traditional narratives are treated as texts to be explored mainly in English, while leaving room for culturally significant terms from Indigenous languages when this supports the pedagogical aim. In *El Gualicho*, for example, the term *gualicho,* often linked to the term *walichu (*Mapudungun*),* should remain in the original language instead of being replaced by an approximate English equivalent. Keeping and contextualizing original terms can prompt reflection on language contact and on the cultural diversity that shapes local settings.

Stories such as the *Pombero*, the legend of the *Zonda wind* and *Gilanco*, or *Mbói Tatá* (the fiery serpent of the northern forests) can be used to work with language related to nature, ecology, justice, and punishment. These themes are familiar to learners and can be connected to lexis and grammar that come directly from the narrative and can be adjusted to different proficiency levels. For instance, at A2, teachers might work with past simple to recount events, *there is/there are* to describe settings, or *must/mustn't* to express warnings.

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[2] Translation from Spanish by the author.

Once a legend or folktale is selected, teachers typically need to translate, adapt, and personalize it in order to make it accessible to a particular class. In this process, generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, can be used as a practical aid to support text adaptation, without replacing the teacher's role in making pedagogical decisions. These tools can help produce level-appropriate versions of traditional tales, which teachers then review and adjust to ensure both linguistic accuracy and cultural coherence.

Beyond text adaptation, similar tools may also support the design of language-focused activities based on these folktales to practice vocabulary and grammar. With the support of generative AI tools, teachers may design exercises that draw on situations and actions presented in the stories, thus avoiding decontextualized practice.

At this point, it is worth emphasizing that generative AI can support the drafting of level-appropriate texts of local narratives, but it cannot be treated as an authority on Argentine cultures or history. This matters because these stories normally circulate in Spanish and, in many cases, are rooted in Indigenous languages and oral traditions. For this reason, any English version used in this proposal is treated as a pedagogical adaptation based on identifiable sources, not as a neutral translation produced by a digital tool. Since chatbots are trained on dominant cultural patterns, they may simplify local meanings, downplay tensions that are relevant to the story, or introduce cultural biases or historical inaccuracies. Teacher mediation therefore remains crucial: teachers review the draft against the source, decide what must stay visible (e.g., culturally significant terms in the original language), and what needs brief contextualization.

Teachers can use the adaptation stage to include short noticing tasks that make translation and adaptation decisions visible to learners, as appropriate to the group's level. For example, learners may compare a brief source excerpt in Spanish and its pedagogical adaptation in English to identify what is kept in the original language, what is explained and in what way, and what becomes less clearly stated. Learners may also create a short glossary of culturally significant terms that remain in the original language, add a one-line explanation in simple English, and discuss why certain terms resist direct replacement.

Practically, it also means shaping prompts to preserve local meanings, avoid stereotyping, sensationalizing, or exoticizing Indigenous elements, and show uncertainty instead of filling gaps with invented (i.e., hallucinated) details. The following examples illustrate how a teacher may write a prompt with decolonial safeguards when using generative AI for drafting purposes.

*Example 1. Prompt for text adaptation with decolonial safeguards (El Pombero).*

> Act as an English teacher and write an A2-level pedagogical adaptation of the legend of El *Pombero*, based on this accessible, identifiable source: [TEXT / URL]. Do not invent cultural, historical, or geographical details that are not supported by the source. Keep culturally significant terms in the original language when they appear in the source (e.g., *Pombero*, names of places, culturally specific items) and add a brief explanation in simple English the first time each term appears. Preserve locally situated meanings and tone; do not reshape the story into a universal moral. Avoid exoticizing and stereotyping Indigenous elements. If a cultural or historical detail is unclear, mark it as [UNCERTAIN]. After the text, add a short glossary and list 2–3 language simplifications you made.

*Example 2. Prompt for lexis and grammar activities anchored in the narrative.*

> Using the A2 adaptation above, create: (1) a 10-item vocabulary activity (matching and gap-fill) using only words that appear in the text; (2) one short grammar activity focused on an A2 structure that is already present in the story (e.g., past simple, there is/there are, imperatives, can/can't, must/mustn't). Use sentences taken from the text or minimally adapted from it; and (3) an answer key. Limits: do not add new plot details or cultural information. Keep culturally significant terms (e.g., *Pombero*) as they appear in the text and include a brief glossary note.

Used in this way, AI can function as a drafting aid, while teachers exercise a controlled form of epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2010; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018): they work with a global technology while maintaining control over the narrative's local meanings.

*Listening.* In addition to vocabulary and grammar work, listening activities can play an important role when working with traditional narratives in ELT. Many Argentine legends and folktales originate in oral traditions and were historically transmitted through storytelling, which makes listening a particularly relevant skill when approaching them in ELT classrooms.

Once a legend or folktale has been selected and adapted for a specific group of learners, teachers may choose to prepare an audio version of the story to support listening comprehension skills. Text-to-speech tools such as *NaturalReader* or *Luvvoice* can assist teachers in producing oral versions of the written texts. These tools provide an additional way of presenting the story in spoken form, enabling learners to engage with it through listening.

The audio materials can then be used to design listening tasks suited to the learners' level and objectives, such as comprehension questions, gap-fills, or true/false activities. Beyond checking understanding, these activities can also help learners notice how the story is told, including aspects such as rhythm and emphasis.

From an intercultural perspective, listening activities can also be designed to foster learners' awareness of the cultural and symbolic dimensions present in the legends. Through guided

listening, learners may be encouraged to identify cultural references, values, or ways of understanding the relationship between humans, nature, and the community, as reflected in the stories.

In all cases, the teacher's role remains central. Audio materials generated through digital tools need to be carefully revised to ensure appropriate pronunciation, intonation, and overall quality. More importantly, it is through the teacher's pedagogical mediation before, during, and after listening that these activities move beyond listening comprehension and contribute to a more meaningful engagement with local narratives in ELT.

*Speaking.* From the practice of pronunciation of key lexical items drawn from the narratives, to shadow reading, and guided class discussions, Argentine traditional legends and folktales offer varied opportunities to develop learners' speaking skills in meaningful ways. Activities like storytelling, role-play, or dramatization allow students to interact with the foreign language while engaging with culturally situated content.

To support oral production, teachers may design short audio or video materials based on adapted versions of the stories. These resources can be used for shadow reading, a technique that helps learners practice pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm while following a narrated text. Digital tools such as *Canva* or *CapCut* facilitate the creation of this type of material in accessible ways.[3]

Speaking tasks can also invite learners to work actively with culturally specific elements of the narratives, including terms or concepts originating in Indigenous languages. Rather than removing or fully translating these elements, students can be asked to (a) explain a term in English, (b) give an example from the story, and (c) say why the term is kept in the original language, thus opening space for reflection on language contact and cultural diversity.

Learners may also use voice recorders such as *Audacity* to record themselves retelling a folktale or sharing interpretations of the story, individually or in small groups. These oral productions can then be shared with peers, fostering collaborative learning and dialogue. When supported by guiding questions and reflection prompts, such speaking activities help connect oral language practice with intercultural awareness.

*Writing.* A wide variety of writing activities can be developed in ELT using Argentine traditional narratives, allowing learners to engage with these texts in reflective ways. Depending on the objectives and the group's level, tasks may range from individual to collaborative formats, and from short responses to extended texts (e.g., paragraphs or essays).

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[3] An example of this approach is *Words Across Worlds*, a YouTube podcast created by the author of this article to support listening and speaking practice through locally grounded narratives for B1/B2 English learners. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/@WordsandWorlds-u4l/videos

Learners may be invited to analyze legends or folktales from different perspectives, write reflections on the values and themes they present, or create alternative endings that reframe the original narrative. Collaborative online tools such as blogs and wikis can support these processes by offering shared spaces for writing and interaction. For instance, a class blog may be used for students to post reflections or alternative versions of a story (e.g., the legend of *Yasí* and *Araí* and the *yerba mate*) in the form of comments, while a wiki can be collaboratively developed to retell a legend and enrich it with multimedia resources such as images, links, or audio files.

At higher proficiency levels, these narratives may also serve as a basis for more extended writing tasks, such as comparative essays between legends from different cultural traditions, or argumentative texts exploring the values, messages, and worldviews conveyed through the stories.

*Cultural Awareness.* It is worth stressing that cultural awareness, as one component of intercultural competence, does not emerge from language practice alone. Its development depends on how tasks are designed and sequenced and, most importantly, on teachers' guidance. This guidance directs learners' attention to specific cultural meanings and requires them to analyze the text and justify their interpretations with evidence.

For example, teachers can work with an English adaptation of a traditional Argentine tale and invite learners to identify one or more of the following aspects, as appropriate for the narrative and the group's level: (a) one value or social norm the story supports, (b) a behavior it questions or warns against, (c) one relationship it brings into focus (for example, humans and nature, or the individual and the community), and (d) a local belief or historical reference implied in the text. Learners identify the part(s) in the passage that support each choice and briefly explain their interpretation in English, or in Spanish as needed. Gradually, this kind of approach can foster students' cultural awareness by making cultural perspectives visible and available for classroom discussion.

Table 1 illustrates this approach by presenting example tasks based on selected Argentine legends and showing how language work, digital tools, and a decolonial and intercultural focus can be integrated into the ELT classroom.

**Table 1**

*Illustrative classroom tasks based on selected Argentine legends (proposal)*

| Legend (example) | Focus (implementation + language) | Sample classroom task (illustrative) | Tool (optional) | Decolonial–intercultural focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *El Gualicho* | Adaptation noticing + lexis + writing + speaking (B2/C1) | Students compare a brief Spanish excerpt and its English adaptation, and highlight: (a) terms retained in Spanish (e.g., *gualicho*), (b) items that are glossed or explicitly explained, and (c) one meaning that becomes less explicit in the adaptation. Students write a brief note explaining each choice (in English or Spanish, as appropriate), citing textual evidence from both versions. Students briefly discuss what the Spanish term conveys that the English version does not fully capture. | Generative AI (drafting aid) | Makes translation choices visible and keeps local meanings in view. |
| *El Pombero* | Lexis (glossary) (A2/B1) | Students co-create a mini-glossary of original-language terms and add one-line explanations. For two terms, students justify why the text keeps the word in Spanish/Guaraní by choosing one reason (identity, respect, untranslatable meaning, setting) and citing a textual clue. | Shared document | Clarifies key terms in context and makes language contact visible. |
| *The Zonda wind and Gilanco* | Listening + writing + speaking (A2 with scaffolding / B1) | Students listen to the adapted story and complete a brief gist task (choose the best summary / sequence three key events). Students write one idea about how the story presents the relationship between people and nature and note one supporting detail from the audio. Students compare ideas in pairs and agree on the best-supported interpretation. | Text-to-speech (TTS) | Moves from comprehension to evidence-based interpretation and discussion of cultural meaning. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mbói Tatá* | Grammar for meaning (A2) | Students select one language pattern from the story (e.g., past simple, *there is/there are*, *must/mustn't*) and state what it does in the passage (recount / describe / warn). Students underline one line that exemplifies it. Then students write one story-based warning using *must/mustn't* (e.g., *In the forest, you mustn't …*) and support it with one detail from the text. | Generative AI (drafting aid) | Links grammar to meaning in the story, rather than practicing forms in isolation. |
| *El Lobizón* | Comparative writing + speaking (B1/B2) | Students compare two short excerpts (*El Lobizón* + another werewolf tradition), note 2 similarities and 2 differences, and write a short comparative comment on what one key difference suggests about the values or fears foregrounded in each story. They must cite one textual detail from each excerpt. In pairs, students choose one difference and deliver a brief spoken comparison (45–60s): state the difference, explain what it suggests about values/fears, and refer to one textual detail from each excerpt; partners ask one follow-up question (*Which detail supports your view?*). | Blog / shared document / audio recorder | Supports comparison without hierarchy, recognizing situated meanings across traditions. |

*Note: Source: Author's own elaboration.*

## Conclusions

Argentine traditional narratives, including legends and folktales, are meaningful resources for ELT. When thoughtfully integrated into language lessons, they support language development and make space for intercultural reflection and decolonial aims. From a postmethod perspective, they enable context-sensitive learning that connects English with local histories, values, and ways of knowing that have often been marginalized in foreign language education.

Throughout the paper, theoretical perspectives have been connected with classroom-oriented practices that explore how teachers can bring Argentine legends and folktales into English language lessons, using digital technologies as pedagogical support. These

classroom practices are not intended to function as fixed models or a set of ready-made activities. They are offered as examples of what teachers can do with local narratives, and they foreground teacher mediation by focusing on selection, interpretation, and contextual adaptation.

Through guided tasks based on traditional narratives, learners use English while working with cultural meanings in the text. With careful mediation, English becomes a medium for bringing different voices, histories, and forms of knowledge into circulation. This kind of work can support a more pluriversal view of language and culture, which matters in Argentine settings where imported ELT materials still tend to shape much of the cultural input available in classrooms.

In this context, the article argues for strengthening decolonial and intercultural approaches to ELT and materials in Argentina, particularly as digital technologies and AI tools increasingly shape everyday pedagogical work. A concrete implication is the need for teacher education programs to address decolonial material design and critically situated uses of digital tools, so that future teachers are prepared to act as critical cultural mediators. Finally, further classroom-based research is needed to examine how these choices affect learners' language development and intercultural awareness, and to explore how ELT can contribute to recognizing diverse epistemologies and cultural perspectives within Argentine education.

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