


MULTILITERACIES, ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA AND TRANSLINGUAL PRACTICES: OPENING PANDORA'S BOX¹

MULTILETRAMENTOS, INGLÊS COMO LÍNGUA FRANCA E PRÁTICAS TRANSLINGUES: ABRINDO A CAIXA DE PANDORA

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Abstract: This paper presents the results of a qualitative research whose objective was to investigate how teacher educators and student-teachers of the Portuguese-English Languages Major at a Brazilian public university perceived their local practices involving multiliteracies, English as a lingua franca (ELF) and translanguingual practices. The empirical material analyzed indicated that participants conceived multiliteracies as teaching resources, rather than as a perspective on what languages are and how they work; in terms of language teaching-learning, the participants generally linked language proficiency to the correct use of a generalized, universal “norm” and to the emulation of a native-speaker, however abstracted from day-to-day practices. Yet, when referring to intelligibility, participants declared to appreciate the importance of being able to negotiate meanings in each interactive situation, associating intelligibility with ELF. Yet again, translanguingual practices were considered as consequences of a poor command of English and should be avoided and corrected, especially in writing. As we anticipated, participants were not a coherent whole in their praxes related to teaching and learning English, as they seemed to support contradictory views of language, depending on the situation they were presented with, what was also true of the teaching practices they privileged. This dimension of the research findings shows

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¹ This paper presents the results of a qualitative doctoral research. This research was also part of a nation-wide Brazilian project on Literacies, Language, Education, Culture and Technology at the University of São Paulo. This is the first time its results are published.

that participants were highly sensitive to context and willing to appreciate its importance in their praxes, but still decidedly oriented by colonial assumptions in ELT (English Language Teaching).

Keywords: English as a lingua franca (ELF), multiliteracies, teacher education, translanguaging practices

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa qualitativa, cujo objetivo foi investigar como professores e licenciandos do curso de Letras Português-Inglês percebiam suas práticas locais envolvendo os multiletramentos, o inglês como língua franca (ILF) e práticas translíngues. O material empírico analisado indicou que os participantes conceberam os multiletramentos como recursos de ensino, e não como uma perspectiva sobre o que são as línguas e como elas funcionam; em termos de ensino-aprendizagem, os participantes geralmente relacionaram proficiência ao uso correto de uma “norma” generalizada e universal, e à emulação do falante nativo, por mais abstraído que tal construto esteja das práticas de linguagem do cotidiano. No entanto, ao se referir à inteligibilidade, os participantes declararam valorizar a importância de poder negociar significados em cada situação interativa, associando a inteligibilidade ao ILF. Todavia, as práticas translíngues foram consideradas consequências do mau domínio do inglês e assim deveriam ser evitadas e corrigidas, principalmente na linguagem escrita. Como antecipamos, os participantes não eram um todo coerente em sua práxis relacionada ao ensino-aprendizagem do inglês, pois pareciam manifestar visões contraditórias da língua, dependendo da situação que lhes era apresentada. Essa dimensão dos resultados da pesquisa mostra que os participantes se mostraram bastante sensíveis ao contexto e dispostos a valorizar sua importância em suas práxis, mas ainda se encontravam claramente orientados por pressupostos coloniais em ELT (English Language Teaching).

Palavras-chave: Inglês como língua franca (ILF), multiletramentos, formação de professores, práticas translíngues.

Introduction

Language teacher education has changed in line with the effects of a globalized world and the intense exchange among cultures (DINIZ DE FIGUEIREDO, 2018). What seemed to require technical knowledge of pedagogic strategies and linguistic structures, together with how to apply them to various teaching-learning and communicative situations, has now been seen as a much more comprehensive and complex learning process. We seem to have realized that, in order to learn how to teach, one needs to develop the competence of reading the context in order to situate practice (COPE & KALANTZIS, 2000). With this also comes the awareness that language-practice teaching-learning contexts involve much more than one particular country or community, one specific physical classroom space, one clear-cut language (CANAGARAJAH, 2013; GARCÍA and WEI, 2014).

Critical debate on the impact of globalization has enabled us to reflect on and question homogenizing ontoepistemologies² that look down on other practices by regarding them as inferior, incomplete, too localized, and therefore deemed as ineffective and unfeasible, and at times even making them invisible, projecting them to the other side of the abyssal line (SOUSA SANTOS, 2018). Social, linguistic and economic changes have always been an important part

² We believe epistemology and ontology to be inseparable, one always informing the other, thus our use of both combined in the word “ontoepistemologies”.

of how people communicate, interact and behave in social environments, but globalization has intensified such dimensions to a point where they can no longer be ignored or left out of education – especially language teacher education, and even more importantly, when *English* language teacher education is concerned (DINIZ DE FIGUEIREDO, 2018). We need to rethink our understandings of what constitutes teaching and learning, what we conceive as *language*, how English is implicated in modernity/coloniality, how it has been placed as the language of contact and access to knowledge throughout the world, and how such positionality affects our own positionalities and our own interpretations of the space-time relationship.

Questioning normalized practices in higher education can be one of the strategies in the process of decolonizing teacher education in our modern world. This move is important in order to make visible knowledges and practices that have been relegated to invisibility as they were pushed to the other side of the abyssal line by modernity/coloniality³ (SOUSA SANTOS, 2018). The metaphor of the abyssal line is used by Sousa Santos (2014) as a way to understand and denounce one of the lingering effects of colonization, which is the invisibilizing of whatever is perceived as not pertaining to the homogenizing drive of modernity/coloniality. Sousa Santos (2014, p. 118) points out that “[t]he invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of ‘this side of the line’ and the realm of ‘the other side of the line’”. In this perspective, whatever is not seen as belonging to the modern/colonial ontoepistemology is projected to silence and invisibility, that is, to the other side of the abyssal line created by modern thinking.

Acknowledging the existence of such lines informing our world views as well as our practices, and listening to the silenced voices promotes the coexistence of ontoepistemologies that widen our repertoires of possibilities, allowing for other interpretations of our praxes as teachers. This is the assumption that motivated us into researching if and how teachers-to-be were exposed to the issues raised by studies on multiliteracies, English as a lingua franca (ELF) and translingual practices, and if and how such issues informed their praxis during initial teacher education. The theoretical underpinning of this study lies generally on decolonial theories (based on the work of the Modernity/Coloniality Latin American group and Boaventura de Sousa Santos), and more specifically on the interface established among decoloniality and multiliteracies (MONTE MÓR, 2015; COPE & KALANTZIS, 2000), ELF (JORDÃO, 2014) and translingual practices (CANAGARAJAH, 2013).

The present article is divided into a section we call “background to the empirical study”, which sets the scene where the field research happened and briefly situates the authors of this paper. This is followed by a second session with a theoretical discussion stating the main points of relevance of the three themes specific to language teacher education selected as the main focus of our analysis (multiliteracies, ELF and translingual practices). The third section finally brings an interpretive analysis of our research, as well as some final remarks we consider important to stress at this moment. We hope this study can help other researchers to reflect on

³ We use the binomial modernity/coloniality siding with the Modernity/Coloniality group of Latin American thinkers including Mignolo, Dusserl, Grosfoguel, Walsh, Quijano and others. The idea here is that the two sides of the binomial always come together, like two sides of a coin. According to Grosfoguel (2008, p. 126), “[...] Coloniality allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and world-system structures modern/colonial capitalist”. Coloniality, therefore, refers to the lingering effects of colonialism.

which knowledges their own practices have been silencing, and on how giving them visibility can enrich the process of teacher education as it has enriched ours.

Background to the empirical study: research methodology, context and participants

Before going any further, readers may need some more details about our locus of enunciation, both in terms of the space where the empirical research was conducted and about the theoretical and practical orientation of the researchers.

This paper presents the results of research on local language practices of twenty-one student-teachers and seven teacher educators of a major in Portuguese-English languages in Brazil. Both researchers, the authors of this text, are experienced teacher educators whose theoretical gaze relies mainly on post-structuralism, post-colonialism and decoloniality in English language teaching-learning. Having been born, raised (academically as well) and worked all our lives in Brazil, most of our work experience has been with teachers of English from private language institutes and public universities.

Initial teacher education in our country happens at higher education level, as part of a graduate course focusing on developing skills within the language chosen by the future-teacher. For example, the curriculum of an undergraduate degree program for teachers of English usually offers courses to broaden future teachers' knowledge of and about English, as well as courses on methodology and didactics in education in general and in the teaching of English more particularly. Most of such language programs require students to major in either one foreign language alone (usually the 5 "classic"/colonial languages, i.e., French, Spanish, Italian, German or English), or one foreign language plus Portuguese (locally known as our "native" language⁴). After students have completed the program, they are licensed to teach from year 5 onwards.

This research participants were volunteers from two different groups of one such program for initial English teacher education at a public university in the south of Brazil. After the approval of the local ethics committee, seven teacher educators and twenty-one student-teachers of the Portuguese-English major participated in the study. The role of the educators was secondary to this research, but we occasionally included them as reference for the classroom practices that the students were involved in, although our main focus was actually the student-teachers.

Our empirical material was generated through class observation during students supervised practicum and questionnaires and interviews with both the teacher educators and the student-teachers. As far as class observation was concerned, students in the last year of the program were supposed to teach eight 50-minute classes in elementary and high schools as a requirement for completing their degree. Nine classes in the evening group and three classes in the afternoon group were observed from August to October 2017. The questionnaires were filled in by the

⁴ Portuguese in Brazil is the language of colonization, imposed by the Portuguese crown since 1500. Despite nowadays being recognized by many as an imperialistic language, and therefore "Brazilian Portuguese" being their preferred term, we still officially call Portuguese the most widely spoken language in Brazil. In this regard, Mariani (2020, p.4-5) argues that "[...] as it is not possible to shed the historical injunctions of colonization, and at the same time, as Portuguese language on crossing the Atlantic was marked by a different historicity, a difference was established: we speak Brazilian Portuguese, we speak Brazilian". Unfortunately, with the institutionalization of Portuguese in Brazil, many indigenous languages were silenced, like Guarani and Tupi, for example.

participants between November and December 2017, and the interviews were held in March and April 2018.

Our analysis of the empirical material started with the generation of themes based on our reading of what was going on in the field. As researchers, we consider ourselves up to the task of devising such categories and providing discussions about them, as is the case with interpretive research in general (ROSENTHAL, 2018). Drawing on the three main themes of the research (multiliteracies, ELF and translanguaging practices), our analytical categories were built. They will be described in detail in the section “Multiliteracies and Proficiency”.

Theoretical framework and analysis

We have chosen to discuss our theoretical framework and present our analysis of the empirical material in the same section, side by side, for two main reasons. First, we believe it increases the readability of the text, making it clearer for the readers why we interpret our material the way we do. Second, praxiology, from the Freirean perspective adopted here, implies the indissociability of theory and practice, what makes it extremely important that we coherently do what we preach. So, without further ado, let us proceed to our background theory and analysis, which is divided into 4 subsections: (1) Connections among multiliteracies, translanguaging practice and ELF; (2) ELF, proficiency and intelligibility; (3) Praxiology in teacher education; (4) Multiliteracies and proficiency.

Connections among multiliteracies, translanguaging practices and ELF

Pennycook (2017) explores globalization as a phenomenon linked to the English language and its colonial ancestry. In the author’s view, the global spread of English cannot be considered without looking at power relations and the ideological, political and cultural forces it sets into motion (PENNYCOOK, 2017, p. vii). Along similar lines, Diniz de Figueiredo (2018, p. 31) presents two reasons that, in his point of view, justify the importance of language studies to our understanding of the globalized contemporary scenario. The first is the fact that strong ties between people and places “increase the necessity for common languages of communication”. The second is that “ideas we have about language(s) reflect ideas we have about ourselves and about the world”. Thus, investigating languages helps us understand human action and society.

Jordão (2016, p. 193) also highlights the never innocent ideological nature of what we call language. For her,

[...] language is not a neutral means for the transmission of meanings created in the minds of some people and conveyed to the minds of other people (...) A language is always a contested site, a dialogical space where people construct meanings, identities, knowledges, and are also constructed by associations, links, relations among meanings; such meanings and relations are, in turn, loci where identities are performed.

We cannot deny that English has become a global language used by people for international communication in many areas all over the world, but as Pennycook (2017, p. 9) points out, the idea that “the spread of English is considered to be natural, neutral and beneficial” needs to be deconstructed. According to the author, the spread of English unveils power-related interests, perpetuates colonial power and silences minority languages. For him, as well as for us, the use of critical lenses is paramount to understand the gradual transformation of this language into a valued commodity, its current symbolic cultural capital (BOURDIEU, 1977) as well as its dissemination around the world. It is no surprise that globalization has challenged us to deal with English in complex contact situations, within a super-diverse (VERTOVEC, 2017) cultural and linguistic global scene. This, along the fact that we are facing a world with intricate economic, social, cultural, political and technological changes, influences how people communicate, how they produce language in a variety of contexts, how they move in and around such contexts and what practices they need in order to start understanding how language affects us in the world.

The traditional ways used for conceptualizing and approaching *literacy* do not take into account such diversified practices, nor the technological changes and the various modes for meaning-making available to many of us nowadays. Back in 2004, Brian Street already made a point about literacies being implicated in ideology, prompting us to think about literacy as a social and political practice, and therefore always ideological, influenced by the complexity of power structures and cultural differences, including diverse semiotic modes and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In an attempt to consider such complexity, the New London Group (1996) had already coined the term “multiliteracies” to encompass cultural, linguistic and technological modes of constructing meanings and their relevance to school practices, especially in language teaching and learning.

In our research we considered Street’s insistence on the ideological nature of literacy, together with the implications of the notion of multiliteracies in processes of teaching-learning English in the 21st century, from an ELF perspective. Doing so made it possible to perceive our work with this language as an opportunity to discover and experience new forms of being and doing in the world, building a wide variety of resources for meaning-making. Siding with Marson (2019), we think of multiliteracies and ELF as perspectives that allow us to value practical knowledges, constructed from and with our experience of the world, as perspectives that motivate us to bring a variety of semiotic resources to language teaching-learning, to produce knowledge collaboratively and relationally.

The work with multiliteracies and ELF in teacher education, however, is not an easy task, as it involves many complex variables such as availability of structural and material resources, teachers’ willingness to change praxes, detachment from pre-established models in English teaching, to name just a few. However, as acknowledged by Marson (2019), we need to invest in knowledge with and from experience to envisage innovation. In a similar vein, João & Marques (2018, p. 53) point out that their perspective on ELF presupposes the comprehension of language in a non-normative fashion, enabling us to “shake off some good(?) old habits in ELT classroom, shifting practice from a normative-driven approach to language, learning and teaching, to the localized agency of participants upon meaning-making in discourse”. The authors claim that stressing the local agency of teachers and students of English is part of a much-needed movement to decolonize ELT. Thus, aligning perspectives of non-normative ELF

with insights gained from the view of language brought forward by theories on multiliteracies and translanguaging practices, as well as modernity/coloniality can help us start to decolonize ELT and bring it closer to the wants, needs and interests of local communities.

In the next subsection, we will shortly present our findings in terms of how intelligibility and proficiency were perceived by our research participants.

ELF, proficiency and intelligibility

Moving away from normativity requires an important revision in our usual concepts within ELT, especially those of proficiency and intelligibility, both of which have been exposed to resignification more recently mainly from studies on ELF.

The figure of an idealized English speaker, as the one that has referenced most ELT practices, does not work in a post-normative ELF scholarship. Likewise, the idea that the aim of learning a language is to emulate such kind of language user needs to be abandoned. According to Marson (2019, p. 215), “[...] a competent [language] user is not the one who imitates the native speaker, but the one who uses their multilingual repertoires with the purpose of communicating”. Whether they achieve that purpose or not can only be determined considering each specific, concrete situation of interaction, where the ones passing this judgement need to take into account as many dimensions of the communication context/enunciative situation as they can. Proficiency is hence tied to *intelligibility*, rather than to emulating idealized native speakers or language varieties.

Needless to say, unfortunately, the native speaker proficiency model has long been (and perhaps still is) promoted and worshipped (WALESKO, 2019; FIGUEREDO, 2011). This has a lot to do with colonial interests lurking behind the dominance of English. In this regard, Phillipson (2017), in his article *Myth and realities of ‘global’ English*, calls our attention to the forces behind globalization. For him, bolstering English as a global language has turned it into a commodity and disguised the historical oppression to which it has been subjecting people all over the Globe.

Thus, we could say that the way student-teachers and teacher educators conceptualize language (and therefore also proficiency and intelligibility) will most certainly interfere in their praxes and determine their perspective on how and what they themselves and their students should be learning. For us, when proficiency is defined in terms of intelligibility, and intelligibility defined within each specific enunciative situation, to use a Bakhtinian concept, proficiency starts to operate beyond linguistic imperialism (PHILLIPSON, 2017). On the one hand, when proficiency in English is understood in abstract terms, or with reference to the native-speaker construct, it disguises the political and social interests privileged and defended by the dissemination of English. In other words, it tries to silence the coloniality of English presenting this language as neutral, or as the only possible language for international communication and access to knowledge worldwide. On the other hand, if we conceive language (and of course the English language) as always political, always situated, unpredictable and subject to change, we can say that language educators’ practices need to be constantly (re)evaluated, (re)thought and (re)organized without following a single and permanent model. This is true both regarding

what a “good language” and a “good language user” can be, and how “good language teaching practices” are defined in terms of effectiveness.

In this regard, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) argue that since the naming of languages was an invention of colonialism, and such invention has been maintained in favor of colonial domination, the recent global changes and accentuated mobility compel us to reflect about the need of thinking about languages differently, conceiving them as plural and open social constructs that exist contingently, situatedly, and relationally. From this angle, English can be understood in its function as a lingua franca, as a named language that is reshaped according to how, why, what, where and when the interlocutors relate to one another and to their perceived power, histories, affiliations, positions, identities, cultures. In such situatedness, new norms can emerge from the negotiation of meanings in intercultural situations. Thus, teacher educators and student-teachers’ practices are seen as constantly negotiated, always localized within specific political, social and cultural environments.

Praxiology in teacher education

We firmly believe that the way a teacher conceives language and the social role of the language they teach has a very strong hold on how they teach. This notion comes mainly from our readings of Freire, Bakhtin/Voloshinov, Makoni and Pennycook, among others, who insist on the close relation between language and society, stressing the ideological basis that exists in every reading of the wor(l)d (FREIRE & MACEDO, 2005). In modernity’s thought, languages have been constructed as if they were discrete and autonomous entities that only occasionally influencing one another (MAKONI & PENNYCOOK, 2007). This made it possible to name languages, to rank-order them and to hierarchize the people associated with them. The famous Herderian triad (posing a purportedly one-to-one correspondence between nation, culture and language) reinforced the idea that language belonged to places and, consequently, that people who were born in a place where a particular language was spoken had authority over such language.

This view of language, legitimized by the communicative approach (JORDÃO, 2013), leads teachers to think that each named language is independent of the others, and the competence they have in one language is not transferable to the other. It can also create, in bilinguals and multilinguals, the idea that there is one language in which they are more proficient than the others, this being called their “native” language (JENKINS, 2009). It follows from this idea that teachers who adhere to this view on languages tend to stress a monolingual orientation to language teaching-learning, that is, to insist that students (and themselves) should never mix languages but, rather, use language forms and pronunciation patterns avowedly belonging to either one or other language system. In this context, correction becomes extremely important and proficiency is related to an external grammar that hovers majestically upon every specific situation of communication practice: it is as if every concrete language interaction should refer to a grammar book created by linguists based on abstractions and constructs.

However, we tend to ignore that all this has been done on the basis of a monolingual language orientation, projected by modern theories on language acquisition as the ideal orientation for teaching and learning languages. More recently, a great deal of research has

been developed, looking into multilingual practices and doing away with the monolingual bias that has traditionally guided studies on languages. By reflecting on the language practices of bilinguals, Ofélia Garcia, Li Wei and Suresh Canagarajah, for example, concluded that people who exist in more than one named language do not mind which language they use, as long as they manage to communicate; rather, they have advanced the concept of *repertoire* as a much more useful concept than that of language. Along these lines, scholars such as Rampton (2019), and Blommaert and Backus (2013), to name only two, prefer the idea of repertoire to refer to semiotic resources, going beyond verbal entities and towards the idea of multiple resources available for the construction of meaning.

This is, in brief, the landscape on which our analysis of the empirical material generated in the research we developed with teacher educators of English and their student-teachers was underpinned. We worked at the interface between decoloniality and studies on ELF, translanguaging practices and multiliteracies. Through interpretive content analysis, we isolated these dimensions of language theory as themes for our analytical units. In each of these units, different categories emerged for teacher educators and student-teachers, so we treated them separately in our analysis. The following section will briefly explore how both groups of participants associated (or not) their idea of multiliteracies with proficiency.

Multiliteracies and proficiency

Teacher educators and student-teachers referred to multiliteracies together with multimodality and digital technology, usually thinking about them in terms of teaching-learning resources, as opposed to a possible relation with a certain way of teaching and/or conceiving languages as multiple repertoires of varied nature. When prompted to reflect about multiliteracies, both groups of participants mentioned their interest in dealing with different teaching resources and text modalities in their classrooms, but they seemed concerned about a supposed need for huge structural and personal investments in order to do so. They felt that their teaching situations did not allow them to have access to the diversity of resources they would need in order to fully do what they desired. For them, the mere addition of such resources in their teaching would help them improve the quality of their teaching and their own learning of English. The following excerpts show some of the typical respondents' ideas in this regard: for Professor 7, “[...] it is crucial that we bring these various modalities, so that we can actually interact with students”⁵ (PROF. 7, INTERVIEW, 2018); one of the student-teachers who already had some teaching experience mentioned: “[...] I try to take these issues [multiliteracies and multimodality] into account and bring as much as I can from the resources that I have”⁶ (ACAD.⁷ 3, INTERVIEW, 2018).

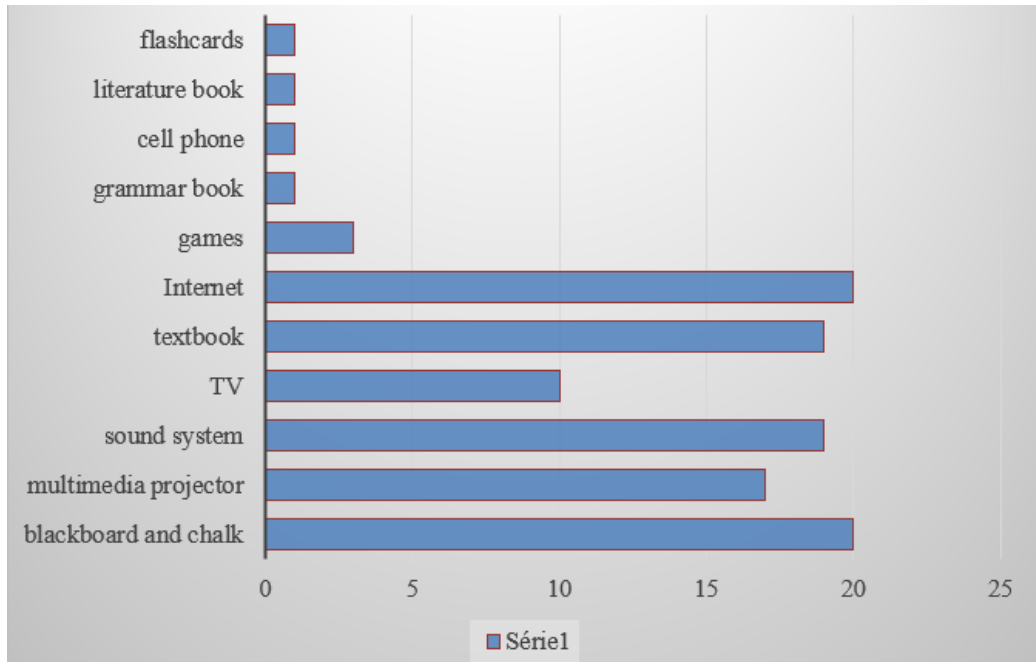
⁵ Original quote: Prof. 7 – “[...] é imprescindível que a gente use essas várias modalidades, para que a gente possa de fato interagir com o aluno”.

⁶ Original quote: Acad 3 - “[...] eu tento levar em conta essas questões [multiletramentos e multimodalidade], e trazer o máximo que eu posso a partir dos recursos que eu tenho”.

⁷ We are using the acronyms ACAD (from the Portuguese “acadêmico”) and PROF (from the Portuguese “professor”) to refer respectively to student-teachers and professors.

As far as resources are concerned, it is also relevant that some student-teachers acknowledged the importance of bringing different textual modes (linguistic, visual, spatial, gestural, oral) to the classroom, but they also mentioned “textbook, chalk and blackboard” as important resources, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Educational and pedagogical resources for English teaching – Student-teachers’ opinions



Source: Adapted from Marson (2019, p.131).

Interestingly, resources such as printed textbooks, chalk and blackboard are the ones most commonly used in elementary and high schools in Brazil, schools the students themselves attended and where they will most probably work, hence their concern with the feasibility of multiliteracies in their teaching practice. It is noteworthy that student-teachers were aware of the need to adapt their practices to the available resources and the structural demands that they found in schools. The empirical material reported on Figure 1 also shows that cell phones did not appear as meaningful resources for the student-teachers, perhaps because they were not encouraged to use them in their language classes at university. On the other hand, the internet and multimedia projectors were mentioned as important resources.

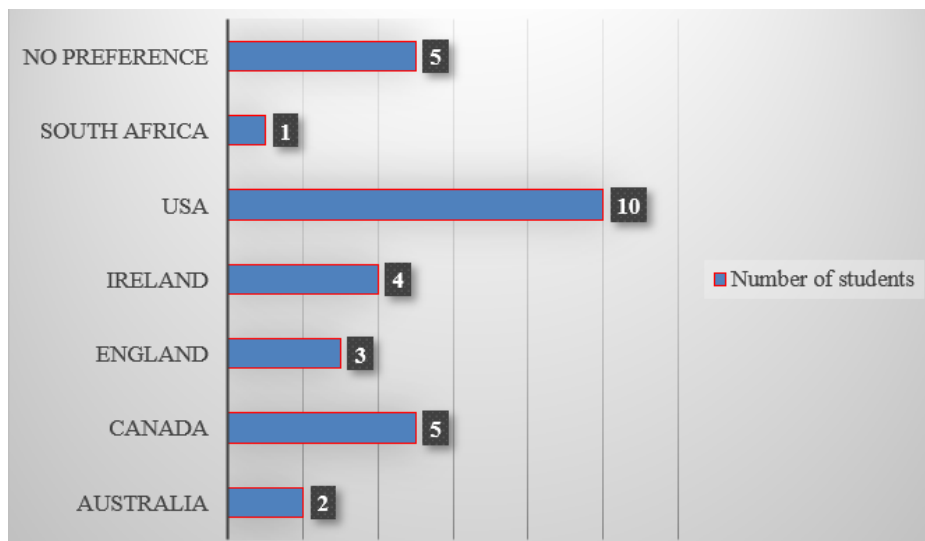
It was intriguing to notice one significant difference in the responses by teacher educators and student-teachers. Despite the student-teachers’ recognition that the use of multiple semiotic modes in language teaching takes up a great deal of teachers’ time and work, they argued that these practices should not be a momentary trend, but an essential condition for teacher education in the contemporary world. On the other hand, some teacher educators seemed to be more hesitant to consider bringing such resources to their classes. We concluded the obvious: for them, complementing their teaching with resources in order to ascertain their students were exposed to different kinds of text would mean investing an impossible amount of time and effort.

That seemed perfectly understandable, since our universities usually demand teacher educators' participation in endless meetings and committees, for example, as much as mandatory research and extension work, besides being to the root on the publish or perish ideology. But it also occurred to us that another reason could be their unfamiliarity with technology (which could considerably reduce the amount of time involved in looking for teaching materials online, for example) and their perceived need for taking whole courses to learn about work involving ICTs, not feeling confident enough to go about it on their own in their own available time.

As regards *proficiency*, teacher educators and student-teachers stressed that proficiency was a very complex issue. Both groups were aware of the variables involved in the study of proficiency, and explicitly mentioned dimensions such as linguistic knowledge, availability of resources, language policies, context of practice, among others. For student-teachers, language proficiency was connected with the idea of (1) the construct of the native speaker as having wide knowledge of the language, especially its grammar and lexicon, and (2) such knowledge determining proficiency. They seemed to be operating from an idealization of proficiency as meaning a “total” command of a language; the dichotomy between native versus nonnative speaker seemed to be alive in student-teachers' perceptions of English. Although some student-teachers mentioned that it was not important for them to have native English teacher educators in their major, they still reinforced the need for their professors to “master all the language skills” (ACAD.12⁸; ACAD.21⁹, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017). We cannot help but wonder what notions of “mastering” and “skills” are informing such position. It might be linked to the skills-based view of the traditional Communicative Language Teaching approach (RICHARDS, 2006), an approach that conceptualized language as a tool for communication and preconized its teaching-learning as the mastering of standard use of four language skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking. The communicative approach, as it is mostly referred to in Brazil, takes as central an idealized imagined language user (represented by the “native speaker” construct) to be the model aimed at and reproduced by language learners. This has been called *native-speakerism* (HOLLIDAY, 2015) and it can be related to our purported dependency, as language learners, on who is perceived to be the owner of the language we are learning: the “native speakers”. As can be perceived in their remarks just mentioned, such perspective was present among our student-teachers, emphasizing the coloniality of the relations they established with the English language. This could also be found in their answers to our question about where they would like to go if they were to study abroad: most of them chose countries in the inner circle (KACHRU, 1996). Figure 2 below shows their choices.

⁸Original quote: Acad. 12 - “Acredito que um professor deve ser fluente em inglês (...) é necessário dominar bem todas as habilidades”.

⁹Original quote: Acad. 21 - “Um professor de inglês deve ter um domínio suficiente que o possibilite trabalhar as quatro habilidades da língua de forma satisfatória”.

Figure 2 – Student-teachers' favorite places to study abroad

Source: Adapted from Marson (2019, p.173).

In our empirical material, as can be observed in figure 2, only six out of 30 entries indicated “non-norm-providing countries” (KACHRU, 1996, p. 138). This preference may be related to the assumption that the best way to learn a language is to live where it is “originally” spoken, a myth that has economically highly benefited countries such as England and the U.S.A. Student-teachers justified their choice with arguments such as “I would like to learn English in a country that has English as a native language, because of the language immersion”¹⁰ (ACAD. 1, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017). Another student justified that “[...] Learning with native-speakers is completely different than non-native, and I think it is important to live the other’s culture”¹¹ (ACAD. 2, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017), or “[...] I believe it is very important for an English teacher to know the language and culture of the language that will be working in the classroom”¹². (ACAD. 8, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017).

Another interesting aspect brought up by teacher educators in terms of proficiency within a multiliteracies perspective was the need for greater flexibility in relation to the difficulties faced by students in oral interactions. They seemed to accept the idea that their student-teachers were in a process of using several communicative strategies to negotiate meanings in oral situations and, therefore, multiliteracies would help them accept mistakes and be more patient when listening to their own students’ productions in oral language. However, this did not seem to transfer to student-teachers’ written productions, for in writing they felt they should be more centered on normativity and, therefore, correct and grade papers based on their proximity with what they

¹⁰ Original quote: Acad. 1 – “[...] Eu gostaria de aprender inglês em algum país que tenha o inglês como língua nativa, por conta da imersão no idioma”.

¹¹ Original quote: Acad. 2 – “[...] Aprender com falantes nativos é completamente diferente de não nativos, e eu acho que é importante viver a cultura do outro”.

¹² Original quote: Acad. 8 – “[...] Eu acredito que é muito importante um professor de inglês conhecer de perto o idioma e a cultura da língua que estará trabalhando na sala de aula”.

conceived of as the norms of standard grammar and academic discourse. In this regard, one of the teacher educators explained that it is important to find the origin of students' mistakes in their written productions. In her own words,

[...] I always try to clarify how I interpreted that [the written mistake] and what I think may have caused it (...) because these misunderstandings are often misinterpreted, and correction efficacy is impaired, because nobody thought about what caused them nor clarified it for the student where that misconception came from, and then this can continue to happen¹³ (PROF. 5, INTERVIEW, 2018).

Regarding the *uses of ELF*, both teacher educators and student-teachers declared to be open to using communicative strategies to deal with misunderstandings in oral interactions. There was among them some kind of realization that meanings can be negotiated and new grammar conventions can be created to ensure intelligibility.

It seemed that participants were eager to discuss the ELF-aware perspective (SIFAKIS, 2014) at the university level. However, in the teacher educators' point of view, the discussion of ELF seemed to make sense only in theory; in practice, they complained that the ELF concept had a too complex logic, and they did not know how to deal with some of its methodological, pedagogical and political concerns. In this respect, Sifakis and Bayyurt (2016, p.152) argue that “[...] Educating the EFL/ESL teachers about ELF is a demanding and complicated process”. They claim to have encountered three kinds of teachers in their ELF-awareness courses: “the supporters, the risk-takers and the sceptics” (SIFAKIS & BAYYURT, 2016, p. 148). The first group, the supporters, is composed of teachers who seem open to an ELF-aware perspective. The second group of teachers, the risk-takers, are those who show willingness and enthusiasm to experiment ELF-borne ideas. The last group, the sceptics, are the ones more resistant to change. The teacher-educators in our research seemed to fit this last group. Prof. 6, for example, was worried about the pedagogical implications in bringing ELF to the classroom; in her words, “[...] I have never worked with ELF (...) I do not see how it can be feasible to work all English varieties, I do not see this possibility, because we do not have time, we have to choose”¹⁴ (PROF. 6, INTERVIEW. 2018). This, of course, was a misconception of ELF as demanding that all varieties of English should be taught – instead, ELF theories rely more on ELF-awareness, that is, on the importance of being aware of language variation and the relativity of universal norms (SIFAKIS, 2014).

For undergraduate students, the concept of ELF did not seem clear either. One of the students explained in the interview that he would like to have a deeper debate about ELF at the university. In his words, that was also the idea of most student-teachers that participated in our research. He explained that ELF “was not mentioned in our course, I think, but it has not yet reached the point of having a lesson that explains it, a reflection on it, there are people

¹³ Original quote: Prof. 5 – “[...] Eu sempre tento esclarecer como eu interpretei isso e o que eu acho que causou (...) porque esses desentendimentos são muitas vezes mal interpretados, e a eficácia da correção fica prejudicada, porque ninguém pensou o que causou ou até mesmo não esclareceu para o aluno de onde veio esse equívoco, e então isso pode continuar a acontecendo”.

¹⁴ Original quote: Prof. 6 - “[...] Eu nunca trabalhei o ILF (...) Não vejo como pode ser factível trabalhar todas as variedades de inglês, não vejo sendo possível fazer isso, porque a gente não tem tempo, tem que optar (...)”.

who may think that it is an English that everybody speaks, but it not that, either"¹⁵ (ACAD. 7, INTERVIEW, 2018).

Regarding *translingual practices*, we presented participants with two communicative situations in the questionnaire. Their responses to these situations were analyzed together, as both situations had the same aim, that is, to find out about participants' views on translingual practices regarding (non)normativity. The first activity (see table 1) was a dialogue between a hotel manager and a tourist involving cognates that made communication difficult between the interlocutors; here, the participants were asked to comment on the reasons why they felt communication was broken and on what they would have done in a similar situation. In their answers they attributed the communication problems mostly to the false cognates in the conversation. One of the student-teachers answered, "[...] The interlocutors' communication was impaired because of the lack of knowledge of false friends"¹⁶ (ACAD. 4, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017). Another participant pointed out that "[...] the cognates issue causes beginners to fall into 'traps'"¹⁷(ACAD. 6, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017). The following table shows the dialogue that was presented to the research participants.

Table 1 – Dialogue between a hotel manager and a tourist

<p><i>Read the dialogue between the Hotel Manager (M) and the Tourist (T)</i></p> <p><i>AT THE HOTEL</i></p> <p><i>(M) – Excuse me, Sir. What's the matter?</i></p> <p><i>(T) – I have a problem. I read the notice "push" and I followed the instruction, but the door isn't working!</i></p> <p><i>(M) – Sorry, Sir...but you can't open the door because you're doing the opposite movement!</i></p> <p><i>(T) – Uhm, thank you. Maybe you can help me. I need to buy a book at the library.</i></p> <p><i>(M) – Sorry, Sir... but you can't buy books at the library!</i></p> <p><i>(T) – Who do you think you are to tell me what I can or can't do? I pretend to buy, so I'll buy, I have the money!</i></p> <p><i>(M) – If you pretend to buy you don't need the money....</i></p> <p><i>(T) – Are you suggesting that I am a thief?</i></p> <p><i>(M) – I didn't mean to offend you. I know that you're just an ordinary man!</i></p> <p><i>(T) – What? An ordinary man? I don't have the costume to be talked like that by strange people, and I see that you're very exquisite and I need respite. I'll call my avocodo. I had a deception with this hotel.... I will process you and this hotel.</i></p> <p><i>(T) - ??!?!???</i></p>
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Source: Marson (2019, p. 236)

¹⁵ Original quote: Acad. 7 – “[...] ILF não foi falado no nosso curso, eu acho, mas ainda não chegou a ponto de ter uma aula que explique mesmo, uma reflexão sobre isso, tem pessoas que podem achar que é um inglês que todo mundo fala, e também não é isso”.

¹⁶ Original quote: Acad. 4 – “[...] A comunicação dos interlocutores foi prejudicada devido à falta de conhecimento dos falsos cognatos”.

¹⁷ Original quote: Acad. 6 – “[...] A questão dos cognatos faz com que alunos iniciantes caiam em ‘armadilhas’”.

Due to contextual constraints we could not have the participants listen to a recording or watch the conversation on video, which would have made the activity closer to real life. We could not do it face-to-face either, which would have helped our interaction and perhaps would have allowed us to deepen their reflections. Nevertheless, we considered the printed dialogue proposal valid for our purposes, in so far as we managed to raise an opportunity of problematizing ELF usage by multilingual users and the written responses did allow us to interpret the participants' attitude to normative grammar and to ELF. Besides, both teacher educators and student-teachers were used to that kind of activity on printed paper.

In the second situation, teacher educators and student-teachers were presented with ten written sentences¹⁸ with standard grammar "mistakes" that we feel are common to Brazilian English. They were supposed to answer how they would react if these examples of cross-linguistic influence took place in their classes. Most participants, professors and student-teachers together, stressed that such statements would be acceptable in informal situations, but not in formal ones such as tests. In one of the participants' words, "[...] If it was in a class dialogue I would let the dialogue flow. If it was an evaluative work I would correct"¹⁹ (ACAD. 6, QUESTIONNAIRE, 2017).

Both teacher educators' and student-teachers' commented that one of the interlocutors, the manager, was not interested in engaging in constructing meaning. In other words, for them the manager was not open to mutual intelligibility or willing to understand sociolinguistic differences. The research participants claimed that the interlocutors should always use all the semiotic resources available for meaning-making, which for us related to supporting multiliteracies. As to teaching-learning, participants seemed open to using a variety of semiotic resources in English teaching; however, when they faced situations in which misunderstandings involved what is usually perceived as an influence of Portuguese (as in the second activity), they interpreted them as harmful for the learners.

These are indicative of traces of coloniality in our participants' resistance accepting translanguaging practices in English teaching-learning when the presence of their native language, Portuguese, was concerned. It seems contradictory that they welcome the use of multiple semiotic resources in their teaching, but the presence of the Portuguese language in the classroom is considered harmful. This silencing/devaluing of the mother tongue may be a sign of the strong hold the initial versions of the communicative approach (and their banning of the mother tongue in foreign language teaching) have had in teacher education in Brazil (VALÉRIO & MATTOS, 2018), and as such, an indicator of our uncritical and colonial reproduction of Eurocentric scholarship.

According to more recent applied linguistics developments, the presence of learners' first language in class is an important part of the semiotic resources available to learners, and therefore an important resource for language learning. The notion of *repertoire* (BLOMMAERT, 2015), for example, is one that stresses interlocutors should use all the resources available to

¹⁸ The sentences presented to them were: 1) Are you good? 2) I don't have none problem. 3) Mike borned in 1985. 4) She is a famous apresentant on TV. 5) David is a famous American director. Your fame started because of your films. 6) He played the piano, the guitar and the battery. 7) He had ten years old. 8) I love live in rural area because is quiet have space. 9) Some of my friends preferre to live in big cities. 10) I don't go frecuently to the partys because it is crowd and noise.

¹⁹ Original quote: "[...] Se fosse em um diálogo em classe eu deixaria fluir. Se fosse em um trabalho avaliativo eu corrigiria".

communicate and construct meanings. This relates to the ELF perspective we are speaking from here as well, in so far as language norms are conceived as being constantly negotiated and legitimized locally for communication purposes (MARSON, 2019). Moreover, interactions are full of conflict and ambiguity, and communication takes place when interlocutors are engaged in promoting mutual intelligibility.

Final remarks: looking ahead and reshaping praxes

Challenging concepts ingrained in our hearts and minds for years and years may not present any noticeable signs of impact for some time. Nevertheless, it allows for the exercise of agency on the part of both educators and students who, having their praxes challenged, are invited to resignify their ontoepistemologies.

In the case of English language teaching in the contemporary world, the process of rethinking praxis demands reconceptualizing teaching and learning as multifaceted and diverse, considering teacher educators' and student-teachers' own literacies in contact with educational praxiologies, including the political and social practices they build and participate in. It also demands looking at language as an assemblage of elements and dimensions (PENNYCOOK, 2018) including languages in contact, languages and cultures, languages and power, languages and identities, languages and contexts, just to name a few intersections between language and the world. Rethinking praxis in the area of English teaching-learning also demands looking into perspectives of ELF as spaces for situated meaning-making. As a consequence, we move into an unstable field, where residents are required to be (and/or trust themselves as being) informed participants in glocal scenarios (GUILHERME & MENEZES DE SOUZA, 2019) that claim for improvisation, flexibility and contextual awareness for localized decision-making.

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