
*Estudios de
lingüística inglesa aplicada*



INTERCULTURAL SPACES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BRAZIL

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12795/elia.2015.i15.03>

This work is part of my doctoral research in Brazil. I have been investigating the presence of Intercultural Spaces in the English lessons in an Elementary School from the perspective of the teacher. Thus, it is a Case Study in which lesson observations will be compared to the teacher's discourse about her own practice (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). It is a study of a single teacher practice and the students are not participants. The definition of Intercultural Spaces is based on Bhaba's concept (1994), Kostogriz's definition (2005) applied to Second Language Acquisition, Kramsch's idea (2009) in the context of Foreign Language Learning and Widin and Yasukawa's study (2013) when it comes to teacher's role of creating such types of Intercultural Spaces in the classroom. Hence, as background to this research, it is believed that students in Early Elementary School, who are between seven and ten years old, should be educated as critical and ethical citizens (Morin, 2005; Menezes de Sousa, 2011; Rocha 2012). Thus, I expect to contribute to Teacher Education with this research in the light of New Learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

Key words: *English; foreign language; intercultural spaces; early elementary school; case study*

Este trabajo es parte de mi investigación de doctorado en Brasil. Estoy analizando la presencia de espacios interculturales en las clases de inglés de un colegio de enseñanza primaria desde la perspectiva de una profesora. Es un estudio de caso en el cual las observaciones de clase se compararán al discurso de la profesora con respecto a su propia práctica (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Asimismo, es un estudio de la práctica de una única profesora y los alumnos no participan en la investigación. La definición de Espacios Interculturales se basa en el concepto de Bhabha (1994), en la definición de Kostogriz (2005) aplicada a la adquisición de segundas lenguas, en la idea de Kramsch (2009) en el contexto de enseñanza de lengua extranjera, y en el estudio de Widin y Yasukawa (2013) en lo que concierne al papel de la profesora de crear tales espacios interculturales en la clase. Como telón de fondo de este trabajo, se cree que los alumnos de enseñanza primaria que tienen entre siete y diez años deberían ser formados como ciudadanos críticos y éticos (Morin, 2005; Mendez de Sousa, 2011; Rocha, 2012). Con este trabajo inspirado en el Nuevo Aprendizaje (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012), espero contribuir a la formación de nuevos profesores.

***Palabras clave:** inglés; lengua extranjera; espacios interculturales; enseñanza primaria; estudio de caso.*

1. Introduction

This paper is a small part of a doctoral research in Brazil. It explains its theoretical background as well as the research and its context, the methodology for data collection, data analysis categorization preview, analysis of one sample lesson and the analysis of the teacher's discourse in relation to that specific lesson. One of its main aims is investigating the presence of Intercultural Spaces in the English lessons in an Early Elementary School in Brazil from the perspective of the teacher to reach the ultimate goal of improving my practice as a teacher educator at a university language course. In order to do so, a Case Study methodology was selected in which lesson observations will be compared to the teacher's discourse about her own practice (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). It is a study of a single teacher practice and the students are not participants. There were twenty non-interventionist lesson observations, they were not video recorded, in response to a request from the school, only detailed notes were taken. Besides this, the teacher was interviewed four times during the period of observations and a semi-structured interview methodology was used (Ludke & André, 1986). The interviews were not video recorded either.

Firstly, it is important to mention that this research takes a language perspective based on discourse according to bakhtinian studies. Therefore, language happens in the context of social practices, becoming ideological, based on specific views about the world that are beliefs, values and interests (Bakhtin/Volochinov, 1929/2014; Jordão, 2013). So to speak, the focus is on language use, creating multiple, social and cultural meanings. Connected to dialogism, the ideas of Translingual Practice (Canagarajah, 2013) and World English (Rajagopalan, 2004) are also brought, questioning the dominant role of English in the contemporary world.

Secondly, Early Elementary school should be considered as a place in which it is relevant to build concrete and meaningful contexts to use the language and also to promote practices that are social and historically situated beyond the classroom walls (Rocha, 2012). Thus, the profile of the student at this age is specially considered from a perspective based on Vygotsky (1978) and McKay (2006).

Finally, one should reflect upon the Intercultural Spaces that are possibly created in the context mentioned above and how the teacher sees those spaces as well as how she approaches the relations between Language and Culture. In order to think about it, there is a consideration about the concept of culture (Hall, 1997; Bhabha, 1994) and intercultural spaces in the second and foreign language contexts and also from the perspective of the teacher (Kostogriz, 2005; Kramersch, 2009; Widin & Yasukawa, 2013). Besides this, as a broader view, this research demands that ethical and citizenship issues for the children are taken into consideration (Menezes de Souza, 2001; Menezes de Souza & Monte Mor, 2006) as well as the path towards New Learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

2. Bakhtinian Dialogism

As mentioned previously, the bakhtinian perspective leads us into viewing language as a real life practice which is changeable, flexible, evolving in a given historical context (Bakhtin/Volochinov 1929/2014). Language is not form or structure, but it takes part in the social interaction, so it is discourse (Jordão, 2013) and there is a subject who is ideologically built (Bakhtin/Volochinov, 1929/2014).

Following the idea of language as social practice, Bakhtin creates the concept of dialogism, which is central to his theory and to my understanding of Intercultural Spaces as one will be able to see later. According to Bakhtin,

It is through dialogic interactions that language is used and developed; and it is through dialogic interactions that the world is created and experienced with each person engaging in the ever flowing current of life imbued with and propelled by other voices, other texts, other ways of being and doing. In other words, a fundamental dialogicality is ubiquitous in humanlife: it is the way we relate to others, model our world and live our lives. (Bakhtin, 1963/1981, p. 346).

Thereby, Bakhtin refuses the idea of monologism (Bakhtin, 1963/1981). The latter happens when a dominant and single point of view is the truth. On the other hand, he welcomes what is plural, giving opportunity to a multiplicity of voices to emerge. These voices remain distinct from one another, they do not merge, but they are not silenced either by the powerful ones, they interact with each other's plurality. Thus, dialogue is openness to difference. For Bakhtin, dialogue is ontological which means it is a way of life (Shields, 2007).

That said, I believe it is important to consider the English language panorama in our contemporary society. In the next section, it will be related to a bakhtinian view of language and it should be relevant to question how culture circulates through language. In this sense, the Translingual Practice (Canagarajah, 2013) perspective is significant for the fact that it also questions a monological view of language.

2.1. English Language Role in the Contemporary World

Given that the globalized world demands learning English as *Lingua Franca*¹, it became a tool for communication in business, education, political, professional, cultural and leisure relations or contacts. Hence, I believe that the bakhtinian perspective helps us to question the role of language education throughout the last decades which has been directed only to the specific purposes mentioned above and not to a broader sense of education or social bonds.

Alongside with the bakhtinian perspective of language, a very up-to-date point of view is brought up by Canagarajah (2013), which is called Translingual Practice. I share both frames of reference here provided that they question a monological view of language; in other words, they question and refuse the authority of a single truth, which leads English into being an imperative tool for success, relegating human differences and social issues. Therefore, a new role should be given to English Language Teaching, including different ways of thinking, citizenship, ethics and, overall, social practices. According to Canagarajah (2013), there is a new place for English in the world:

As a lingua franca with dominant global status and imperial history, English invites a special consideration in communication and pedagogy. English is the language most people in the world use for contact purposes. There is a unique place for this language in global contact zones, as people adopt this language to engage with diversity communities. We have to ask how English is participating in these translingual practices. As people all over the world appropriate the resources of English according to their own norms and values, accommodate them into their existing language repertoires, and shuttle between English and diverse local languages for communication, the translingual orientation also explains their competence and practices better. (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 25).

Hence, the idea of an idealized native speaker (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011) and the hegemonic role of English in the world are not valid for Translingual point of view in order to avoid oppressing identities, languages and social values as well as a feeling of insecurity for not being able to copy a native speaker of the language (Rajagopalan, 2005; 2004). This way, Rajagopalan (2009) suggests the idea of multiplicity, which means the English language is not directed towards a single idea, but to multiple representations, languages and cultures. Rajagopalan (2004; 2012) defends the World English that belongs to everybody who speaks it, however it is not their mother tongue. Thus, English has reached a stage at which it is becoming liberated from the control of its mother-tongue native speakers. There is, therefore, no need of native-speaker custodians (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Also, Graddol (2006) and Crystal (1997) affirm that most people who speak English are non-native speakers and they use the language for contacts.

For Canagarajah (2013), different cultures and different languages meet and combat in global contact zones², but they can also collaborate with each other. It is the idea of bakhtinian dialogism, that is, new meanings are created through differences.

Hence, Canagarajah (2013) believes in *Lingua Franca English* and not *English as Lingua Franca*. His label “gives emphasis to the contact relationship and treats English as a social process or mode of practice” (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 68), it emerges from use and it is not a pre-established system, it is marked by cultural, political and historical factors. On the other hand, *English as Lingua Franca* still gives the idea of an imperialistic language, used for international relations, and cultural differences are discarded.

Reflecting upon the role of English today and problematizing its hegemony is crucial to think about children education in Early Elementary School from a broader perspective. As a result, they will be able to exercise their citizenship through language in the world. In this sense, the idea of Culture and Intercultural Spaces are also essential and I will talk about them in the following sections.

3. What is Culture?

The concept of Culture was firstly established by the anthropologist Edward B. Tylor (1871). He explained that Culture encompasses knowledge, belief, art, law, morality, habits and human beings’ abilities, which are shared by a society, having a collective dimension.

Another concept was the one developed by Boaz (1911) who conceived Culture as the wholeness of mental and physical reactions that characterize people’s behaviour in a social group relating to their natural environment, their own groups, members of the group and themselves. Culture also involves the products of those activities and their roles in the lives of the groups. Therefore, Culture would be revealed by habits.

The views exposed above bring a traditional and behaviorist perspective, concentrated on what the Culture is able to produce within its limits. However, the contemporary society demands a dynamic and fluid

idea of Culture. Thus, I propose that Culture is seen from a point of view of a changing world, variable beliefs, renewable habits, reinterpreted laws and codes, new references to morality and so on.

According to Street (1993), Culture is a verb as it is a dynamic concept, it is a process of collaborative meaning making. Following the same paradigm, Hall (1997) explains that Culture is a set of shared meanings, which allow people to understand each other and communicate with one another. It is a process within a set of social practices.

Also, extremely relevant for the scope of this study is the fact that cultural meaning is constructed by language. Therefore, “language is one of the ‘media’ through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture” (Hall, 1997, p. 1). According to Bhabha (1994), in order to establish Culture, one should consider the dialogue, which is the incorporated and rearticulated actions in the discourse. So to speak, Culture is a vital process present in the discourse spaces between individuals. The social subject is formed through cultural hybridization, articulating cultural differences enabling an interstitial agency to emerge, refusing dichotomic representations (Bhabha, 1994). In this sense there is no cultural supremacy and the process is the following:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The past-present becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7).

I defend that the articulations between cultural differences are essential to living; as a consequence, they are essential to the dialogues that occur in the language classroom, between teacher and students, among the students and also between the discourse of their mother tongue and foreign language, contributing to children’s education towards ethics and citizenship. Hence, the concept of Interculturality emerges as we can see in the next section.

3.1. Spaces of Interculturality

First of all, it is necessary to acknowledge the connections between Language and Culture when it comes to teaching a foreign language. Kramersch (1998) assures that language reveals a cultural reality and it is a symbol of social identity for its speakers.

Besides this, we are not prisoners of the cultural meanings offered by our own language; we can enrich them through contact with other cultures, interacting with other people. Therefore, it is important to reflect upon the Intercultural Space, which was first called Third Space by Bhabha (1994). Next, Kostogriz (2005) studied it in the context of second language education, naming it the Pedagogy of Third Space. Later, Kramersch (2009) approached the idea as the Third Culture in the situation of learning a foreign language. Finally, Widin and Yasukawa (2013) studied the role of the teacher on creating such a space in the language classroom. So, I am going to explain each of the concepts below.

For Bhabha (1994), Third Space is a space in which there is interaction through language and then the cultural aspect is built by our words and other people's words. It is a space in which individuals relate to each other and there is active meaning construction. It is a heterogeneous, contradictory space in which a third perspective can be developed away from domineering points of view, feelings and thoughts.

According to Kostogriz (2005), there is a third category created between cultures in order to understand the cultural dynamics as a process of creative hybridization. As a result, new texts, new meanings, new identities are built and cultural perceptions are re-signified in such a way that the individuals taking part in those interactions do not remain the same. In the classroom, he names it the Pedagogy of Third Space which aims at social justice inside and outside the school, democratic principles from an ethically oriented curriculum that welcomes diversity, conflict and differences. On the other hand, Kramersch (2009) looks at Interculturality from the perspective of foreign language education, naming it Third Culture, which encompasses three main characteristics – popular culture, critical culture and ecological culture. For popular culture, official knowledge is not so relevant as hybrid identities that question the authority of the native speaker of the target language, for example. Therefore, it is a contradictory

space in which the learner creates meanings beyond the official ones. In the scope of critical culture, categories imposed by the foreign language are questioned and active comparisons between mother language and foreign language take place. Eventually, concerning ecological culture, it is highly sensitive to what environment and context demand.

Moving towards the role of the teacher in creating a Third Space, Widin and Yasukawa (2013) believe that teachers should work with their learners to create new spaces of belonging and being. They should also make these spaces worth belonging to and not having a judgemental atmosphere, helping learning and negotiations of experiences to happen so that “classrooms can become sites of dynamic citizenship” (Widin & Yasukawa, 2013, p. 169). Then, a Third Space is seen “as offering students to develop historically new forms of activity that are different to what dominant discourses prescribe as legitimate ways of being and acting” (Widin & Yasukawa, 2013, p. 173).

What all the perspectives above seem to have in common is the fact that they question the official dominant discourse, thinking about hybrid spaces that enable participants to be involved in new points of view.

4. Ethics and Citizenship towards New Learning

By deeply getting involved in the idea of Intercultural Spaces in the English language classroom for kids doing Early Elementary School, I believe it is important to consider ethics and citizenship as these two concepts encompass the otherness.

First of all, I understand ethics as the ability of putting oneself in other people’s shoes and being able to listen to the other self. Menezes de Souza (2011) defines it as being aware of the fact that our actions and thoughts are connected to other people’s. Therefore, we should listen to each other’s opinions in order to learn from the differences and not to impose our ideas on others or not to eliminate what diverges from us. This idea is directly connected to citizenship. According to Morin (2005), a citizen shows solidarity and responsibility towards the planet. I add that we have responsibility towards the otherness. Cope and Kalantzis (2012) believe that we now have multiple citizenship because “there are many

places of belonging” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2012, p. 128) as we are part of various communities – local, regional and global at the same time.

Monte Mor and Menezes de Souza (2006) and Menezes de Souza (2011) discuss the educational aspect of citizenship. Not only should education be based on contents, but also on citizenship as a social value to be developed in English as a foreign language classes. Likewise, children learning a foreign language can be educated and can be given opportunities to become critical citizens, according to Winograd (2015) and Rocha (2012).

By considering ethics and citizenship, we should think of a broader context in education which is a path leading to New Learning. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2012), these are strange or even interesting times for education. Education is seen as essential, it is critical in shaping kids’ destiny and it is a certain route to social mobility. Indeed, nowadays, not only is education responsible for developing skills and knowledge acquisition, but also for social abilities, creating solutions for social inequalities, poverty and prejudice in order to enable students for social justice and to be “aware of the broader human and environmental impacts of their actions” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012, p. 19).

Nevertheless, those demands and high expectations for education today generate much conflict as there is little investment from the government in schools and teachers and parents opt to pay for a private school for better education. It is what is described by Cope and Kalantzis (2012) as well as it is what happens in the context of my research. Hence, to cater for what is currently occurring in education, Cope and Kalantzis (2012) believe we need a new view of learning.

Perhaps, if we can succeed at putting education at the heart of the designs for society’s future, we might even be able to succeed in our various campaigns to ensure that education is innovative, empowering, just and adequately resourced. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012, p. 28).

Likewise, New Learning is also a new background to teach English as a foreign language to kids, provided that it leads them into ethics and citizenship. Therefore, they will feel responsible for their actions and how much they can affect other people, their community, the environment, their places and the planet. As a result, English should have a fundamental role to

form their identities so that they should be able to act in the world with civic participation and proactivity, trying to diminish the gap between individuals who do not speak English and the ones who do speak it exclusively for personal and not for social purposes.

5. The Profile of the Learner in Early Elementary School

The children who are pupils of the teacher collaborating in my study are aged from seven to ten years old. Thus, to understand this profile of learner we resort to McKay (2006) who analyses it. First of all, she observes that, even at early stages, kids are able to use the language somehow both productively and receptively. They can even go further if they are inserted in an appropriate environment in which they can develop more than linguistic skills, they can develop socio-cultural skills. For us, it also connects to Vygotsky (1978) perspective of social interactions for kids, creating the ZPD concept (zone of proximal development), which is:

The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Vygotsky (1978) believes that cognitive development and psychological functions are social and culturally determined and this idea supports the interaction among subjects during their learning process. Social and cultural interaction, as seen by Vygotsky, was incorporated in the Sociocultural Theory for Second Language Acquisition by Lantolf (2000). Also, it was related to teaching English as a foreign language for kids by Cameron (2001), bringing about a dialogic perspective that is linked to a bakhtinian point of view: “This process is dialogic and entails continuous assessment of the learner’s ZPD and subsequent tailoring of help to facilitate developmental progression from other-regulation to self-regulation” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 211).

According to Vygotsky (1978), a learner’s task is to incorporate cultural values by using language. For him, human being’s behaviour creates new forms of psychological processes rooted in the culture. In their turn, Lantolf and Thorne (2007) bring about concrete examples to explain

this idea. They affirm that developmental processes happen in cultural, linguistic and historical environments, such as the family or among learner's peers or in the institutions we belong to with the help of a more capable peer or even in symmetrical relationships. Therefore, the most important human cognitive activity occurs through interaction in social and material environments since "by transforming our social and material environment, we also change ourselves and the way we live in the world" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 199).

On that account, McKay (2006) emphasizes the fact that kids should develop abilities for social interactions throughout their learning and certain products of language, such as grammar and vocabulary, are mere consequences of that. Indeed, children need to learn what is expected from them when they are engaged using the language, in other words, it is important to understand pragmatic issues – to whom one speaks, how one speaks, the necessary silence moment, the moment for reply, the intonation to be used, the objective of the talk and so on. "When children learn language, words not only function to isolate specific objects and actions, they also serve to reshape biological perception into cultural perception and concepts" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 199).

Another significant aspect approached by McKay (2006) is kids' identity. For her, they are developing new identities in their communities and at school, especially when learning another language. Connected to that, there is the importance of discourse and culture developed in the classroom, which may reflect or not their society and their family habits. Thus, I am concerned with situated practices to teach English for kids, using the various discourses that are available for them, helping them to view their social and cultural world in a critical way and to transfer new knowledge to other possible contexts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

6. The Research

The main motivation for this research arose due to my own practice in the area of Teacher Education. Some years ago, I got involved with teacher training at a language institute and later I started teaching university students taking a Language course in order to become teachers of both English and Portuguese. Thus, one of my most important ultimate goals

with this study is to be more aware of what is necessary for my students to reflect upon language and culture from a pluralistic perspective and to be able to contribute to their education as teachers. It is important to highlight, though, that the aspect of language and culture is only a part of the investigation I chose to discuss in this article. It refers to one of my research questions as the whole study is broader than that. Therefore, I am trying to answer the following: Which views towards English language and culture can be inferred from the teacher's practice? How can I relate those views to a critical and formative English teaching process?

In the Brazilian context, we face a difficult reality when it comes to education of English teachers to Early Elementary School (children from six to ten years old³), provided that English is not mandatory for those ages and, as a consequence, most teachers who work with the English language take Language University courses, having experience with older students (from eleven to seventeen years old). Gimenez (2013) explains that we have a gap in Teacher Education in Brazil that should be fulfilled with more research in the area in order to change it. Hence, this scenario justifies the present study.

7. Context of Study and Methodology

This research is a qualitative case study of a single English teacher in the context of Early Elementary School in Brazil. This teacher is very eager to collaborate with it. She is a special case because she has a degree in Pedagogy, which is specific for teaching kids from four year-olds to ten year-olds, considering the initial period of mandatory schooling (Pre-School and Early Elementary School). Therefore, she had a lot of experience teaching basic subjects to kids not only English. Later, she got involved in English teaching, she decided to study more and she got a specialization in English Language; afterwards, she started another university course to have a degree in English. The latter is still ongoing.

The school where the research took place is a private school in a countryside town in the state of São Paulo, one of the most important states of the country. The school is considered to be reliable by parents and the community in the area. Children go to school part-time either in the morning or in the afternoon. Their groups are composed of approximately

twenty students and they start studying English when they are aged four or five years old along with other extra subjects, such as Music and Arts.

The building of the school is spacious and full of trees, plants and even some friendly animals coming from the woods next to it. Hence, the kids are encouraged to be in contact with the nature. Besides this, the environment of the whole school and each classroom is full of kids' own productions, such as drawings, paintings and compositions.

Having described the context of the research, the rationale behind a case study will be explained and also the approach used for data collection and analysis.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2011), a case study is appropriate "to portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals" (Cohen, Manion & Morrisson, 2011, p. 85) as well as it focuses on individuals and local situations. It brings about deep and detailed data from wide data source. It aims at catching the complexity and situatedness of behaviour so it treats the phenomena holistically. As a consequence, a case can be recontextualized, in other words, there is something to be learned from it. Finally, case studies are non-interventionist, which is remarkable for me since I chose to observe lessons but not to intervene in the teacher's practice. Likewise, André (2013) believes case studies show a deep and contextualized data analysis. Besides this, she thinks that it is important for the researchers to know the world to which the subject belongs, their daily experiences, language, culture and interactions, thus research should happen where the subject lives or works.

Following the ideas above for a case study, I chose two ways to collect my data: twenty lesson observations throughout a school term (six months), there were five lessons of each school year (second, third, fourth and fifth) and four semi-structured interviews with the teacher during the same period. Both the lessons and the interviews were not video recorded in response to a request from the school, but detailed notes were taken in the format of a diary. Each week there were observations of the teacher working with two different groups amongst second, third, fourth and fifth year of Early Elementary School, ranging from seven year-olds to ten year-olds, but the students were not participants. In each group, there were about twenty students.

For the interviews, open-ended questions were used and they were related to lesson observations and focused on what the teacher thought of Language and Culture as well as Intercultural Spaces. According to Cohen, Manion and Morisson (2011), semi-structured interviews should include prompts and probes. Prompts help the interviewer to clarify topics and probes will lead interviews to extend, elaborate or add something to their response. So this was the process used, trying to be as close as possible to a real and spontaneous conversation.

In terms of data analysis, I am considering categorizations based on Smyth (1992) and Liberali (2012), that are – to describe, to inform, to confront and to reconstruct. The questions that should be asked are the following:

- To describe: What does the teacher do?
- To inform: What is the meaning of what the teacher does for herself/himself?
- To confront: How did the teacher come to act like this?
- To reconstruct: How could it be done differently?

The first question will be answered by describing exactly what the teacher does in each of the lessons observed. The second question will be covered through the answers the teacher herself gave during the semi-structured interviews. The third question will be contemplated through the teacher's history of her own practice and also relating it to my theoretical background. Finally, the fourth question concerns not this single teacher's practice but how Teacher Education can be changed to help teachers in order to connect language and culture as well as create Intercultural Spaces in their lessons. As background, a Bakhtinian, Translingual perspective and Vygotsky's view of learning for children should be taken into consideration. Thus, I expect future English teachers will be more aware of ethics and citizenship for kids' education. The motivation for the last question comes from my reality as a professor of a university course that prepares students to be English teachers.

8. Data Analysis Categorization Preview

Analyzing data in a qualitative case study is a task of subjective interpretation. Thus, according to Cohen, Manion and Morisson (2011), there is a reflective encounter between the researcher and the data, which happens to be interpretations of a social encounter. In order to do so, there are some stages described by them that are the following: generating natural units of meaning; classifying, categorizing and ordering those units; structuring narratives to describe the content of the lessons and interviews and, finally, interpreting the data.

For this reason, I am starting to analyze my data by building up categories that reveal the representations of the teacher about Language, Culture and Intercultural Spaces. In order to achieve my goal, I am thinking about three main views of language. The first one is language as commodity, that is, English is a language to be learned for specific purposes, such as trips, business, leisure and so on. As a consequence, there is only one manner to speak the language correctly and an idea of hegemony and idealized native speaker of the language who should be copied for success (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011; Rajagopalan, 2005). Besides this, learners should aim at perfect pronunciation reflecting an audiolingual perspective (Brown, 2007).

Secondly, Intercultural Spaces could arise as being creative hybridization (Kostogriz, 2005) between the culture of the mother tongue and the foreign language being studied. So there is openness to otherness, questioning monological discourses. Thus, I am thinking about a category that will cover Interculturality.

Finally, language is seen as a possible path to social practice and citizenship; in other words, it is engaged in the kids' social interactions and it evolves dynamically (Rocha, 2012). Also, it is the possibility to think about language from a bakhtinian perspective, in other words, every enunciation is ideologically marked (Bakhtin/Volochinov, 1929/2014). Therefore, a third category will be Language as social practice.

After analyzing all the twenty lessons observed and the four semi-structured interviews with the teacher according to the categories previously mentioned, I will relate the teacher's discourse in her practice

during the classes to her discourse in the interviews. This will be done in order to follow the category of informing (Smyth, 1992; Liberali, 2012) to answer the question “What is the meaning of what the teacher does for herself/himself?”, trying to find what the teacher views and values towards language and culture are. Hence, the results will be generated from subjective interpretation of the researcher, which is typical of qualitative research as already explained above. By doing so, I expect to reflect upon what I do in the area of Teacher Education to help future English teachers that will certainly have kids at Early Elementary schools as their pupils. I hope that they will be able to think about English from a pluralistic perspective through bakhtinian dialogue and the possibility to create Intercultural Spaces for ethics, collaboration and plural civic actions by teaching kids to use English in their social practices.

8.1. One Sample Lesson

Throughout the period of six months, twenty lessons were observed and one was chosen as a sample to be described and briefly analyzed in this section in correlation to what the teacher explained about it during the semi-structured interviews. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the mentioned questions proposed by Smyth (1992) and Liberali (2012) for the analysis will not be completely answered here.

The selected lesson was taught to the fifth year of Early Elementary School, so kids were aged ten or eleven. It was a cooking class whose recipe to be prepared was the Cup Cake. Firstly, I will describe how the lesson developed below and then I will analyze it briefly and also expose what the teacher thinks about it.

The teacher entered the class and helped the students to organize their desks in order to start their cooking class. Students had brought ready-made muffins and chocolate lentils to decorate the cup cake. The teacher had made Brazilian chocolate treat to cover the cakes.

The teacher asked them, “Where did the idea of cooking class come from?”

And she herself answered, “From Unit 6, party time. So, eyes on the teacher. As we are talking about party time, how are their cakes in the USA?”

The teacher then showed a poster with cup cakes pictures and a phrase, “decorating cup cakes is a fun way to show off your creativity!”

The teacher pointed to the Brazilian chocolate treat and asked the kids,

“What is this? Chocolate cream. Repeat. And chocolate lentils. Repeat. And why cup cake? What is the advantage?”

The teacher read what was on a poster, “It’s a cake that you can eat with your hands. And you don’t have to share with anyone. So, it’s individual“.

And students repeated what she read.

The teacher presented another poster and asked, “Why is it called cup cake?”

The poster said, “They were originally cooked in cups”.

The teacher organized students to work in pairs and she said, “Go and wash your hands, please?”

When they were back, she explained, “Guys, now you are going to use... pay attention to the teacher... Hair cover plus gloves. Guys, take a look at these, they are plastic gloves. Now, you are cup cakes chefs. 1,2,3 hands up! You are going to get your cake and you are going to put it on this plastic plate”.

The teacher underlined plastic plate on the board and asked students to repeat it. And she went on, “So, the cakes are on the plate. So, what’s this? Everybody, repeat! Spoons! Plates! I’m going to give you a cup of chocolate cream and put on the top of your cake and decorate it with chocolate lentils”.

The teacher asked students to repeat new words and new sentences: “1, 2, 3 repeat: decorate your cup cake”.

Students repeated that and the teacher said: “It’s time to decorate your cup cake”.

Students used their creativity to decorate their cup cakes. When they finished, the teacher said: “Look how the cup cake of your friend is.

Everybody says with the teacher: Let's eat it! Is it delicious??"

And students left the class with their cup cakes as it was break time.

In this class, it is possible to observe that the teacher tries to create an Intercultural Space bringing up the habit of making and decorating cup cakes which did not use to be so common in Brazil, but it became part of our culture some years ago. It is interesting that the way people decided to decorate it is typically Brazilian. They use a chocolate treat, called "*brigadeiro*", which is a special dessert for us, and this is exactly what the teacher prepared for her class. Thus, I believe there is a lot of room for interculturality mixing a type of cake from the USA and a Brazilian sweet. Thinking about dialogism, a new vision towards cup cakes was created because of interrelations between the two cultures. Also, in terms of language related to culture, students had the opportunity to learn English vocabulary connected to cultural cooking and eating habits. There was a third space created in which the children felt comfortable and worth belonging to (Widin & Yasukawa, 2013).

On the other hand, when it comes to Kramersch's concept of Third Culture (Kramersch, 2009), one can note that the critical element is crucial provided that in the scope of critical culture, categories imposed by the foreign language are questioned and active comparisons between mother language and foreign language take place. From the observation of this sample lesson, it is not possible to infer any type of critical thinking space created for the kids. I believe that the habit of making cup cakes might have increased in the world as some type of American culture and way of life imposition. Furthermore, the idea that American people always have individual cup cakes in their birthday parties could be questioned. Hence, this idea could be questioned and discussed with the students as Rocha (2012) believes that kids at this age are very capable of problematizing social issues in order to be prepared to act as citizens in the world.

When the teacher reported her lesson during the semi-structured interviews, firstly, she mentioned she learned how to conduct cooking classes in a course in a Reggio Emilia⁴ school in Canada, underlining the role of having experiences for the kids. Also, from her explanation of the lesson, it was possible to understand she had been observing how the kids' mothers prefer to take cup cakes for their children birthday celebrations

since it is much easier to predict how many cup cakes they will need for each child. This practice seems to be practical for the mothers instead of having a big cake to be cut in slices and shared with everybody, as it is commonly done in Brazil. Therefore, even though she is well aware of this difference in cultural practices, it is not critically explored in the lesson. I believe opening this perspective to English teachers is important. So, the context of such a lesson is very rich as food for thought to teach English in social practices.

Finally, concerning language itself, there is a lot of repetition of new words for memory and pronunciation used during the class. When talking to the teacher about this kind of practice, she says she believes it is important to have repetition so that kids will not speak English with Portuguese intonation, they will internalize the correct version of the sentences to be said in English appropriate intonation and pronunciation. This way of thinking might reveal an idealized view of the English language and a need created to learn to speak it as natives do. From my theoretical background as one could see, such a practice implies the idea of language as commodity, that is, language is an instrument to achieve a certain goal. The latter would be considered a monological view of language by Canagarajah (2013). However, it is important to highlight that, for the author, the structural part of language, such as grammar and pronunciation, should not be disregarded even being less important than meaning negotiations.

By reconstructing my perspective towards language and culture as a teacher educator, I would call my university students attention to the possibility of working with language as social practice from a bakhtinian perspective. I can observe room to expand language repetitions so that the kids can produce enunciations that reflect their own thinking and reality. Moreover, kids could have the opportunity to relate the cup cake recipe to other traditional recipes from their families in celebrations as birthdays and anniversaries. They could also contribute to the school cultural fair with them. Eventually, as the habit of eating an individual birthday cake is mentioned, some research could be done by the kids about birthday celebrations in other English-speaking countries.

9. Final Considerations

My data is still under analysis by categories and I have expectations to find a multiplicity of ways of thinking about Language and Culture in the teacher's practice and discourse. I believe each category I propose to my analysis should not be seen as a straight jacket. Yet, there should be overlappings of the categories given.

What I expect to find are subsidies to think about new paradigms for English teaching to Early Elementary School, connecting Language and Culture in Intercultural Spaces in the light of New Learning, which is:

an open call to read the transformations going on in the world, to imagine the corresponding transformations that may need to occur in education, and to plan ways in which educators might lead these transformations rather than fall victim to changes over which they feel they have little or no control (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012, p. 30).

Therefore, the role of the teacher, their practice and discourse are of paramount importance and my intention with this work is to describe, inform, confront and reconstruct (Liberali, 2012) teaching practices in order to have a more critical view of language teaching and help future English teachers to be able to make their enunciations through English in their own social practices (Bakhtin / Volochinov, 1929/2014) and to help their students to become critical citizens.

I also believe that English Teacher Education should think about problematizing issues of Language and Culture, consequently, of Intercultural Spaces. Alongside with this idea, kids' profile should be taken into consideration as well as their need to be citizens of the world. Hence, I think that courses whose target are teachers for Early Elementary School should include this critical cultural and linguistic practices awareness in their curriculum.

Acknowledgements

This paper is part of my doctoral studies at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Brazil, supported by a research grant from CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior), supervised by Professor Doctor Cláudia Hilsdorf Rocha.

Notes

- ¹ Lingua franca is the language of communication among speakers whose mother tongue is not the same, for example, they speak English and they are not natives of that language, and they use it across linguistic boundaries. (Seidholfer, 2005; El Kadri, Gimenez, 2013; Jordão, 2014).
- ² This concept was developed by Pratt (1991). They are social spaces where cultures meet, collide and combat in contexts of asymmetrical power, such as colonization, slavery and so on. Yet, it generates new norms and genres, bringing forward possibilities of resistance and voice to marginalized groups. For Canagarah (2013), they also create opportunities for collaboration, not only conflict.
- ³ In my study, I consider children from seven to ten years of age because the participant does not have a group of six year-olds.
- ⁴ The school where the research took place uses Reggio Emilia approach for very young kids from three to five years old and the importance given to experiences remains later in Elementary School.

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First version received: September 2015

Final version accepted: November 2015