A critical analysis on English textbooks and literature as an alternative resource for decolonial education /

Uma análise crítica sobre livros didáticos de inglês e a literatura como recurso alternativo para uma educação decolonial

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ABSTRACT

English Textbooks are commonly geared toward learning content for communicative purposes and skills development and they do not always explicitly and critically bring to the scene ideological issues that favor a decolonial view (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2019; MIGNOLO, 2018; OLIVEIRA, 2019; WALSH, 2018) of English teaching and have its ideological character in perspective (RAJAGOPALAN, 2004). These questions surreptitiously participate in the composition of unique stories (ADICHIE, 2009), which act in the construction of concepts and prejudices conveyed in them. In this construction, discursive textures are found alongside a rhetoric of absence – conceived from the notion of "forms of silence" (ORLANDI, 2007) –, which sometimes reinforce stereotypes, engendered through the predominance of a hegemonic view, sometimes promote the erasure of cultural aspects that would put into play the thriving ethnic-racial and socio-cultural diversity in times of border problematization and paradigm de-hierarchization. Based on the assumptions of Critical Discourse Analysis (MELO, 2018; VAN DIJK) and Critical Applied Linguistics (PENNYCOOK, 2006; MOITA LOPES, 2006), this paper aims to present a critical analysis of two textbooks for teaching English as a foreign language. Combined with this analysis, this study presents alternatives for the development of critical thinking (HOOKS, 2010) in the teaching of English through the use of literary texts (BRUN, 2004; MOTA, 2010; PEREIRA, 2017) of postcolonial contexts with the purpose of deconstructing a rhetoric of knowledge production of unilateral diction and hegemonic matrix in a perspective that strives for decoloniality (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2019; MIGNOLO, 2018; OLIVEIRA, 2019; WALSH, 2018).

KEYWORDS: English; Textbook; Decoloniality; Literature; Teaching.

RESUMO

Comumente voltados à aprendizagem de conteúdos com fins comunicativos, livros didáticos de inglês como língua estrangeira nem sempre trazem à cena, de forma explícita e crítica, questões ideológicas que favoreçam uma perspectiva

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decolonial (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2019; MIGNOLO, 2018; OLIVEIRA, 2018; WALSH, 2018) do ensino de inglês e que tenham em tela o seu caráter ideológico (RAJAGOPALAN, 2004). Essas questões participam sub-repticiamente da composição de histórias únicas (ADICHIE, 2009), que atuam na construção de conceitos e preconceitos veiculados neles. Nessa construção, flagram-se tessituras discursivas ao lado de uma retórica de ausência – concebida a partir da noção de "formas de silêncio" (ORLANDI, 2007) –, que ora reforçam estereótipos, engendrados através do predomínio de uma visão hegemônica, ora promovem o apagamento de aspectos culturais que colocariam em cena a diversidade étnico-racial e sociocultural na língua inglesa, considerando os diversos países em que é falada. A partir dos pressupostos teóricos da Linguística Aplicada Crítica (PENNYCOOK, 2006; MOITA LOPES, 2006), sob o crivo metodológico da Análise Crítica do Discurso (MELO, 2018; VAN DIJK, 2015) e da Pesquisa Qualitativa Interpretativista (MOITA LOPES, 1994), este artigo tem o propósito de apresentar uma análise crítica de dois livros didáticos para o ensino de inglês como língua estrangeira. Conjugada a essa análise, apresenta alternativas para o desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico (HOOKS, 2010) através do uso de textos literários (BRUN, 2004; MOTA, 2010; PEREIRA, 2017) de contextos pós-coloniais com a finalidade de desconstruir uma retórica de produção de saberes de dicção unilateral e de matriz hegemônica.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Inglês; Livro Didático; Decolonialidade; Literatura; Ensino.*

1 Initial Considerations

In this article, I address my experience as an English language teacher in order to discuss a fruitful topic in the field of language teaching: the textbook. On this topic, I underscore two points that make up the objectives of this text: analyzing ethnic-racial issues in two textbooks in light of critical discourse analysis (MELO, 2018; VAN DIJK, 2015); and presenting literature as an alternative material to supplement the textbook in order to contemplate themes in a decolonial perspective, which are important to a country with wide inequality in various areas.

The absence of an intercultural tone in textbooks was evidenced by Siqueira (2012) when pointing out the inexistence of the world, a metaphor for cultural diversity. In consonance with Prodromou, the author captures the "plastic world"[1] (SIQUEIRA, 2012, p. 323) of the textbook, stating the attempt to achieve neutrality and not to include ideological issues in its contents. However, in accordance with Pennycook, cited by him, Siqueira (2012) recognizes that no textbook is devoid of ideological and cultural issues and enunciates the disagreement between its alleged neutrality and the realization that there are "many and increasingly multicolored spoken English, nativized and remodeled all over the world"[2] (SIQUEIRA, 2012, p. 343), with English being "the language of the world and of everyone"[3] (SIQUEIRA, 2012, p. 343). Despite this diversity of colors that makes up the use of English in the world, its representation is still unicolor.

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[1] In the original text, "mundo plástico".

[2] In the original text, "muitos e cada vez mais multicoloridos ingleses falados, nativizados e remodelados em todo mundo".

[3] In the original text, "a língua do mundo e de todo mundo".

In unison with Siqueira (2012) and as a reflection of his musings, I ask: if the English language textbook is developed to be adopted in different countries, how can teachers adapt or supplement the textbook to encompass the sociocultural universe, sociocultural contexts of subjects of multiple social classes, aspirations and cultural identities that speak and study English? How to give access to the shades of varieties of that language? What teaching resources can be used and what purposes other than teaching skills and competences should be considered in a country with great socioeconomic inequalities and constant manifestations of discrimination in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality? A proposal to answer these questions is the use of literature, credited as serving as one of the resources to promote critical thinking (HOOKS, 2010) and increase empathy, respect and the development of social awareness. The answer, however, is not so simple and requires thinking about what literature to teach and how.

To answer these questions, this article is divided, in general terms, into two parts. The first involves theoretical and methodological architecture, encompassing the analysis of two textbooks. The second, in turn, presents proposals for teaching English using literature as a resource to implement a decolonial teaching of this language.

2 Methodological and Theoretical Paths

The reflections I engender in this article have as their methodological contribution the interpretative qualitative research (MOITA LOPES, 1994) and are anchored in the theoretical assumptions of Critical Discourse Analysis (MELO, 2018; VAN DIJK, 2015), with consequences for Critical Applied Linguistics (MELO, 2018; VAN DIJK, 2015). MOITA LOPES, 2006; PENNYCOOK, 2006). This theoretical-methodological bedrock guides the considerations about the textbooks that I chose for analysis and that, despite this specificity, are expressive of issues and representations observable in other teaching materials. I also discuss alternatives for the decolonization of English teaching, having literature as a resource.

The choice of the methodological approach resides in the option for a non-categorical interpretation supported by the intersection of experiences and theories conceived as subject to reconfigurations in the opposite direction of the exactitude desired by positivist research (MOITA

LOPES, 1994). With regard to Critical Discourse Analysis, it concerns the treatment of situations that involve discourse and power relations (VAN DIJK, 2015), aligned with the purpose of noticing the presence and absence of socioeconomic, ethnic-racial and gender elements, among others, in textbooks. This purpose finds fruitful ground in another field of knowledge in which these reflections are also inserted, namely: critical applied linguistics, with a transgressive and interdisciplinary nature (MOITA LOPES, 2006; PENNYCOOK, 2006), whose contributions fall into the social and cultural areas.

The spectrum of issues contemplated by the theoretical and methodological aspects chosen for this article gains a political tone attentive to the importance of "opposing, resisting and crossing the oppressive limits of domination by race, gender and class"[4] (PENNYCOOK, 2006, p. 74) observable in an increasingly globalized world. Such a world, whose limits seemed diluted, shows itself with well-defined borders for the subjects who need to cross them for survival reasons.

3 Critical discourse analysis as a theoretical support and desilencing strategy

The political character of the problematic in which the questions discussed in this article are inserted find echoes in Critical Discourse Analysis. Regarding it, it is valid to trigger some theoretical considerations that characterize this field of knowledge and differ from other areas that also deal with discourse studies. This distinction will serve as a contribution to thinking about the treatment given to language in textbooks.

Iran de Melo's (2018) reading of Fairclough's reflections on the difference between critical and non-critical approaches to discourse denotes that they "differ in terms of how analysts see the relationship between discourse, power and the effects constitutive factors that language exerts on individuals, relationships and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1985)"[5] (MELO, 2018, p. 28). Among the criticisms, he mentions discourse analysis. Non-critical approaches, in turn, involve pragmatics, conversation analysis and sociolinguistics. Pragmatics "focuses only on the actions, intentions and individual strategies of the speakers"[6] (MELO, 2018, p. 28); conversation analysis

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[4] In the original text, "opor, resistir e cruzar os limites opressores da dominação pela raça, gênero e classe"
[5] In the original text, "diferem quanto à forma como os(as) analistas enxergam a relação entre discurso, poder e os efeitos constitutivos que a linguagem exerce sobre os indivíduos, as relações e os sistemas de conhecimento e crença (Fairclough, 1985)"
[6] In the original text, "concentra-se apenas nas ações, intenções e estratégias individuais dos falantes".

disregards the social background and power issues at work in conversation; sociolinguistics, on the other hand, describes the "relationship that culture maintains with linguistic traits, without realizing how language is capable of transforming cultural facts (Fairclough, 1985, 2001)"[7] (MELO, 2018, p. 28).

Along the lines of analogy, in many textbooks, the treatment given to language is in accordance with a non-critical view. Language is often presented in activities that do not lead to reflection on social asymmetries and the impacts they have on cultures and ideologies. The very methodologies of teaching English show advances and setbacks in their history motivated by the proposal to teach the language for the purpose of learning its structure or for the development of communicative competence, disregarding intercultural aspects and the power relations inherent to the use of imperialist languages. Such methodologies are not aimed at equipping students to question the recurring presence of certain representations and also absences or silences. Faced with these omissions, Critical Discourse Analysis is activated to analyze images, texts, linguistic choices in two textbooks, as well as absences, taking into account the theoretical configurations of Orlandi (2007) in *The forms of silence*.

Words, accents, subjects and images in textbooks bring silence in their midst. The apparently paradoxical character between expression and silence is at the heart of what constitutes language, according to Orlandi (2007), who states that "there is a dimension of silence that refers to the character of incompleteness of language: every saying is a fundamental relationship with the non-saying."[8] (ORLANDI, 2007, p. 12). From the author's words about the silences that reside in what is stated, it is possible to affirm that the recurring presence of some idealizations, or, in Siqueira's words, "islands of fantasy"[9] (SIQUEIRA, 2012, p. 320), as illustrated by examples of texts that portray the lives of people with high purchasing power, is silent about the lives that escape this portrait. These lives, when not contemplated, are reserved for a silence that echoes, among other factors, in the discouragement of speaking a foreign language. Subjects who do not see themselves on the pages of textbooks do not always feel encouraged to speak the language represented as belonging to contexts of which they are not part. This situation, even though it is not determinant or deterministic, probably acts surreptitiously in comments in which one reads that English is far from their reality.

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[7] In the original text, "relação que a cultura mantém com os traços linguísticos, sem perceber como a linguagem é capaz de transformar os fatos culturais (Fairclough, 1985, 2001)"

[8] In the original text, "há uma dimensão do silêncio que remete ao caráter de incompletude da linguagem: todo dizer é uma relação fundamental com o não-dizer."

[9] In the original text, "ilhas da fantasia".

4 Representativeness and Silences in Textbooks

In the well-known Ted Talk *The Danger of a Single Story*, Chimamanda Adichie (2009) reveals the lack of representation of black people and African stories among the books to which she had access when she was younger. These absences also occur in many stories to which Brazilian students have access in textbooks used in foreign language classes.

With regard to basic education, with the implementation of the National Textbook Program (PNLD), ethnic-racial and gender issues began to appear among the requirements for the approval of textbooks by the PNLD evaluators. The use of this criterion enunciates a tradition of erasing these issues in textbooks, attenuated with the creation of this program. The same orientation, however, is not extended to textbooks used in free language schools. In these contexts, the emphasis is on its effectiveness for the development of communicative competence, having as "north" the parameters of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, that is, having, as a north, the Global North. This framework defines the knowledge, skills and abilities that must be achieved by learners at each level studied in a tonic of universalization and homogenization under the influence of the epistemologies of the Global North (SANTOS, 2019), which disregard the pluralism of the contexts in which learning takes place.

In regard to this note on the epistemologies that guide the creation of textbooks, I observe that the *Interchange* series seems to point to the North. More specifically, this series points to a North American country, the United States. To illustrate this orientation, I chose to analyze the book *Interchange Intro B*, by Jack Richards (2013). This book has units sequenced from nine to sixteen, corresponding to the second part of the *Interchange Intro*. Unit ten brings sports in the United States and Canada and a final text with an interview with an American gymnast, Shawn Johnson. The strong presence of North America in a unit about sports reinforces a cultural aspect that is closely linked, above all, to the United States, where there is a large investment in the training of athletes. This image of the country, although not erroneous, when presented throughout the unit, overshadows other countries where there are successful stories in the field of sports, including countries where English is also spoken, such as Jamaica, Kenya, among others. Thus, the prominence given to the United States

enhances a hegemonic culture and emphasizes its centrality position to the detriment of others that, given the recurrence of American representations in textbooks, are not always recognized as belonging to the set of countries where English is spoken. .

The spotlight on the United States extends throughout the aforementioned book, in which, in unit eleven, the holidays of that country is one of the topics; tourist attractions in New York is one of the activities of unit thirteen; the reading section on the life of the American Mackenzie Bearup is part of unit fifteen; an activity on "Popular Activities in the United States" (RICHARDS, 2013, p. 108) is in unit sixteen, with the title of the text of the reading section, "In Los Angeles this weekend". This sample of the strong presence of North American culture in the book reinforces the silence in relation to several countries where English is spoken.

Since the emergence of discourses around minorities and coloniality, it has been essential to decenter hegemonic cultures so that they do not continue as the standard that rules ways of knowing and living. Decentering does not mean that hegemonic countries should not appear in textbooks, but rather that they should not be the only source for representation. This vision converges with a movement undertaken by intellectuals sensitive to the geopolitical division of the world into two main poles, translated into the abyssal division (SANTOS, 2019) between the countries of the Global North and South. In this division, a history of conquests and ways of producing knowledge of a hierarchical and universalizing nature is identified, which put the peoples of the South in a situation of subjugation through coloniality practices or as places that must assimilate the dominant culture that imposes itself as universal.

One of the practices of coloniality involves language and triggers the history of imposition of European languages in countries subjected to colonialism. As Thiong'o (2011) points out, the imposition of the English language and the banning, under the threat of punishment, of native African languages was one of the ways of instituting a process of territorial, cultural and intellectual colonization. In response to this domination, Thiong'o (2011) brings a proposal, expressed in the title of his book, of decolonization. For him, one of the fundamental paths for this is the use of African languages.

In supporting his argument, Thiong'o (2011) criticizes African writers, such as Chinua Achebe, for using English in their texts, thus contributing to linguistic imperialism. In response, Achebe (2009)

claims that if, for Thiong'o, the linguistic issue of the use of the English language is a matter of "either/or" (ACHEBE, 2009, p. 97), for him, it is a matter of "both" (ACHEBE, 2009, p. 97). He adds that English is one of the languages used in his country and that it does not represent a risk to the existence of other languages. These thinkers raise two central questions that take on different colors from points of view that seem to be opposed, but which, when seen through the prism of decolonial thought, appear as supplementary.

In Thiong'o (2011), the presence of a radical thought is noted and it is related to a logic anchored in a dichotomous way of thinking about a complex problem such as linguistics. Despite this dichotomy, his voice is dissonant from a modern logic or an epistemology of the North, as he expresses it from the place of speech of those who were historically silenced because their languages were not recognized and were replaced by the language of the colonizer. His position is, therefore, necessary to oppose the movement of silencing African languages.

In his considerations, Achebe (2009), in turn, disregards the impact of English on African languages, which could have greater resonance if English did not have the status of universal. This is the silence that Achebe's speech does not reveal. For him, the multilingualism of African countries is capable of incorporating one more language. For this reason, he considers Thiong'o's fear of African languages disappearing to be questionable. The alternative found by Achebe of incorporating a Nigerian diction into English and inserting Igbo words into his texts appears as a viable path that does not dichotomize, but rather, stages the linguistic diversity of his country. On the other hand, the effusive production in English reinforces its hegemony. In a way, Achebe uses the hegemonic reach of English to disseminate African literature worldwide, boosting the publication of African authors by the Penguin African Series. Therefore, it is possible to consider that, despite the ratification of English imperialism, Achebe (2009) uses the resources of the oppressor to disseminate his culture, because it is through his texts in English that his readers get to know Africa from a local perspective, including access to a sample of an African language, Igbo.

I would add that having this discussion expressed by two authors of strong international resonance is a strategy to draw attention to the fact that, in the most diverse countries, the English language coexists with several other languages. The apparent monolingualism of countries like Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, New Zealand is only maintained because of the lack of representation of

other languages in the teaching of the one that is hegemonic and by the denomination English-speaking countries (countries where English is spoken), which also extends to other imperialist languages such as Spanish and Portuguese (THIONG'O, 2009). For many students, English is the only language spoken in countries where it is official or considered the main language. However, a visit to such countries demonstrates their linguistic diversity due to the presence of tourists, immigrants and also the existence and resistance of several native languages. That was my experience, for example, in Singapore, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, countries to which I traveled for a linguistic experience and where I came across different languages being spoken instead of English.

Bringing awareness around the multilingual context in which the English language is inserted is a way of questioning its hegemony. This seems to be a viable alternative to simply replacing or banning English, which would be an attitude equivalent to that used by settlers who instituted physical punishment for children in Kenya who spoke Gĩkũyũ. Operating in this logic of exclusion would establish a modern thinking of contrasts and oppositions.

Finding the way to operate in logics that are not consistent with that of exclusion or dichotomy is a difficult task, because modern Eurocentric and Cartesian-based epistemes have a long and solid tradition. The search for this path is a continuous struggle and, as stated by Mignolo (2018), it is up to each one to seek "decolonial liberation" (MIGNOLO, 2018, p. 105). In unison with this notion, for Catherine Walsh (2018), it is not possible to escape coloniality even in the face of awareness and implementation of decolonial practices. What is possible is, as she paraphrases Subcomandante Galeano, to make fissures or cracks in coloniality (WALSH, 2018). In the same thread of thought, Boaventura Santos (2019) asserts that the epistemologies of the south do not aim to replace those of the north, but rather to deconstruct hierarchies between them.

5 On the centrality of textbooks and what they teach about the "center"

Very commonly, in language schools, prospective students are introduced to the textbook as if it were the course method. The association between method and textbooks is not random. They bring guides for the teacher that provide direction on methodological issues and the content to be taught in

the course, which is often called a module. Naming the course as a module also refers to the textbook and suggests its pre-formatted character.

The emphasis on the textbook is also expressed in the speech of teachers who allude to pages already taught when asked about subjects already covered in their classes. Such an act denotes the centrality of the textbook, to which the lesson plans are tied due to several factors: the need to assure students that the contents were taught with an eagerness to follow an international standard in contrast to local knowledge, considered less legitimate than those produced in the global North. This is reflected in the timid production of textbooks by Brazilian authors.

The centrality of the textbook is also related to the attribution of power to the poles that produce this type of material in the commercialization arena, which slips into the dispute around who has the power over the English language (RAJAGOPALAN, 2004). The geopolitical linguistic issue assumes a protagonist character in this discussion because the most hegemonic countries are those that are taken as a parameter for the teaching of English. This premise can be confirmed by the use of the words "British" and "American" in the names and descriptions of some free language schools.

The terms British and American also label the variety of English present in dialogues and texts used in books, which commonly express a capitalist, heteronormative and white vision. There is a strong white representation that authors and publishers have tried to neutralize with the use of some images of black, indigenous, Asian people, often stereotyped or without protagonism.

Such representations give the English speaker an idealization, which involves a vision of the possible identities of an English student. This idealization converges in the stereotype enunciated by Chimamanda Adichie's roommate (2009), as narrated by the writer, when she was surprised to discover that Adichie, being Nigerian, spoke English. The lack of knowledge about countries where English is spoken makes many people recognize as British all varieties of English that do not have some characteristic features of another well-known variety, in generalizing lines, the US one, as if there were only these two varieties that assimilate, then, the others.

The project of homogenization of the English language, also understood as the neutralization or pasteurization of it, is expressed, as already mentioned, in textbooks, in the absence of the linguistic diversity that characterizes several countries where the English language is spoken. The question that can be raised is that such books should focus on communicative competence and aim to maximize

linguistic learning for the purposes of fluency and accuracy without emphasis on sociocultural aspects. Considering the development of communicative competence is fundamental. However, it is also important to ask what kind of speaker is needed in a world marked by walls materially and symbolically erected against refugees and in an era of stress on a neoliberal perspective that privileges material things over lives. Would the development of linguistic and communicative competence be enough to become a speaker of an imperialist language in this context? A possible answer is that, in addition to the aforementioned competences, it is necessary to highlight critical thinking (hooks, 2010), which broadens the world view in order to make learners of a foreign language become users of the language instead. of uncritical carriers of the ideological and political layers that make it up.

Although there is no program that guides the production and dissemination of textbooks for free courses, there have been some advances in recent years with regard to the production of this material. Contrary to what happens, for example, in the book *Interchange*, in *Breakthrough*, there is a greater diversity of countries, as shown by the reading activity with a text about a teacher from Newcastle in England who teaches in Ghana. The reference to Accra brings the expectation of decentering stories that usually revolve around the United States or England. The presentation of this story, however, is done through the prism of an Englishwoman named Jane, who brings a stereotyped look expressed in the exclamation at the end of the statement that sometimes Ghanaians eat rabbits for dinner. This exclamation denotes the astonishment in relation to a dish seen as exotic, as exotic would also be some dishes common to western cuisine if it were not for the western gaze that determined, in this text, what is or is not normal to eat.

The exercise proposed in relation to the text mentioned is all about identifying information. There are no questions about the cultural content and the image brought to Ghana, which could sharpen knowledge about the country in a decolonial perspective, that is, under a prism that denaturalizes the representation that places it as exotic. On the contrary, only some information about Jane and a final question regarding the family's and Jane's eating habits at breakfast and dinner are underscored.

Furthermore, the text indirectly compares Jane's routine to that of Lizzie, the matriarch of the family with whom Jane lives in Ghana. While she helps the kids with homework, goes to the grocery store, checks her emails, chats with friends, reads a book, "Lizzy spends all afternoon cooking dinner

outside and chatting with friends." (CRAVEN, 2012, p. 9). This indirect comparison could be seen as an exposition of a woman's routine, but when it comes to representations about women belonging to a continent like Africa, historically represented in the literature in a negative perspective (ACHEBE, 2009), it is necessary to have a critical look at this representation, which lays bare its ideological bias that perpetuates a stereotyped history about that continent. In the face of this stereotyped history, it is necessary to assume a decolonial stance, which presupposes decoloniality in "[...] a struggle against the logic of coloniality and its material, epistemic and symbolic effects." (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2019, p. 36)

Faced with books such as the ones analyzed, it is possible to notice that it is not an easy task to decolonize the teaching of the English language and reveal the linguistic and cultural diversity of the countries where this language is spoken or even to make a bridge between the English language and the social environment of the students so that they relate to what they learn. One of the alternatives is to use other resources and, among them, literature appears as a fruitful resource, which can be used to give voice to "knowledge and ways of knowing not recognized as such by the dominant epistemologies"[10] (SANTOS, 2019, p. 19).

6 Literature as an alternative to decolonial education

The text "Literature and(in) teaching a foreign language" (MOTA, 2010) establishes the relationship between literature and the field of linguistics under the argument that the "common basis that integrates them is language."[11] (MOTA, 2010, p. 101). Despite the convergence between studies on language and literature, situations in which literature is used in language teaching are not common. For Milena Brun (2004), although teachers resort to fiction to outline the context of the subjects taught, literature is not used in classes in which the communicative method is applied, because this method favors the use of pragmatic texts. Such a character can be observed in the use of dialogues and texts such as the one in the book *Breakthrough* (CRAVEN, 2012) or magazine articles. Other texts considered "authentic" include e-mails and blog texts.

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[10] In the original text, "conhecimentos e modos de saber não reconhecidos como tal pelas epistemologias dominantes".
[11] In the original text, "base comum que as integra é a linguagem."

The texts analyzed in *Breakthrough* (CRAVEN, 2012) demonstrate that the teacher is guided to a teaching proposal with an emphasis on communicative competence. Despite the relevance of this competence, I consider that, in a context such as Brazil, marked by social inequalities, the country should "encompass objectives in education that transcend the accumulation of knowledge devoid of social, cultural and political implications and serve as a catalyst for change Social."[12] (PEREIRA, 2017, p. 24).

In a country with low educational rates and high levels of violence, teaching aimed at expanding critical thinking (HOOKS, 2010) and social awareness seems to be the most productive path towards humanizing and emancipatory education. This purpose converges with the principles of a pedagogy of possibility (PEREIRA, 2017) in line with the parameter of possibility described by Kumaravadivelu (2003) based on the ideas of thinkers such as Paulo Freire. In this type of pedagogy, education should be seen as a catalyst for social transformation (FREIRE, 2011). I do not suggest, with this, that teaching English for communication purposes should be disregarded, but that it can be refashioned to mean more than simply reproducing chunks and functions.

To insert questions of social relevance, literature is an alternative resource. In the text "Literature and(in) teaching a foreign language", there are some examples of how to use literature in classes. The literary texts used, however, were written by an English and an Irish author. In *Education and Literature*: Reflections on Social, Racial, and Gender Matters, a wider range of literary texts is presented, involving some from the North and, above all, from the Global South, which bring English teaching strategies that focus on themes related to social, racial and gender (PEREIRA, 2019). For this work, the aim is to emphasize texts by writers from the global South addressed in this book (PEREIRA, 2019). Based on this choice, one of the purposes of an English class would be to make students look at a cultural reality of countries in the Global South, such as Kenya, Nigeria, Solomon Islands and India, where English is spoken and that are not always presented in textbooks.

To illustrate the use of literature in the classroom, I choose the book *Weep Not, Child*, by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009). In class, the teacher could write on the board in English "Education is the light of Kenya" (THIONG'O, 2009, p. 40) and then brainstorm ideas about the meaning of this phrase in the

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[12] In the original text, "abarcar objetivos na educação que transcendessem o acúmulo de conhecimento desprovido de implicações sociais, culturais e políticas e servissem como um catalisador para mudança social".

context of Kenya and of Brazil. The teacher could write the students' words and phrases in English on the board and ask them to take notes. In a pre-intermediate level class in a free language school, the teacher could ask students to discuss the phrase in English; in the context of basic education, if the teacher does not teach classes in English, students could get together to create sentences that denote their views on education in Brazil based on the initial brainstorm and with the help of dictionaries. In a second moment, the teacher would ask what the students know about Kenya and mention the fact that it is a country where English is spoken. Then, the teacher would present a brief synopsis of the novel in English for students to read excerpts in pairs from this knowledge. They would have to underline words they already know and could ask the meaning of five other words whose meaning cannot be inferred for the interpretation of the text.

After a discussion, students would read two excerpts from the book: "'[...] you will not have the midday food like other children.'" (THIONG'O, 2009, p. 2) and "[oh], Mother. I will never bring shame on you. Just let me go, just let me. The vision of his childhood again opened before him. For a while he contemplated the vision. […] a bright future... Loudly he said, 'I like school.'" (THIONG'O, 2009, p. 3). The teacher could then ask about themes that emerge from these two excerpts. Both in an intermediate level class, in a free language school and in basic education, students could be invited to write a short text to describe the daily life of Njoroge, the main character. In basic education, if necessary, the teacher could do one more brainstorm for students to expand their repertoire of words and phrases to write the text. In a third moment, the teacher could ask about experiences with English classes and what the objectives of a class should be. After some comments on strategies to develop fluency, the teacher could talk about the myth of the exclusive use of the target language in the classes and give the example of the class described in the novel, in which Njoroge does not know how to answer the question in the present continuous and just repeats the sentences without understanding what he is reproducing. Students would read the excerpt in pairs to understand the text in a cooperative way, using the principles of Cooperative Learning (BROWN, 2007), which promotes interaction among students to help each other in the learning process. In this case, the objective is to read and understand the text. The teacher would then write questions on the board about the type of class in the excerpt and a class they could envision as being effective for not only teaching English, but also developing principles that would promote greater social awareness. Finally, the teacher would ask students to write

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a journal entry as a form of alternative assessment (PEÑAFLORIDA, 2002), in which they would report what they learned together with a table of new words to compose a dictionary of the vocabulary studied until the end of the unit.

The described class would take one hour and forty minutes, that is, it would be intended for two consecutive sessions in basic education or a session in free courses. As a final activity, the teacher would ask students to write on a sheet of paper a word that defines the meaning of education and then record it on the board. They should then copy in their notebook the other words written by their colleagues to keep a table of opinions in a collective panel of words.

For teachers who want to approach the multilingual context in which English is inserted, I recommend *The Alternative*, by John Saunana (1980), which brings the story of a student who experiences the problem of having his world divided between local and Western culture. presented by its British-educated teachers. In this novel, there are several passages in Arosi, one of the languages spoken in the Solomon Islands.

As another suggestion for a novel that also portrays the lives of students and brings excerpts in another language spoken in India, I suggest *Like it Happened Yesterday*, by the Indian Ravinder Singh (2013). In this novel, several passages and words in Hindu are used. The novel *Push*, by the African-American writer Sapphire (1997), is written in Black English. This English could be taught as a way of bringing to the classroom a type of English placed on the margins under the argument that it is necessary to teach the standard language.

Within the scope of these suggestions, I aim to enunciate and subvert homogenizing layers of cultural representations conveyed in textbooks, showing that they are engendered in order to maintain the legitimacy of some cultures to the detriment of others through erasure. This objective brings, in its core, the assumption that English is not limited to being, among other materialities and representations, a commodity (TSUDA, 2019). The proposal I bring is to think about the literature produced on the margins of modernity split by coloniality as a resource for this subversion within an emancipatory education project, which prioritizes those subordinated by modernity engendered by coloniality, as a decolonial education demands (OLIVEIRA, 2018).

Final Considerations

In this paper, I presented some arguments in favor of using literature as an alternative material for teaching English. I support that, when choosing texts, priority should be given to those produced by writers from the Global South, considering the abyssal line unveiled by Boaventura Santos (2019), that is, the South or the Souths that were historically placed on the sidelines by a hegemonic discourse produced by the Global North. On the grounds of this proposal, I listed some novels that can be used and presented teaching strategies designed for classes in basic education and in free language schools.

The proposal results from the observation, after analyzing two textbooks and based on teaching experiences for twenty-one years, that there is an emphasis on communicative competence to the detriment of plural objectives that could be aimed at expanding critical thinking (HOOKS, 2010) and social conscience. According to arguments in another text (PEREIRA, 2017), I emphasize that, in a country with substantial social inequalities, one of the roles of education is to broaden horizons and lead students to launch questions that expand the meanings of manifold texts, including a text called world.

The English language can be one of the ways to understand, access and re-signify worlds beyond the axes that encapsulate and plasticize transported imaginaries driven by language. Promoting an English teaching that recognizes linguistic plurality and, by extension, other diversities that characterize it and constitute its speakers, by bringing up the plurilingual context in which this language is inserted, is a way of turning the page of a story to which many people do not relate.

Literature presents itself as one of the paths to the various worlds that can be made present in the classroom through the exercise of otherness that immersion in imaginaries promotes. By having language education via literature in mind, it is then possible to envision a type of education in which imagining the use of a language is combined with imaginations that unveil and revalue singular experiences and knowledge in their wide and unrestricted plurality.

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