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Teaching English in the globalized world: fostering an education for a plurilingual and intercultural global citizenship

Enseñar Inglés en el Mundo Globalizado: Fomentando una Educación para la Ciudadanía Global Plurilingüe e Intercultural

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ABSTRACT
This article resulted of a collaboration between two master's students and their professor. It addresses the importance of a multilingual and intercultural approach of English teaching to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and internationalization. Using narrative vignette analysis (Hoelz & Bataglia, 2024), the authors examine personal teaching and learning experiences, revealing how hegemonic practices in language teaching can reinforce a colonialist mentality and silence diversity. The study's theoretical foundation is based on UNESCO's guidelines (2006); Thoresen (2020); Lowe and Allum (2020); Padinha and Goia (2021); Vaz Ferreira and Stanke (2023); Hird (2023); and McHugh (2024), among others, to discuss the concepts of interculturality, multilingualism, and GCE. The vignettes highlight teaching experiences in language institutes, university extension projects, and virtual exchange programs prompting reflections on teaching practice and the role of the English language teacher as a mediator of learning in an intercultural context. The analysis and discussion of the vignettes highlight the importance of recognizing and valuing the linguistic and cultural diversity of students, deconstructing the idea of English as the only language of international communication, and encouraging the promotion of education for global citizenship based on practices of plurilingualism and interculturality. It is hoped that this article can contribute to other education professionals, especially English language teachers, to rethink rigid pedagogical practices, in order to promote an education for global citizenship that is more inclusive and humanized, preparing learners to act in the globalized world in which we live.

Keywords: Plurilingualism; Intercultural Education; Global Citizenship Education.

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RESUMEN
Este artículo es resultado de la colaboración entre dos estudiantes de maestría y su profesor. Él aborda la importancia de un enfoque plurilingüe e intercultural en la enseñanza del inglés para promover la Educación para la Ciudadanía Global (GCE) y la internacionalización. Utilizando un análisis de viñetas narrativas (Hoelz & Bataglia, 2024), los autores examinan experiencias personales de enseñanza y aprendizaje, revelando cómo las prácticas hegemónicas en la enseñanza de idiomas pueden reforzar una mentalidad colonialista y silenciar la diversidad. La fundamentación teórica del estudio se basa en Las directrices de la UNESCO (2006); Thoresen (2020); Lowe y Allum (2020); Padinha y Goia (2021); Vaz Ferreira y Stanke (2023); Hird (2023); y McHugh (2024); entre otros, para discutir los conceptos de interculturalidad, plurilingüismo y ECG. Las viñetas resaltan experiencias de enseñanza en institutos de idiomas, proyectos de extensión universitaria y programas de intercambio virtual, planteando reflexiones sobre la práctica docente y sobre el papel del docente de lengua inglesa como mediador del aprendizaje en un contexto intercultural. El análisis y discusión de las viñetas resaltan la importancia de reconocer y valorar la diversidad lingüística y cultural de los estudiantes, deconstruir la idea del inglés como única lengua de comunicación internacional y fomentar la promoción de la educación para la ciudadanía global basada en prácticas de plurilingüismo. e interculturalidad. Se espera que este artículo pueda contribuir a que otros profesionales de la educación, especialmente los profesores de lengua inglesa, puedan repensar prácticas pedagógicas rígidas, con el fin de promover una educación más inclusiva y humanizada para la ciudadanía global, que prepare a los educandos para trabajar en el mundo globalizado en el que vivimos.

Palabras clave: Plurilingüismo; Educación Intercultural; Educación para la ciudadanía global.

Introduction

This article resulted of a collaborative effort of three English language teachers - two master's students and their professor of the Federal University of Uberlândia - and has been based on discussions promoted during the course entitled ‘‘*Linguistic and internationalization policies and practices*”, taught as part of the university’s graduate program.

Inspired by the professor's welcoming and plurilingual attitude throughout the course, we realized how we got used to and accommodated ourselves to accepting and considering English as the default language for international communication. However, from a critical position, we began to question our certainties and reflect on the language teacher's role in internationalization in our globalized world.

In doing so, we were disturbed by the naturalization of hegemonic practices that reproduced a colonialist mindset, grounded on a limited understanding of our multilingual and multicultural reality. Shaken by reflections and (re)constructions of meanings about our beliefs and pedagogical practices, we could not remain silent in the face of the need to discuss the role of the English teacher in promoting plurilingual and intercultural Global Citizenship Education (GCE), based on narrative vignettes’ analysis of our teaching experiences, which is the goal of this article.

As educators, if we limit ourselves to carrying out isolated practices fixed on hegemonic beliefs about the superiority of the English language in educational contexts, we will be placing ourselves in an ivory tower and thus contributing to cultural erasure and the silencing of the voices of so many learners around the world.

As Souza (2023) reveals, distancing and silencing are the bases for violence in education, side by side with prejudice. Therefore, we decided to share experiences that transformed our limited worldview with other educators - especially those on teaching

hegemonic languages so that we can reflect upon the need for openness and transformation in our educational practices.

With this objective in mind, we share part of our journey toward fostering GCE that is more inclusive, humanized, welcoming, and guided by plurilingualism and interculturality, driven by the desire for change. To guide our journey, we developed qualitative research, according to Paiva (2019), Trainor and Graue (2013), and van Schie (2023), using the analysis of narrative vignettes as the study's methodology (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 2001; Hoelz & Bataglia, 2024; Santos, 2022).

Paiva (2019) states that research is commonly defined as a "search for problem-solving" (Paiva, 2019, p. 7). However, the author emphasizes that, in Applied Linguistics and Education, research is not restricted to finding solutions to problems, as it does searches to comprehend the reality ("*busca mesmo é compreender a realidade*"[1]), describing and investigating phenomena based on diverse theoretical-methodological frameworks.

In a complementary way, Trainor and Graue (2013) explain that qualitative research is meant to describe, understand, and challenge, "by looking closely at something and learning through particularity" (Trainor & Graue, 2013, p. 12). This type of research approach, as explained by van Schie (2023), "allows researchers to explore complex phenomena in depth and emphasizes the perspectives and voices of the participants" (van Schie, 2023, p. 3), constituting a means to share our experiences, with the potential to promote understanding.

Additionally, Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (2001) state that "the writing can be alive" in qualitative research, proposing a variety of forms to inform understanding, among which we have the narrative vignettes, defined as "narrative investigations that carry within them an interpretation of the person, experience, or situation that the writer describes" (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 2001, p. 70).

When writing qualitative research, we can use narrative vignettes to restructure the "complex dimensions of its subject for the purpose of capturing, in a brief portrayal, what has been learned over a period of time" (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 2001, p. 70), which is precisely the reason why we chose them as a means to present and analyze our teaching and learning experiences.

Moreover, when discussing the contribution of narrative vignettes to teacher education, Santos (2022) presents the genre as a "catalyst in the educational process" (Santos, 2022, p. 75), with the potential to lead us to reflection and understanding. In a complementary way, Hoelz and Bataglia (2024) state that "vignettes serve as starting point for critical reflection" (Hoelz & Bataglia, 2024, p. 14), which suits our purposes in this article.

Our analysis begins considering Dewey's (1938) timeless understanding of experience as a *continuum* of learning, in which "every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences [...] that is the very meaning of growth, continuity, reconstruction of

[1] Considering the plurilingual approach we intend to foster, we have decided to present our direct citations in their original language of publication.

experience" (Dewey, 1938, p. 47). For Dewey (1938), an experience is 'educative' when it enables future learning and possibilities for growth and reconstruction.

We hope that by participating in our experiences through our narratives, readers may have an educative experience (Dewey, 1938) that creates openness for personal and professional growth, inspiring reflections on their practices. Therefore, we invite readers to join us on this path towards Global Citizenship Education, in a plurilingual and intercultural context, embracing linguistic and cultural diversity as constitutive of our globalized world.

Our journey begins with the presentation of our theoretical framework, which contextualizes interculturality and intercultural education, plurilingualism, and Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Then, we will share our experiences through narrative vignettes, followed by their analysis and discussion in the light of the theory. Finally, we will present our considerations of the work and what we have learned.

Theoretical framework

Trainor and Graue (2013, p. 13) compare the theoretical framework to a "lens or way of looking at something". In this article, we chose to look at our experiences through the lens of intercultural education, plurilingualism, and Global Citizenship Education (GCE).

Interculturality and Intercultural Education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) presented the *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* in its *Section of Education for Peace and Human Rights*, to foster quality education worldwide, which was designed for "teachers and learners, curriculum developers, policy makers [...], and all those who wish to promote Intercultural Education in interests of peace and understanding" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 7). Considering the relevance of the international organization for promoting inclusion and influencing international politics, we bring to the discussion some of the concepts addressed in the document.

According to the guidelines, "through programs that encourage dialogue between students of different cultures, beliefs, and religions, education can make an important and meaningful contribution to sustainable and tolerant societies" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 8). As English teachers, we need to be aware of our central role in providing more welcoming and inclusive learning opportunities. Therefore, if we intend to promote transformative educational practices toward Global Citizenship Education, we must be guided by the principles of interculturality and intercultural education.

UNESCO's document recognizes interculturality as a dynamic concept that refers to promoting open dialogue in the interaction of different cultures, based on mutual respect. As explained in UNESCO's guidelines, promoting intercultural education goes beyond simply accepting or tolerating diversity, it means achieving "a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of *understanding* of, *respect* for and *dialogue* between the different cultural groups" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18).

With a similar purpose to UNESCO's, of fostering equality and inclusion in education, the Council of Europe published the "*Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education"* (Beacco et al., 2016), after discussing the challenges involved in developing language policies during the Intergovernmental Policy Forum (2007), which contains guidelines for language teachers and policymakers.

As stated by the authors, language teaching is considered "the domain *par excellence* for contact with cultural otherness" (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 12), and plurilingual and intercultural education is the basis for quality education that recognizes and respects the "cultural and linguistic diversity in societies marked by increasing mobility, plurality, and complexity" (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 15), as the ones we are currently living in.

As educators and language teachers, it is also our responsibility to foster the development of intercultural competence, working with an approach that facilitates learners' access to "equity and quality of education" (Beacco et al., 2016, p. 15), considering the diversity of their needs. Besides that, we need to develop our intercultural competence.

McHugh (2024) explains that developing intercultural competence goes beyond adapting to the globalized world as "it is the ongoing pursuit of a deeper understanding and appreciation of ourselves and others [...] and continually developing our capacity to navigate differences with sensitivity and respect" (McHugh, 2024, p.3). The author also stresses that intercultural practices should be encouraged to foster collaboration and inclusion.

According to Oviedo and Krimphove (2022, p. 10), intercultural competence involves knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. The authors list some of the intercultural competencies to be developed, such as knowledge about the world, countries, and cultures; understanding of diversity and diverse perspectives; openness, acceptance, empathy, respect, and sensitivity; besides technical and teamwork skills, creative thinking, and adaptability, among others.

As an example of educational practices that can foster the development of intercultural competence in both teachers and learners, we highlight Oviedo and Krimphove's (2022) analysis of Brazilian's virtual exchange, especially 'Collaborative Online International Learning' (COIL) programs that connected classrooms and promoted online collaborative learning. Salomão and Freire Junior (2020) also share a myriad of collaborative online projects in the scope of the Brazilian Virtual Exchange (BRaVE) program, which has broadened the possibilities of internationalizing higher education experiences.

Finally, Hird (2023) defines interculturality "as processes of recognition and integration of human, linguistic, cultural, technological, moral and environmental diversity that constitute our integrated humanity" (Hird, 2023, p. 25), which foster empathy and mutual understanding. The author also states that interculturality must be "a self-conscious commitment to understanding, participating and celebrating humanity in its comprehensive diversity" (Hird, 2023, p. 34), reinforcing the personal responsibility involved in the process.

Another essential part of fostering global citizenship education and respecting diversity and mutual understanding in the context of language teaching is plurilingualism, which we discuss in the next section.

Plurilingualism

Plurilingualism may sometimes be confused with multiculturalism; therefore, it is important to highlight the distinct features of each orientation. According to Hamel (2000, p. 134), multiculturalism refers to the "*reconocimiento de una situación de facto que existe independientemente de su valoración por parte de los actores sociales"*[2]. This means that the presence of diverse cultures and languages in society is acknowledged but as a "*problema a resolver de una otra manera"*[3] (Hamel, 2000, p. 134).

On the other hand, practices that arise from a plurilingual orientation do not mean to overcome cultural diversity as if it was a problem, they rather "*reconocen y asumen las diferencias étnicas y lingüísticas como factores de enriquecimiento socio cultural y como valiosos recursos para la sociedad en su conjunto"*[4] (Hamel, 2000, p. 134). This positive view of cultural and linguistic diversity may foster plurilingual actions that instead of trying to mask or blur differences among peoples (which could lead to the assimilation of the least prestigious groups into the main culture), would, in fact, help in the strengthening and reaffirmation of different identities.

Plurilingualism does not aim to smooth a path in which seamless interactions among people happen, however, it targets the development of citizens capable of navigating through a plural society, not dodging its plurality, but counting on it. This perspective challenges the rationales behind the common belief that minoritized languages are "*el símbolo por excelencia del atraso, del atavismo, del inmovilismo social* [5]" (Monsonyi, 1987, p. 57). This belief might be the fruit of a relatively recent invention, the European nation-state (Monteagudo, 2012, p. 48).

According to Monteagudo (2012), tied to the project of a nation-state was the new notion of a national language (Monteagudo, 2012, p. 49), during the process of establishing this new way of organizing (or controlling) society, something else was also happening:

> *A diversidade linguística se tornava uma realidade anômala e disfuncional, tanto na ideologia quanto na prática. O estado ficava programaticamente vinculado ao programa de homogeneização linguística e cultural, correlativo ao de criação e difusão da língua e a cultura nacionais e a manutenção da correspondente intelectosfera ideológica e cultural que acompanha, legitimando-os, esses processos*.[6] (Monteagudo, 2012, p. 49).

[2] English version: "recognition of a de facto situation that exists independently of its appreciation from social actors" (Hamel, 2000, p. 134).

[3] English version: "problem to be solved in one way or another" (Hamel, 2000, p. 134).

[4] English version: "They recognize and assume ethnic and linguistic differences as factors of socio-cultural enrichment and as valuable resources for society as a whole" (Hamel, 2000, p. 134).

[5] English version: "the symbol par excellence of backwardness, of atavism, of social immobility (Monsonyi, 1987, p. 57)".

[6] English version: "Linguistic diversity became an anomalous and dysfunctional reality, both in ideology and in practice. The state was programmatically linked to the program of linguistic and cultural homogenization, correlative to the creation and

In this way, plurilingualism, which was throughout history the norm, became an exception. Progress was portrayed as monolingual. Then, if we follow this logic, individuals or groups that would be against learning the national language or would refuse to stop using their mother tongue would be seen as retrograde.

Later, the decimation of languages under the claims of progress also reached the colonies. In Brazil, authors Vaz Ferreira and Stanke (2023) mention the 1758 law "Diretório dos Índios" (Indigenous Directive) that imposed the Portuguese language to all, as a milestone of the homogenization around Portuguese (Vaz Ferreira & Stanke, 2023, p. 197). Centuries after this law, during the Vargas administration, Brazil "witnessed a violent linguistic and cultural repression of the immigrant populations in the country." (Vaz Ferreira & Stanke, 2023, p. 197).

While all these policies were being created to suppress languages and their cultures and favor only one official language, knowing other languages was not frowned upon as long as these languages maintained their foreign status, being non-constitutive of the identities of these speakers. Thus, languages could still be studied, but as a tool.

This is where we find ourselves in 2024, as waves of this kind of nationalism still reinforce the discourse of a national identity that is singular and consequently monolingual, there has also been a rise in the search for bilingual schools in recent years. "Between 2014 and 2019, the bilingual school market grew between 6% and 10% in Brazil and generated BRL 250 million" (Padinha & Goia, 2021, p. 3). This would be strange if it was not for the fact that this tendency is observed in a specific portion of the population, the elites.

Therefore, "the increased offer of bilingualism in Brazilian private schools must be seen from the view that the elite wants to obtain cultural and social capital for their children at increasingly higher levels." (Padinha & Goia, 2021, p. 4). Then, we see history repeating itself as privileged groups use their power to maintain their position, and language is one of the means through which this happens.

This search for language education does not come from a perspective of mutual respect for different languages. Ironically, it still operates in a monocultural/monolingual way that values conquest and control over collaboration. This mindset also idealizes a perfect speaker, just as centuries ago people would idealize a perfect national citizen as pure rather than plural, reinforcing the pervasive idea of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006, p. 385) as positive.

Nowadays, in a world more globalized and connected than ever, yet still so divided as always, we, as educators, believe that it is also our responsibility to shift the course of things one class at a time. However, as the popular saying states "old habits die hard", that is the reason why we question ourselves about our personal experiences and professional practices aiming for an education that is more intercultural, plurilingual, and, as we continue to talk about in the next section, oriented towards the development of global citizens.

dissemination of the national language and culture and the maintenance of the corresponding ideological and cultural intellectosphere that accompanies, legitimizing, these processes" (Monteagudo, 2012, p. 49).

Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

Global citizenship encompasses an array of ideas which once very few people took seriously, but has become an accepted topic of discussion, moving out of perceptions of doubt and utopia, especially in times of the importance of the Millenium Development Goals, which embed "the concept that economic growth would lead to prosperity" (Thoresen, 2020, p. 222). According to De Wit (2019, p. 9), these are times of "tensions between a short-term neoliberal approach to internationalization, focusing primarily on mobility and research, and a long-term comprehensive quality approach, global learning for all". Although the ambience is still surrounded with developmental and capitalist premises, we see an opportunity to take advantage of this more central role of the concept of global citizenship to explore the multiple understandings available.

Firstly, it is relevant to consider the limitations of the common sense that internationalization can be reduced to traveling abroad. "*Cette internationalisation ne présente pas un caractère sociétal très developpé car il ne semble pas que, suite à une mobilité internationale, tous les étudiants se sentent davantage des citoyens responsables de questions de societé* (Hugonnier, 2020, p. 205)"[7]. We believe a more comprehensive approach to internationalization (Hudzik, 2015) which encompasses both internationalization at home (Beelen & Jones, 2015) and internationalization of the curriculum (Leask, 2015) will definitely benefit society on the road to global citizenship.

Thoresen (2020) proposes three values which are fundamental principles for global citizenship: (a) connectivity and cohesion, meaning the necessary coexistence of different beings, such as plants and animals, in an integrated way; (b) transference and transmutation, having to do with universal processes of growth, adaptation and evolution; (c) finiteness, referring to the recognition of mortality and the existence of immortality. Only by acknowledging our connection, the importance of collective action and the finiteness of resources around us will we understand the need for global moderation and sharing.

Considering the definition of citizenship as "a matter of one' formal legal and political status and a sense of belonging. It also entails the right and responsibility to make rights claims regarding those issues that impact one's well-being", offered by Sant et al. (2018, p. 5), we move towards the context for GCE. If being a global citizen involves a sense of belonging, it is in the educational spaces that we can delve into experiences to understand this belonging more collectively. If being a global citizen relates to one's well-being, schools and universities could be an appropriate place to discuss the theme and, eventually, open minds on the importance of global citizenship.

UNESCO defines GCE as "an educational approach that nurtures respect and solidarity in learners in order to build a sense of belonging to a common humanity and help them become responsible and active global citizens in building inclusive and peaceful societies"[8]. In a similar

[7] English version: This internationalization does not have a highly developed societal character, as it does not seem that, following international mobility, all students feel more like citizens responsible for societal issues (Hugonnier, 2020, p. 205).

[8] Global citizenship education: taking it local (2018): https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265456

direction, and complementing the definition, Santos Jorge (2018, p. 38) states that GCE "*objetiva desenvolver, em todos os níveis de ensino, valores, conhecimentos e habilidades para o exercício de uma cidadania local e globalmente responsável. Tais habilidades são baseadas nos princípios dos direitos humanos, da justiça social, da diversidade, da igualdade de gênero e da sustentabilidade ambiental*"[9]. These definitions point to the responsibility of educators in cultivating global citizenship as a necessary part of the curriculum.

Nussbaum (2002) advocates that not only basic courses integrating the concept of global citizenship, but also more advanced reflections should be part of pedagogical proposals in different levels of schooling. "The teaching of particular values is also an integrated process often requiring mindset changes in moving students beyond thinking and feeling to acting (Lowe & Allum, 2020, p. 200)". The values surrounding global citizenship should be part of the curriculum as well, since what educators do has a clear impact on the students' beliefs and behavior. In this direction, Lowe and Allum (2020) conducted research to measure a teacher's impact on young people's attitudes and actions as global citizens. By exploring with their students what makes a good community and how we can make the world a better place, teachers were able to foster an ambience that favored global citizenship.

Finally, Marins, Costa and Abba (2024) assert that education can either transform or reproduce "*uma sociedade monolíngue e monocultural*"[10] (Marins, Costa & Abba, 2024, p. 7) and it is up to us, educators, to transgress and challenge the dominant power structures, if we want to promote education for global citizenship.

Narrative vignettes of teaching (and learning) experiences

In this section, we share some of the experiences that guided our journeys and motivated our desire to foster plurilingual and intercultural global citizenship education.

Potentially-miseducative experiences

The experiences we present in this section illustrate our journey as learners and as teachers of a foreign language, which could have led to a colonialist view of the world, and a potentially monolingual and monocultural approach to teaching that reinforced the dominance of hegemonic languages and distanced our practices from a plurilingual and intercultural approach. The title of this subsection refers to the concept of miseducative experiences, which lead to poor, wrong or harmful education (Dewey, 1938).

[9] English version: "aims to develop, at all levels of education, values, knowledge and skills for exercising locally and globally responsible citizenship. These skills are based on the principles of human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability"

[10] English version: "a monolingual and monocultural society" (Marins, Costa & Abba, 2024, p. 7).

Vignette 1 - Experiences at home and school

From a very early age, I felt that knowing another language was important, especially if this language was English. Both my grandfather and my father spoke English, so more than just important, due to their example, I also felt that speaking English was something possible.

When my twin brother and I reached eleven years old, we had the privilege of attending a good private school with English and Spanish as part of the curriculum. Besides that, this school received at least one international student almost every year, and some of my colleagues would also spend a year abroad. I never had one of these students in the same class as me, but I remember being completely mesmerized simply by their presence in my school.

After seven years of studying both languages and having contact with international students and the Brazilian ones who were back from exchange programs, I graduated with the feeling that I only had an incipient linguistic knowledge, so if I truly wanted to become the third person of the family who was able to speak English, I had to enroll in a language school (which, as a matter of fact, I later on did). **(Teacher Lucas, 2005-2011)**

Looking at these early experiences at home and in basic education in a country where monolingualism is seen as the norm, we see how these environments may affect a student's perspectives on the mere idea of one day being able to speak another language. Even though the vignette narrates an experience lived in a small city in the middle of the country, far away from the borders, and with scarce foreign presences, it exemplifies how sometimes having contact with a person who speaks another language, comes from another country, or someone that had any experience abroad may spark the desire to get to know more about different languages and cultures.

Another thing worth mentioning is the fact that at the time, English and Spanish were both taught at the school. 2005 was the year in which law 11.161 made Spanish a compulsory subject to be offered in the last three years of basic education, and optional for 5th to 8th grades. However, there was still a stigmatization of the Spanish language as if it was not worthy of the same status as the English language. It was not uncommon to hear people say that they did not like the way Spanish sounds. That resistance to the language was more linked to the cultures that the language represented than to their phonetics per se. This prejudice and rejection of the language proved to be true when this law was revoked in 2017. This act seems to send the message that there are only certain languages or cultures worthy of spending time and money learning.

Therefore, even though the experience narrated in this vignette appears to be a privileged and somehow diverse one, the desire to learn English was the only one that prevailed at the end of those years in basic education. And, although becoming bilingual seemed possible, after finishing the studies at school the confidence to learn it was shaken. Here we see that the belief in the superiority of not only the English language but also its cultures (British and American) and the tendency to think that being proficient in the language was equivalent to becoming somehow a copy of a native, rose as a barrier to develop fluency.

Vignette 2 - English teaching instructor

In my interview for the position of 'language instructor' (a position we have here in Brazil, which involves teaching classes, but without the need for previous teacher education!?, common in language institutes), the coordinator asked me "*Is your English British or American?*", to which I promptly replied '*American*', full of pride. I did not even think that my pronunciation is not really 'American', or that I am not (and do not need to be) a 'native speaker' of the language, and that there are many accents or even many "Englishes" specific to each part of the world and adapted to each cultural need. During the period in which I taught at the school, students often complimented me ('*You speak very well, teacher!*' '*Your American English is great, teacher!*'), and I also did not question it, far from being critical of the compliments and the reality. During this period, I also repeated the practice of asking students to only use English in class ('*In English, everyone*'; '*Please, can you repeat that in English?*' or '*Try to say that in English*') or stating how important it was to 'think in English' to learn the language well and practice to become more fluent. Although it was one of the school rules not to use Portuguese in class, I liked to reinforce this with the students, and I never felt embarrassed about my attitude at that time. However, it bothered me not being able to 'really' listen to my students, just because they were not saying something in English. **(Teacher Alessandra, 2007-2017)**

This vignette evokes the understanding that, before enrolling in the English Language Teaching course at university, the teacher considered English a language for international communication, and did not question her colonialist and Eurocentric view of the world. As an English teaching instructor, she was simply reproducing what she was trained to do.

At the time, there was little room for reflection, although there was some level of discomfort when students did not learn English despite all the 'teaching efforts'. However, time (several years) and experience brought the need to improve teacher education beyond the 'language instructor' training, seeking more preparation for being a teacher.

Only then, after enrolling in the English Language Teaching course at university, and having learned about the importance of contextualization, critical thinking, decolonial, and internationalization practices, the teacher started to change and broaden her limited views of the teaching and learning processes, which was the first step into a transformative journey.

Vignette 3 - Preconceptions get challenged

After finishing an English course in only three semesters I realized that what I had learned in my teenage years was not as basic as I had imagined. That made me gather the confidence I needed to go one step further in my journey with the English language, now it was my turn to go abroad. I had another privilege, a gap year volunteering within a transnational organization in England.

I was thrilled; I could not believe that it was actually happening to me. Not even in my wildest dreams, I had pictured that I would experience living in the cradle of the English language and would be in contact with the "purest" English. Well, that dream faded rapidly once I was placed to work in the north of the country, in a multicultural environment in which I had daily interactions with people from all over the world, and the hardest ones to understand were the native speakers.

Being placed in such a culturally diverse context was one of the best things that happened to me, I learned German words, tried Pakistani food, learned to greet in Welsh, and got to know even a little bit about Irish Travelers, all first-handed delivered by people from these different cultures, in a place I previously thought was only the stronghold of the English language and its *proper* culture.

Finally, with this experience, I learned that *pure* English was something that I would not find but in limited textbooks. Even natives that lived apart by only a half-hour drive would sound different and have different conceptions of *proper* English. I also learned that plurilingualism was not something

to be feared, since at the end of my time there my English was never so strong, and alongside that, so was my awareness of other languages and cultures. **(Teacher Lucas, 2014-2016)**

The experience narrated in this vignette is not uncommon among Brazilian students. Many people finish basic education with the feeling that they have not learned a thing about foreign languages therefore they need to study in a school that is exclusively devoted to language teaching. Then, in these schools, they go deeper into their linguistic and cultural studies (which, often, means learning British or American culture).

Then, by providing a narrow vision of culture, these courses may develop in students the confidence they had not developed in school, as is narrated in the example above. The vignette presented that this confidence came from the belief that after completing the course he had learned what was missing, what was lacking in his basic education, now he knew how to use the language, how to deal with natives, and how to understand the culture.

This type of knowledge, composed of formulas and *how-tos*, fails to consider the organic factor of human interactions and the complexity of each human being. In order to coexist and have relationships with people from different cultures, one does not need to master the other's language or culture. Comprehension is mutually built as interactions happen. So, rather than preparing students to become pundits, our education should aim to enable students to have these interactions, even when there is no previous cultural knowledge or vast language training. Students should count on what they do not know about others to actually learn something from them. In the experience narrated in the vignette, this lack of knowledge proved essential to make the experience diverse and unexpectedly enriching.

Vignette 4 - Teacher education experience

For a couple of years, I coordinated an inservice teacher education program in partnership with a regional department. Two other teacher educators and I met with a group of around 20 English teachers who worked in public middle and high schools every month. Our aim was to help those teachers understand and implement the national guidelines at the time, namely the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) and the National Curricular Parameters for High School (PCNEM). For every meeting, we used to bring language-related and culture-related topics to explore with the teachers and wrapped up with a practical activity. Understanding that I had an American English background, and sometimes being asked questions about British English, I decided that in one of these meetings we should study the differences between the two variations. I remember emphasizing that neither was better or worse, they were just different, a statement which served as the title of a poster resulting from the practical activity to materialize these comparisons. I failed to acknowledge other variations of the English language or even mention the variations of minority communities within these countries, something clearly mentioned in the PCN and PCNEM. **(Professor Valeska, 2006)**

The first meaning that can be extracted from this vignette is the narrow view of interculturality, since the pedagogical proposal considered linguistic and cultural aspects of the English language as something fixed, which could be compared in a limited way - this or that. The professor failed to recognize intercultural opportunities as dynamic and open for dialogue. Restricting the two variations reduced the chance to navigate differences with sensitivity and respect. Extending the language variations could have led to a more positive view of cultural and linguistic diversity.

A second meaning related to the discussion presented above is the failure of proposing plurilingual actions that do not mask or blur differences among peoples. The idea of American English (or British English) as a homogenous unit and the consideration that American or British peoples are uniform communities conduce to monolingual (at most bilingual) ideas. Questioning how heterogenous the English language is would be vital in an opportunity to tackle language variations. This could have been done if the teacher educators in the vignette had explored world Englishes, in different registers, spoken and written by people labeled as native or not, as proficient or not, who could have illustrated the diversity of the language and not blurred its differences.

Lastly, we can mention that the participants of the teacher education program missed the opportunity of challenging the dominant power structures, which is central in GSE. American and English empires stand for hegemonic practices and for a hierarchical authority influencing and maintaining their power over world society. The pedagogical proposal aligned with these power and dominant structures instead of promoting a sense of belonging to a multiple world, a collective behavior towards multiple societies, an education for global citizenship for all.

Experiencing Interculturality, Plurilingualism and Global citizenship

In this section, we present experiences that challenged our colonialist view of teaching English, which enabled us to question and broaden our practices, besides inspiring our journey toward fostering a plurilingual and intercultural education for global citizenship.

Vignette 5 - Possibilities of a plurilingual undergraduate course

When I got back to Brazil, I was certain about some things, I would like to continue working with education, like I did in the volunteering program, and I would like that to be related to languages in a way that would make it possible for me to be in contact with people from different cultures. That was when I decided to enroll in a language teacher education program at Federal University of Uberlândia.

The program, which today has a different curriculum, used to have three semesters dedicated to introducing the students to the basis of linguistics and literary studies, as well as to the foreign languages in which we could major: English, Spanish, and French. Being in contact with students who intended to get their major in different languages and learning from professors who worked in these areas broadened my horizons offering me possibilities that I had never considered before.

In this initial phase of my undergraduate course, I worked as an interpreter for a group from Uganda, became a teacher of Portuguese as a Foreign Language for a group of Haitians living in Uberlândia, and joined the Languages without Borders program, in which I taught English for Academic Purposes. These early experiences as a pre-service teacher left indelible marks on how I perceive the teaching-learning process.

Being positioned as a student of languages that I had much, some, and little knowledge of, having to work with my native language as foreign, and finally dealing with English in a different light, pushed me to become more aware of the dynamics of a classroom, flexible enough to accept and adapt to changes as well as confident enough to propel some of these changes. **(Teacher Lucas, 2017-2021)**

Reflecting on this vignette we see how plurality can be positive, especially when someone is specializing in some field of study. The experience narrated is about a higher

education course in which only one language should be chosen as a major. However, due to the curriculum design of the time, the student could benefit from being in contact with the different languages offered in the institution. As a result, he also had many opportunities to live experiences that he would not have otherwise.

Vignette 6 - Amazed by Polyglot Teenagers

In the first year of the course, I was invited to work as a volunteer teacher in the extension project 'Polyglot Teenagers', a language and culture course for adolescents aged 11-14. In this program, students are familiarized with multiple languages (English, Spanish, and French) and different cultures, making it the perfect example of a plurilingual and intercultural educational practice. Each class was divided into three 30-minute segments, and I was responsible for teaching English. All the teachers prepared the material based on common language or cultural topics, so the process was fluid, and the teenagers usually learned while having fun. They also had a notebook with relevant information in all three languages they were learning.

I was fascinated by how fast they learned vocabulary and navigated through three different languages smoothly. I want to share two of my experiences with the class. The first one is an example of plurilingual interaction that happened frequently, during the transitions between teachers. When I arrived at the classroom, the Spanish teacher was finishing his lesson, so I got to participate a little in their learning process, and as soon as he finished, the students said 'Goodbye' to him in Spanish ("*Hasta luego / ¡Nos vemos la próxima semana!"*) before turning to me with a cheerful "*Hi/Hello/ How are you, teacher?*", like it was the most natural thing in the world. The same happened when I finished my part of the class and the French teacher arrived; they would say "*Goodbye, teacher, see you next class!*" to me and immediately welcomed the next teacher with a '*Salut / Bonjour, professeur!*", before continuing the conversation in French about any subject they were discussing in the previous class. They mixed Portuguese with French and kept talking with the teacher, who responded in French; they often laughed. It was amazing! I was impressed by how easily they transitioned between four different languages: English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese, adapting to each context. **(Teacher Alessandra, 2019)**

By analyzing the vignette above, we understand that the experience lived as a volunteer teacher, participating in a plurilingual and intercultural program, broadened the teacher's perceptions of education beyond their limited traditional views.

While English was previously perceived as the only option for international communication, after the experience, an intercultural and plurilingual approach started to be considered an effective way to promote and improve learning.

Vignette 7 - An opportunity to promote intercultural education (or not?)

During my English Language Teaching course, I developed a scientific initiation project in which I led a gamification workshop for learning the English language (*Gamify your English learning with Trace Effects*), part of a collaboration between Languages without Borders (IsF) and the university's Internationalization Training Program (ProInt). The course had, among other objectives, to enable students to "interact in multicultural contexts" and "identify verbal and non-verbal elements appropriate for different intercultural communication situations" (Santana & Souza, 2020, p. 1008),

while communicating in English. During the classes, we used the computers available in the university's language laboratory.

One of the students in the class was a Venezuelan; so, her native language was Spanish, not Portuguese like the other students. Throughout the workshop, she had difficulties completing some of the proposed activities, and I assumed it was due to her low proficiency in English, the language used to conduct the classes. When the students had questions or difficulties, I used Portuguese to communicate with them individually, and I did the same with her, even though Portuguese was not her native language (relevant information that, at the time, I completely ignored!).

In one of the classes, she was accompanied by a friend whose native language was also Spanish, but who was proficient in English. For him to participate in the class, I asked that they would use only English to communicate (!), because, at that moment, I believed that understanding the language was the main objective of the course. However, I realized that, despite my instruction, they communicated in Spanish the whole time and this helped her to understand the objectives of the activities and to carry them out with ease. It was her most productive class. **(Teacher Alessandra, 2019)**

The experience above provoked the teacher to question the reason why it was the student's most productive class. While at the time it was not even considered, since the teacher was satisfied with the positive result, after critical reflection we realized that limiting the communication in class to English - even though the teacher helped others in their native language (which was also hers) - was inappropriate and also unfair. Due to the teacher's lack of preparation, the student received unequal treatment and was disadvantaged in the process.

It is not always easy to recognize our flaws or limitations, but this is essential to personal and professional growth. *What could have been done?* As an educator, the teacher should have been more sensitive to the fact that the student was having communication difficulties, instead of assuming that the problem was with her proficiency in the English language.

Starting from this recognition, the teacher could have used a plurilingual approach, respecting the learner's needs and acknowledging her native language, to communicate with her and understand what her difficulties were; or even using other tools, such as online translators (since there were cell phones and computers available) so that she could better understand the instructions and carry out the activities.

As English teachers, we are often so isolated in our 'ivory towers' that we do not even notice situations or difficulties in students' communication, problems that can be easily solved with a little more openness and flexibility. Bringing intercultural education and plurilingualism into our practices can be something organic, which makes communication more dynamic, reveals possibilities, and facilitates learning. After all, our role is to offer learning opportunities to our students, and not to impose language barriers or create more difficulties in the process. We should reflect on this.

The next vignette is in the shape of verses, a poem that has no intention to rhyme or to follow any canon poetic techniques, but to gather how the experience was lived from the viewpoint of the Brazilian professor who partnered with members of a Mexican university to have a virtual exchange experience using the COIL methodology.

Vignette 8 - COIL experience

IVEC Conference 2023, São Paulo, Brazil
An opportunity, doors open, and I am excited to go in
October 30th, 2 p.m., I choose a workshop, Coral Room
Will I meet people from other countries and interact with them?
I sit next to nice people from Chile and from Mexico and I learn from them
October 31st, 9 a.m., back to Coral Room to learn more from Monserrat
Loads of lectures, experiences, workshops, and interactions on virtual exchange
I go back to Minas Gerais, knowing this is something I want to be part of
Will I get a chance?
An email arrives, I look at the inbox, an invitation from a more experienced institution
Am I that lucky?
I read the email, fill in the form and study the slides
Back and forth, nobody from Applied Linguistics, will I find a match?
Back and forth again, Marcela, Posthumanism, Digital technologies
Am I that lucky, again?
I spot there are many differences, but I can see a knowledge thread
Time for an exploratory meeting, we set a date, and this word comes to my mind in its fullest
Will there be an interest? Have I really found a partner? Will I get a chance?
I learn from my experienced friends, about the process, about their previous virtual exchanges
I listen with attention, and I am heard, we have a match
We work together, we negotiate, we have a plan
I run into limitations, I strive to overcome them, and luck seems to be on my side
Everything is ready and I have butterflies in my stomach, will it be all right?
April is the month, 2024 is the year, first synchronous meeting and I have a blast
My Brazilian students get to know their Mexican peers
Their eyes are wide open, they interact, they use their teaching skills
I accompany the process; I watch the videos and I read the messages
I write messages back, I record videos back
Yes, I have a blast, thank you for that! **(Professor Valeska, 2024)**

The experience narrated in the previous vignette illustrates the embodiment of an intercultural and plurilingual global citizenship proposal. Interculturality was at the heart of the experience since the Brazilian and Mexican participants had the opportunity to share who they were, what they did in their everyday lives, what they were studying, etc.; their storied lives and their cultures. Although the predicted language of interaction was English, some of the exchanges happened in Portuguese and Spanish and they were able to teach and learn their native languages. Finally, there was a sense of belonging to an international community, having

less marked frontiers, which was fostered by the experience that probably helped the participants feel they were global citizens.

Next, we present one of the last experiences we had during the course "*Linguistic and internationalization policies and practices*". The lecture that would be held the following day was going to have a guest speaker, the coordinator responsible for the virtual exchange program at *Tecnológico de Monterrey* (Mexico) - the *Global Shared Learning Classroom* (GSL Classroom)[11] - Laura Monserrat Balandrano, who could present in English or Spanish, her native language.

Regardless of the language chosen by the guest, our professor offered to help us understand, providing simultaneous interpretation via chat whenever necessary. This illustrates her permanently open and flexible posture as an educator, focused on promoting multilingual and intercultural education for global citizenship. Below, we share our learning experience at this multilingual and intercultural knowledge exchange.

Vignette 9 - What language(s) can you follow?

The day before the lecture, the professor asked us 'Which language(s) can you follow?' (English, Spanish, or both) and carried out a survey to find out the class's preferences. Of the 12 students, 4 responded that they could follow both, while half of the class selected Spanish (6) as the language they would most easily follow, and the rest (4) stated that they could only follow English. We were included in this last group, as we considered that for us to follow the lecturer's participation in her native language, we needed to be fluent in Spanish. As Spanish was the language most people would be most comfortable with, the next day, during class, the lecturer was invited to speak in her native language, which we now realize makes much more sense, as she is the guest speaker. As students, we were a bit nervous about the event, anxious about the language barrier, and anticipating that we might not understand the content of the presentation.

During the lecture, something that caught our attention was the fact that Professor Monserrat had prepared her material (slides) in English and was willing to use the language to communicate with us. However, she delivered her presentation in Spanish, explaining all the core points of the virtual exchange program developed at the Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico) - Global Shared Learning Classroom (GSL Classroom) - which is an impressive educational practice, by the way. We all listened and took notes while the professor explained the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) experience, the program's structure, its objectives, the faculty commitments, presenting practices that had worked and its benefits, as well as the tools that facilitated the international collaboration, and several innovative practices.

The most amazing part of this experience was that we understood all the important information - despite it being delivered in Spanish - which was both surprising and illustrative of how effective a plurilingual intercultural exchange can be. **(Alessandra and Lucas, as master's students, in October 2024)**

[11] Here is the link to the program, in case you are interested. We highly recommend it!

https://globalsharedlearning.tec.mx/en/gsl-classroom

Based on this shared experience, we would like to highlight some aspects that we consider relevant for our discussion. Firstly, the fact that the speaker assumed that the English language would be used to communicate with the group of Brazilian graduate students is something expected, common even, since in the academic environment, regardless of the country we are in, the English language is used as a means of communication and scientific exchange.

As teachers, sometimes we believe that being fluent in English puts us in a position of comfort and superiority to other languages, as it is considered an international 'lingua franca'. We used to make the same assumptions about the language we taught. Now, in light of education, critical thinking, and reflections on our practices, we understand that this constitutes a limited view of language education, and we feel the need to move towards a more inclusive and democratic stance, that values the knowledge of other peoples, cultures, and languages, with all their contributions.

Another aspect that we consider relevant was the fact that even without being fluent in Spanish or even having studied the language formally (Alessandra's case), as students, we were able to understand practically 100% of everything that was discussed while taking notes in Portuguese and English during the guest teacher's presentation delivered in Spanish. By doing so, we experienced the perfect example of a plurilingual approach, inserted in the context of intercultural education for global citizenship that we intend to promote. And we can all learn a lot from this.

The vignettes analyzed in this section represent a set of 'educative' experiences (Dewey, 1938), considered as a *continuum* of learning, which lead us to reflections and changes in our pedagogical practices. As Dewey (1938) proposes, we can learn from and reconstruct our experiences, which enables further learning and transformation. We hope other educators, especially fellow English teachers, were inspired by our shared experiences and understandings to reflect upon and rethink their role in the face of the globalized world challenges.

Final remarks

We set out to investigate our teaching and learning experiences, analyzing how hegemonic practices in language teaching could reinforce a colonialist mentality and silence diversity. Throughout the article, we intended to stress the significant role English teachers play in fostering plurilingual and intercultural Global Citizenship Education (GCE),

Now, at the end of our journey, after presenting and discussing our experiences through narrative vignettes, we hope to have been able to convey the relevance of valuing linguistic and cultural diversity and deconstructing preconceived notions, in our search to promote transformative practices.

As educators, we work as mediators in developing more inclusive, democratic, plurilingual, and intercultural practices, as it is our responsibility to encourage and promote personal, professional, and social changes. It is crucial to understand that the recognition of diversity and the deconstruction of hegemonies contribute to the formation of global critical citizens and that we, as teachers, are active agents of social transformation.

We hope other educators, especially fellow English teachers, were inspired by our shared experiences and understandings to reflect upon and rethink their role in the face of the globalized world challenges.

At the end of this shared knowledge journey, we invite educators to incorporate a plurilingual and intercultural approach into their pedagogical practices, contributing to fostering Global Citizenship Education (GCE).

Finally, we recognize that the transformative journey is an ongoing and continuous process of learning and reflection. As teachers, we will always be on a path of personal and professional growth, which requires openness to new ideas and perspectives.

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