# Ecology of knowledges in language teacher education: the use of new technologies in the contact zones between basic and higher education / *Ecologia de saberes na formação de professores de língua: o uso das novas tecnologias nas zonas de contato entre ensino básico e superior*

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ABSTRACT

The attacks against Brazilian education are not a recent phenomenon, but lately criticism against primary and higher education and their depreciation have made education an easy target for social criticism. Knowledge produced in public basic education, on the one hand, is considered inefficient or deficient. On the other hand, the university is losing its legitimacy because of the lack of circulation of the knowledge it produces (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011). This qualitative ethnographic research seeks to discuss the development of new pedagogies, new processes of construction and diffusion of scientific and lay knowledges, and new social commitments, on local, national and global levels, by creating contact zones (PRATT, 1992) between basic and higher education. The exchange of knowledges on English language teaching, of this denationalized and de-territorialized language (RAJAGOPALAN, 2004, p. 2004), turns the space where knowledges meet into a dynamic and rich place. Thus, we observe the need to make a critique of traditional schooling that does not incorporate new technologies that are part of the world of our students, regardless of the social class that each one of them belongs to. Digital inclusion in the educational system should lead to new forms of language learning and teaching and make educators and educated people not only consumers of digital ways of meaning-making, but also producers (PARDO, 2015).

KEYWORDS: Ecology of knowledges; Contact zones; Teacher education; New Technologies; De-territorialized language.

RESUMO

*Não é de hoje que a educação brasileira sofre ataques, mas ultimamente as críticas contra o ensino básico e superior público e a sua depreciação tornaram a educação alvo fácil da crítica social. O conhecimento produzido no ensino básico público, por um lado, é considerado ineficiente ou deficiente. Do outro lado, a universidade está perdendo sua legitimidade por causa da falta de circulação dos conhecimentos produzidos por ela (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011). Essa pesquisa qualitativa de cunho etnográfico busca discutir o desenvolvimento de novas pedagogias, novos processos de construção e de difusão de conhecimentos científicos e leigos, e novos compromissos sociais, locais, nacionais e globais a partir de criação de zonas*

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*de contato (PRATT, 1992) entre a educação básica e superior. A troca de saberes sobre o ensino de língua inglesa, essa língua desnacionalizada e desterritorializada (RAJAGOPALAN, 2004, p. 2004), torna o espaço de encontro de saberes em lugar dinâmico e rico. Assim, vemos a necessidade de fazer uma crítica ao ensino tradicional que não incorpora as novas tecnologias que fazem parte do mundo do nosso alunado independentemente da classe social a que cada um pertence. A inclusão digital no sistema educacional deve levar a novas formas de aprendizagem e de ensino de línguas e tornar os educadores e os educandos não só consumidores das formas digitais de criar sentidos, mas também produtores (PARDO, 2015).*
*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ecologia de saberes; Zonas de contato; Formação de professores; Novas tecnologias; Língua desterritorializada.*

## 1 Introduction: the crises, criticisms and creativities of public education in the contemporary world

In recent years, Brazil is increasingly entering a deep crisis in basic education at federal and state levels. Several reasons contribute to this picture: educators' salary issues in public basic education, school infrastructure, symbolic and physical violence, exorbitant workloads for these civil servants, lack of time to keep themselves updated, lack of interest and motivation for learning from the students' part, physical and mental illnesses of teachers and a growing depreciation of the profession of educators, not only by the current government, but also from the general public. Education funding cuts have hit both primary and tertiary education in Brazil over the last 5 years, and thus educational institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain and perform their basic functions.

On the other hand, in the last two decades, higher education institutions in Brazil have gone through processes of "democratization of access to universities" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 25), through the system of racial and social quotas and the inclusion of students who were historically excluded from these educational institutions. This democratization of Brazilian universities created the need for expansion and interiorization of public higher education institutions. Thus, new universities were created and existing universities underwent processes of expansion with new campuses being built in regions remote from the big cities. However, governments increasingly want "the transformation of the university into a service that is accessible, not through citizenship, but through consumption and, therefore, through payment" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 25), seeking to contain this massification effect (still extremely limited) of higher education.

In addition to these more local factors, processes of globalization and digitalization of knowledge and the transnationalization of higher education, due to the

169

growth of internationalization actions create certain knowledge flows that intensify power relations between universities in the Global North and those in the Global South. Araújo (2019) shows that "like any other human process and / or activity, the internationalization of higher education is neither neutral nor ahistorical" (p. 133). Most students in the Global South look for universities in the Global North (with the United States, France, and England at the top of the list) because they believe they would be, thus, closer to producing knowledge at its place of origin (ARAÚJO, 2019). Believing that any university in the Global North contributes more to academic development than a Brazilian university demonstrates a North-South rationality that qualifies certain knowledge as valid and others as not. (SOUSA SANTOS, 2014).

However, this depreciation of our universities happens not only on an international level, but also on a national one. The minister of education argued in one of his pronouncements, for example, that in the federal universities there are upheavals. There are several reasons that make this minister proclaim such declarations: 1. The "current institutional paradigm of the university has to be replaced by a business paradigm" and "the favoritism given to private universities occurs because of their much easier adaptation" to the prerogative of the university to increase its profitability (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 31); 2. A mercantilistic view that empties the university "of any humanistic or cultural concern" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 26) and reinforces a view of education that seeks to serve the labor market; 3. The power of teachers is seen as one of the main shortcomings of the public university. "Academic freedom is seen as an obstacle to the university's corporatization and to the university's accountability to the companies that want their services" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 32); 4. The social criticism that the university suffers from the demand for applicability of the knowledge produced in it; 5. The criticisms from some faculty members and sectors of the society, which the university refutes, for having gone through processes of democratization of knowledge and inclusion of students by using social and racial quotas.

These challenges revive discussions about the role of higher education in contemporary society and, more specifically, the role of a humanities campus located on the outskirts of an urban center that adheres to quota policies. In general, the depreciation of the functions of teaching in contemporary Brazilian society has made education an easy target for social criticism. The knowledge produced in public basic education, on the

one hand, is considered inefficient and deficient, sometimes blaming the teachers (their academic education, motivation and diligence) and the school infrastructure (computer labs and internet access, libraries), sometimes blaming the family (educational level, family environment, access to information and income), sometimes the student (maturity, responsibility) (SAMPAIO; GUIMARÃES, 2009, p. 48-49) and other times the educational policies determined by the state.

On the other hand, it seems necessary to reinvent public higher education based on a critical reading of its way of perceiving itself and its capacity to act. Its creativity in regaining its legitimacy must be both local, as well as transnational and global in character, and for this the use of new media becomes paramount. In fact, this globalization would be an alternative globalization with discourses against neoliberal ideology:

> The new alternative and solidary transnationalization is now based on the new information and communication technologies and the establishment of national and global networks where new pedagogies, new processes of construction and dissemination of scientific and other knowledges, new local, national and global social commitments circulate … The new university contract thus starts from the premise that the university plays a crucial role in shaping the country's place in a polarized world between contradictory globalizations[1] (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 57).

After the attacks on universities in recent times, the academic community has taken to the streets, public squares and social media to resist the crisis of its hegemony and legitimacy. The flow of messages on digital networks showing the alleged "upheavals" regarding their innovation, research and social impact activities that occur in the institutions, increased significantly after the education budget cuts and hostilities against educators and students, referred to, in the president's speeches, as "manipulated masses" and "useful idiots". The university is obviously in a defensive position and "it is therefore crucial to define and sustain a counter-hegemonic definition of the crisis". (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 63).

Projects that create ties between the university and the community are becoming increasingly common within the scope of the extension work of public higher education

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[1] A nova transnacionalização alternativa e solidária assenta agora nas novas tecnologias de informação e de comunicação e na constituição de redes nacionais e globais onde circulam novas pedagogias, novos processos de construção e de difusão de conhecimentos científicos e outros, novos compromissos sociais, locais, nacionais e globais...O novo contrato universitário parte assim da premissa que a universidade tem um papel crucial na construção do lugar do país num mundo polarizado entre globalizações contraditórias.

institutions. There is a need to make visible the knowledge that is being produced in the universities for the benefit of the society. It is to that effect that the project *Global language, identities and knowledges: encounters and frontiers in the contact zones* was launched in the peripheral zone of the city of Guarulhos, in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, in May 2018. As the text of the project argues:

> The encounter of scientific knowledge with practical, popular and lay knowledges demands a greater social responsibility from the universities. As more segments of the society are being admitted in the university, the university increasingly needs to insert itself in society. Thus, knowledges from non-privileged social groups can interact with scientific knowledges and therefore much more heterogeneous confrontations emerge that require much more reflection than accommodation in the already established *status quo*[2] (MIZAN, 2017, p. 89).

As such, the university uses its knowledge in order to collaborate with the social transformations that are taking place in its interstices:

> the production of knowledge, with the ongoing transition from conventional university knowledge to pluriversity which is transdisciplinary, contextualized, interactive knowledge that is produced, distributed and consumed because of new technologies of communication and information, on the one hand, and education and citizenship, on the other.[3] (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 63)

The redefinition of the university involves an internal rearrangement of its teaching, research and extension activities, with more intense exchanges between the activities performed in each one of these areas. The social responsibility that the university must assume, by carrying out intense contacts between those involved in education, teachers and students of basic and higher education, can be based on the ecology of knowledges (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 66-67), as an innovative practice that works towards the decolonization of our knowledges and the construction of a postcolonial university where the hierarchies among knowledges are deconstructed and in their place a cognitive justice is established. As mentioned in the aforementioned project,

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[2] O encontro do conhecimento científico com conhecimentos práticos, populares e leigos demanda uma responsabilidade social maior das universidades. No momento em que mais segmentos da sociedade estão se inserindo na universidade, a universidade cada vez mais precisa se inserir na sociedade. Assim sendo, conhecimentos dos grupos sociais não privilegiados são capazes de interagir com conhecimentos científicos e emergem assim confrontos muito mais heterogêneos que exigem muito mais reflexão do que acomodação no já estabelecido, no *status quo*.

[3] na produção do conhecimento, com a transição, em curso, do conhecimento universitário convencional para o conhecimento pluriversitário, transdisciplinar, contextualizado, interativo, produzido, distribuído e consumido com base nas novas tecnologias de comunicação e de informação, por um lado, e formação e cidadania, por outro.

> [the] school as the laboratory of the human sciences researcher can provide a space for the practical learning of teachers in professional development, by letting the educational reality in its complexity cross the gates of universities, at local, regional, national and global levels. This ecology of knowledges considers that only the exchange of knowledges can facilitate the articulation between basic schooling and higher education and lead to the development of a science, also, that springs from the experiences of teachers and the learning of knowledges that constitute these experiences.[4] (MIZAN, 2017, p. 94).

From this perspective of decolonization of our knowledges, it is not in our interest to adopt research methodologies rooted in the Enlightenment rationalism and modern positivism. Qualitative ethnographic research seems to us to be more appropriate since it highlights the descriptive and interpretative role of research in the Humanities, making the complexity of social life emerge, specifying that "the interpretation of reality involves taking into consideration and harvesting the meanings attributed by social actors to different aspects of their interaction." (SILVA, 2013, p. 78).

Therefore, conducting research projects that comprise intense exchanges between higher education and the basic education that forms the community around our institutions can be defined as action research that consists of articulating social interests with scientific interests and thus, "the production of scientific knowledge takes place while being closely related to the satisfaction of the needs of social groups that do not have the power to put technical and specialized knowledge at their service through the mercantile route" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 74-75).

This action research, in short, criticizes the elitism and corporatism of the university in the neoliberal globalized society and seeks to create practices that lead to a counter-hegemonic globalization that seeks to benefit the historically underprivileged classes through the sharing of knowledges between primary and higher education. This would be a "counter-hegemonic globalization of the university as a public good ... the university contract as a public good" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2011, p. 56).

## 2 Initial Teacher Education: Registering an Unevenly Globalized English

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[4] [a] escola como o laboratório do cientista das humanas é capaz de proporcionar espaço para aprendizagem prática dos pedagogos em formação, levando para o interior da universidade a realidade educacional na sua complexidade, nas escalas local, regional, nacional e global. Esta ecologia dos saberes considera que só o interconhecimento pode facilitar a articulação entre escola básica e ensino superior e levar a construir uma ciência, também, a partir das experiências dos professores e o conhecer dos saberes que constituem estas experiências.

There has been much talk lately about the status of the English language in contemporary times. The concepts are many: EIL (English as an International Language), EGL (English as a Global Language), ESL (English as a Second Language), EAL (English as an Additional Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ELF (English as Lingua Franca) (JORDÃO, 2014) or even World Englishes. In most of these cases, this language expands outside the territories where it is spoken as a mother tongue and is appropriated by speakers of distinct mother tongues who are in "contact zones" (PRATT, 1992, p. 4) and need to communicate.

However, this perspective on the English language follows a communicative model established in English language teaching and learning methodologies in Brazil and around the world in the 1980s. Communicative teaching emphasized oral production and communication based on the philosophy that knowing a language means being able to speak that language. However, what is actually observed in the urban peripheral zone in Brazil is an insertion of this language for neoliberal and consumerist purposes.

In one of the initial language teacher education courses at the higher education institution where this research took place, the students did a field research by photographing the invasion of the English language in their neighborhoods. Most students stated that in the neighborhoods where they live (mostly peripheral, as students' writings reveal), English is not used as a "contact language" (FIRTH, 1996, p. 240), but as a language of consumption with neoliberal goals.

Image 1: Train station Eng. Goulart[5]

The need of foreign visitors in Brazil to orient themselves in the unfamiliar space is met by translating the signs of the metropolitan public transportation (Image 1). Thus, special signs were installed on the train station platforms that run the routes to Guarulhos International Airport. A similar situation is observed in subway lines in the city of São Paulo that are in upscale neighborhoods, such as the green and yellow line (is it a coincidence to choose these colors for these lines?), which, most often, meet the needs of tourists in the city. In recent years, new signs have appeared in English in neighborhoods such as Itaquera that hosts the Corinthians stadium because of the international events that took place in Brazil, such as the World Cup (2014) and the Olympics (2016).

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[5] Available on: <https://diariodotransporte.com.br/2018/10/01/prometida-para-setembro-operacao-de-trens-da-estacao-aeroporto-ao-bras-comeca-nesta-quarta-feira-na-linha-13-jade/>. Accessed on June 15, 2019.

Image 2:  A sofa and couch store on Juscelino Kubtischek de Oliveira st.[6]

The English language stamped on the walls and shop windows in different neighborhoods of Guarulhos does not yield to the traditional norms of this language, its spelling, syntax, morphology and meaning. Culturally speaking, this language that is not spoken in the periphery is sometimes used to spread the neoliberal culture of consumerism and other times used to valorize and attribute status and prestige to products sold, which would also be a practice used for the spreading of neoliberal culture.

In Image 2, we are looking at a very luxurious, newly opened store in the surroundings of our higher education institution. The store's prestige and quality guarantee earn a seal through the use of the English language (even though it is spelled incorrectly). The whole style of the store shies away from the neighborhood standards and reveals the gentrification process of the area, driven by the intense presence of the public that studies and works at the university. This leads to a higher cost of living in the region and causes the poor, who are not able to maintain the profile that the area is developing, to leave the neighborhood.

The invasion of the English language in this neighborhood, in a pluricentric conception of the English language, penetrates central and peripheral places in different ways and for different purposes and probably without the intention of leading the inhabitant of the periphery to social mobility. Jenkins (2006) argues that speakers of other languages become familiar with some lexicons used extensively in certain groups of

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[6] Available on: <https://www.google.com/maps/contrib/104450788273230978901/photos/@-23.4345906,-46.4055949,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m3!8m2!3m1!1e1>. Accessed on June 15, 2019.

speakers (p. 161) and apparently this is what happens in the neighborhoods of Guarulhos and adjacent areas.

These linguistic manifestations reach levels of intelligibility even in neighborhoods where English is not used in everyday life, as they use English cognates or words that are already part of the Portuguese language, such as the word "express". The emergence of these linguistic expressions problematizes "the ideology of normatism, as seen in the native speaker model or standard language ideology" (KUBOTA, 2015, p. 31) and proves that "teaching ELF requires a daily visit to various frontiers, electing new priorities, including the most appropriate pedagogies for such a reality". (SIQUEIRA, 2011, p. 90).

Historically, English teaching has been regulated and produced by the imaginary centers of this deterritorialized language (SIQUEIRA, 2011). This English considered neutral was seen as being purified from questions of culture or social class. It was intriguing, for example, the attempt to teach the use of Present Perfect, a tense usually used to reveal the speaker's experiences, at a private university in Sao Paulo. At the question "Have you ever been abroad?", a student stated that not only he had never traveled abroad, but that he had never left the city of São Paulo. Despite the long experience of teaching this language in Brazil, the fact of always having taught certain social classes, with which these questions made sense, makes the educator "blind" to other realities that are invisible in certain classrooms.

The question, then, that cannot be put to rest, would be how we can go beyond the "plastic world" (SIQUEIRA, 2015) of textbooks (which would include, in some cases, collections made according to the National Book and Teaching Material Program, PNLD, government decrees)[7] that do not seem to be concerned with questions of social class or culture, and its "firm objective of keeping the language classroom detached from the real world" (SIQUEIRA, 2015, p. 248). ELF (English as Lingua Franca) and its pluricentric perspective open possibilities for teacher education outside the standard of the plastic and

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[7] As Miranda and Gimenez demonstrate in the article "Analysis of English Language Teaching Materials from the Perspective of English as Lingua Franca. Available on: <http://www.uel.br/eventos/sepech/arqtxt/ARTIGOSANAIS_SEPECH/fernandacmiranda.pdf>. Accessed February 15, 2019.

purified world of textbooks. This education involves, at first, a reading of the surrounding reality, the uses of this language for the needs of the population that wishes to or is called to study this language. This perspective creates potentialities for a more critical and situated teaching of this "Lingua Franca" that is not universal, at least not in the peripheral urban spaces in Brazil.

Thus, we "propose the design of syllabuses and materials relevant to specific contexts of learning" (SIQUEIRA, 2015, p. 248), triggered by a teaching that leads the teacher in initial education to observe the domains in which this language is found in the situated context and the purposes it serves. This perspective requires going beyond conventional approaches and designing critical, situated, and informed pedagogies.

## 3 For a situated language education: decolonizing the English language and learning from postcolonial English languages

What are the political-pedagogical implications inherent in these processes of the English language expansion in peripheral areas? Should teaching, in this context, think about communication with native speakers of the language? Should teaching focus on British or North American lifestyles, vocabularies and accents? How should this decentralization of education be done? Anyway, what should we teach? How should we show students that ELF[8] belongs to all of them?

Siqueira (2011) challenges us to think about the place that the cultural element should occupy in the teaching-learning process of a language that has become deterritorialized and no longer has centers. The circles of Kachru (1985), the inner (United States and the United Kingdom), the outer (countries colonized by the United Kingdom, such as India) and the expanded (countries that were not colonized by the United Kingdom such as Brazil) "contest monolithic and ethnocentric perspectives on the English language" (TUPAS, 2015, p. 4). Thus, World Englishes proponents defy standard

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[8] English as Lingua Franca refers to any use of English among speakers of different mother tongues for whom English is the means of communication chosen, and often the only option (SEIDLHOFER, 2011). As Jenkins (2006, p. 159) points out, there is considerable overlap between ELF users and EFL students, in part because many of those who start learning English thinking of it as a foreign language, end up using it as a lingua franca.

English that belongs to the British and, "who knows" [9], even to the Americans, and criticize notions of the concept of native speaker. It is worth pointing out that a trip to the UK is more than enough in order to deconstruct the UK as the epicenter of the English language and the native speaker. The United Kingdom, still in the days of English colonization, was inhabited by a variety of ethnicities, from populations belonging to the colonies (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh etc) to black Africans who were brought into the country during slavery. Chinese and Irish people, also, inhabited British port cities. That is why we admit that our imagination is politically and economically colonized by misleading images about who the British or the American is in the past and today.

Therefore, in the globalized and interconnected contemporary world, teaching and learning ELF:

> ... assumes a complexity never imagined. It means surpassing and overcoming structures of thought, conceptions, and practices that no longer respond (if they ever did) to the true needs of global English learners. It requires, first and foremost, the democratization of access to a powerful cultural good that needs to cease to belong to an elite that can buy its weight in gold.[10] (SIQUEIRA, 2011, p. 110).

The denationalized and deterritorialized English language (RAJAGOPALAN, 2004, p. 2004) becomes increasingly creative, more flexible, assuming the representation of the identities of non-native speakers and their worlds. Consequently, the native speaker, "the supposedly legitimate owner" of this language, becomes irrelevant, along with his accent and systems of thought. Yet, traditional linguists, by choosing excerpts of that language (for example, Shakespeare's writings), created what came to be called the standard norm of language. Bagno (2001) explains the case of Portuguese which is similar to English:

> As its name implies, it is not a language but a language model, a language ideal, a pattern of linguistic behavior that, supposedly, should be followed by all language speakers every time they use the language to speak or write. And this standard norm, as has been shown, is based almost exclusively on the use made by great writers in their aesthetic adventure of creating a personal, inalienable literary language.[11] (BAGNO, 2001, p. 39).

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[9] Available on: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jul/24/worry-americanisation-english-linguists. Accessed on February 15, 2019.

[10] ...assume uma complexidade jamais imaginada. Significa ultrapassar e superar estruturas de pensamento, concepções e práticas que não mais respondem (se é que em algum momento responderam) as verdadeiras necessidades dos aprendizes globais de inglês. Exige, antes de tudo, garantir a democratização do acesso a um bem cultural poderoso que precisa deixar de pertencer a uma elite que pode comprá-lo a peso de ouro.

[11] Como o próprio nome já indica, não é uma língua, mas sim um *modelo* de língua, um *ideal* de língua, um *padrão* de comportamento linguístico que, supostamente, deveria ser seguido por todos os falantes do

It is worth studying the place and language use on the outskirts of large cities, and we do so not only because we occupy these places and act in them, but also because other paradigms of linguistic repertoires and resistances to dominant and elitist uses can emerge in these culturally diverse spaces. National and colonizing languages such as English contributed to the building of European nations in the Renaissance (ANDERSON, 1991) and collaborated with the colonizer's civilizing mission that sought to conquer not only the lands of the colonized but also the hearts and minds of these subjects.

Undoubtedly, the language models that were established with the birth of the science of linguistics "were based on authoritarian, centralizing and aristocratic principles, inspired by the selection of a few 'noblesmen' and the exclusion of the vast majority of people" (BAGNO, 2001, p. 51). Researching how this global language, which is the owner of the digital world, enters the linguistic repertoire of speakers that belong to diverse cultural, racial, social and linguistic contexts is the work of applied linguistics.

The demand of the model makes us deviate a little from our topic and think about the current government's requirement to establish the School Without Party program. It is clear in this case that the government demands the traditional model of teaching that presents itself as purified from any ideological indoctrination and promotes teaching that prioritizes fixed and imposed truths and pre-established contents. In this conception, critical education that teaches the model while questioning it, is placed in the dock for not offering banking education (FREIRE, 2005, p. 65), for not teaching just that water in chemistry is $H_2O$, but also discussing the importance of water for human life, its use to generate energy, the pollution of our rivers, lakes and seas, and the preservation of nature as a condition and premise for the permanence of the human race on earth[12].

Under the auspices of critical teaching, the appreciation of linguistic repertoires occurs because "English is then understood as a frontier language through which people appropriate global discourses and reinvent local life in their daily performances" (LOPES, 2008, p. 309). However, we cannot ignore the hierarchies created by most

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idioma toda vez que vão usar a língua para falar ou escrever. E essa norma-padrão, como foi mostrado, se baseia quase exclusivamente no uso feito pelos grandes escritores em sua aventura estética de criação de uma linguagem literária pessoal e intransferível.

[12] I thank Simone Batista for explaining this eloquently on Facebook.

speakers (and also non-speakers) of this global language: the reception of English considered "native" enjoys greater prestige not only in the countries of the inner circle, but also in the external and expanding ones. This is the reason why, Tupas (2015) adopted the concept of "unequal English" (p. 3) to take on and, by the same token, contest the power relations involved in the use of this language: "the assumption that British (in some contexts American) English is the only valid standard of English, and the notion that the 'native speaker' is the only model that all learners should aspire to has been put to question" (TUPAS, 2015, p. 4).

National borders are becoming increasingly porous, not only through human flows, but also through the digitalization of information and culture that

> fueled by pop music, the Internet, online chats and email, it allows us to cross borders and mix global and local norms freely, especially among the modern youth. These developments clearly indicate that, "the pluralization of English to Englishes across the globe goes far beyond national borders and is a much more complex phenomenon than country-based labels suggest." (TUPAS, 2015, p. 5-6).

Yet, more and more, the agency of non-native speakers of this imperialist (PHILLIPSON, 1992) and colonizing (NGUGI, 1986) language becomes obvious. Learners, speakers, and users of World Englishes or English as Lingua Franca[13] are no longer viewed as passive recipients of historically and culturally related structures and meanings. While using traditional structures, these speakers transform them by determining, through language, their own creative and transgressive identity revealing their agency.

Despite studies on the ways in which this global language is appropriated, altered or reformulated in local social practices (OTSUJI; PENNYCOOK, 2010, p. 243) and research on the agency and resistance of non-native speakers to this linguistic invasion, little have our pedagogical practices or language policies changed. These theorizations about the democratization of the use of the English language, which question the power

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[13] As Jenkins (2006) points out, World Englishes (WE) scholars dispute the legitimacy of ELF. These theorists continue to describe the expanding circle of English as varieties of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for use in communicating with native speakers. In this way, varieties in the expanding circle are perceived as dependent on British or American norms. However, in recent years, there has been a consensus among WE and ELF researchers on the importance of developing critical linguistic awareness among educators in the three Kachru circles, the need for a pluricentric approach to English teaching and use, and the importance of accommodation skills development.

of the English Inner Circle (KACHRU, 1982; 1985), have not yet led to radical changes in the way that language is taught.

This research sees the need to cross the abyssal line (SOUSA SANTOS, 2018, p. 19) of the English used in Brazil not by the dominant strata, inhabitants of the noble neighborhoods in the urban zone, and not by the businesspeople working at multinational companies on Paulista Avenue and Berrini, and not yet the English taught in language schools. These varieties of "English used by economically and intellectually privileged elites, which is not too much different from Standard American English." (KUBOTA, 2015, p. 30). We are interested in English used by people who have never attended a language school and have never used this global language to communicate on a trip they have (not) taken abroad, but consume that language through its cultural manifestations, such as music, film or TV and use it to communicate in the digital world, by playing games or joining groups that are characterized by affinities.

## 4 The pedagogy of ecology of knowledges: deconstructing power relations and hierarchies of knowledges between educators and educated

The pedagogy of ecology of knowledges for educational purposes in Brazilian higher education gained momentum with the processes of democratization of higher education and the consequent expansion and interiorization of university campuses (BRAZIL, 2014) between 2003 and 2014. Public universities, through racial and social quotas (BRAZIL, 2012), and private universities, in a way, with the implementation of programs such as Prouni (BRAZIL, 2005), assuming their social responsibility, sought to intensify their social inclusion processes, creating a reality within institutions that reflects more the diversity of society that surrounds the institution and defines the country in general. The insertion in the higher educational system of layers of society that were historically excluded from these spaces, makes the university assume processes that seek the democratization of knowledges.

Undoubtedly, the university still remains a space for the dissemination of traditional and legitimate academic thought, but the contact with other knowledges that are considered lay, traditional and invisible makes the academic space more complex, less elitist, more humane. As Sousa Santos (2011) states:

> University knowledge - that is, scientific knowledge produced in universities ... was, throughout the twentieth century, a predominantly disciplinary knowledge whose autonomy imposed a relatively decontextualized production process in relation to the everyday needs of societies.[14] (p. 41).

Inspired by this theoretical perspective of knowledge, the research project we are developing is carried out in a higher education institution that adheres to quota policies and, as a humanities campus, begins to express an intense interest in interactions with the community that inhabits the university's neighboring areas. There has been much talk and many studies at the university that reveal the inability of basic education to fulfill its mission and educate the next generations of citizens. However, the project sees the need to establish, as a first step, a relationship of trust between higher education actors and those of basic education.

In fact, in meetings between elementary school teachers, undergraduate language students and the university teacher, the principles of theories of the ecology of knowledges led us to see that the experiences and experiments in these contact zones (PRATT, 1992) were leading us to a process of reciprocal education that broadens the possibilities of research and academic writing and, consequently, leads us not to write "about" public education, but to write "with" public education teachers. Thus, by promoting the interaction and interdependence between scientific and non-scientific knowledge, we try to reconfigure the internal plurality of science by exploring alternative scientific practices. And "from this ecology of knowledges, scientific knowledge also comes out enriched. This is why the diversification of empirical work is fundamental for the diversification of theoretical work" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2012, p. 703).

Considering that this is a critical proposal for teacher education, that encompasses linguistic and didactic theory and practice, the project that has already become a course carried out for more than a year, is developing an emerging *modus operandi* that aims to educate in-service language teachers and pre-service language teachers while transforming this space with the intense exchanges between the knowledges of basic education teachers and the linguistic and didactic university knowledge. Thus, the goal is

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[14] O conhecimento universitário - ou seja, o conhecimento científico produzido nas universidades...foi ao longo do século XX, um conhecimento predominantemente disciplinar cuja autonomia impôs um processo de produção relativamente descontextualizado em relação às premências do quotidiano das sociedades.

to establish relationships of respect with the epistemic diversity and dialogues that reflect the ecology of knowledges (MIZAN, 2017).

This search, for the articulation of educational interests with scientific interests, attempts to establish symmetrical contacts between academic institutions and institutions of basic education and seeks to let differences appear in their intertwining (MIZAN, 2017). The development of this pedagogical-educational proposal geared by Boaventura de Sousa Santos' theory of ecology knowledges takes into account the context of the participants involved in the project and the peculiarities of the schools and communities with which the university aims to relate.

This teaching practice gives prevalence to conceptions of language as social practice and prioritizes the situated and cultural production of meanings (MIZAN, 2017). We consider the ecology of knowledges an epistemological imperative that is also political. And "this epistemological choice justifies the presence of themes [generative] as a starting point for the work of reading skills, oral communication and written practice, these desirably taken as cultural practices contextualized by local realities" (DUBOC, 2011, p. 734).

At first, the bringing together of identities, that act in different educational contexts and the co-construction of the space that became, in each meeting, a contact zone between basic and higher education, occurred through the reading of the literary text in foreign language. The practice of reading literary texts as social practice seeks to motivate primary school teachers to construct their own narratives based on the reading, but inspired by their social experiences. Thus, teachers feel motivated to construct their narratives about their own identities, as well as, about the language teaching practices that inform their daily work in schools. These narratives of experience become generative topics (FREIRE, 2005, p. 101) that try to critically discuss: (1) the educator-learner relations in the classroom, (2) the diversity of identities and knowledges that circulate in basic education, (3) the reading that teachers make of the realities lived in the Brazilian educational system and (4) the current situation of education professionals in Brazil who have their legitimacy questioned by the government and the society.

The *modus operandi* of this course aims to research practices that long to establish an ecology of knowledges that considers that only the inter-knowledge can facilitate the articulation between elementary school and higher education and lead to weave a science,

also, from the teachers' experiences and the knowledges that constitute these experiences (MIZAN, 2017). And, in this manner, we can begin to make a transition from uni-versity knowledge to pluri-versity knowledges. Sousa Santos (2011) states that "pluriversity knowledge replaces unilaterality with interactivity, an interactivity greatly enhanced by the revolution in information and communication technologies" (p. 44).

In this context, we see the need to criticize traditional teaching that does not incorporate new technologies that are part of our student's world regardless of the social class to which one belongs. Digital inclusion in the education system should lead to new forms of learning and make educators and learners not only consumers of digital ways of creating meanings, but also producers of meaning. Monte Mór (2010) develops well this association between English language learning, globalization and the use of digital technologies:

> The perception of the need for access to new technologies, new forms of communication and the knowledge generated by them (this access is being seen as a form of social participation and social ascension) is combined with the impetus to learn the English language, recognized as a language of wide circulation in communication and technological language. According to the "globalizing" reasoning, from the combination of these two elements/knowledges (computer literacy and English language literacy), emerges the belief that these are "indispensable" tools for the admission into the globalized society. These knowledges would enable social integration, translated into professional success, employment, improvement of material life, and well-being because of the sense of belonging.[15] (MONTE MÓR, 2010, p. 3-4).

In addition to this aspect of social inclusion triggered by digital inclusion, encounters among educators who belong to different teaching segments seek to develop a digital epistemology, or, in other words, a way to access knowledge through emerging digital performance. In the words of Duboc (2011):

> Thus, instead of prioritizing the concentrated and individualistic content of the conventional epistemology of modernity, we now prioritize distributed knowledge (GEE, 2004), that is collaborative, unstable and dynamic, as well as, the performance of subjects in the use of new strategies and skills, or as Lankshear and Knobel (2003) call it, a

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[15] A percepção da necessidade de acesso às novas tecnologias, às novas formas de comunicação, ao conhecimento por elas gerado (sendo esse acesso visto como forma de participação e de ascensão social) alia-se ao estímulo por saber a língua inglesa, reconhecido como um idioma de amplo trânsito na comunicação e linguagem tecnológica. Segundo o raciocínio "globalizante", da junção desses dois elementos/conhecimentos (conhecimentos sobre informática e sobre a língua inglesa), emerge a crença de que essas se tornam ferramentas "imprescindíveis" para a entrada na sociedade globalizada. Essas possibilitariam a integração social, traduzida por sucesso profissional, emprego, melhoria de vida material, bem-estar pelo sentimento de pertencimento.

performance epistemology focused on knowing how to do things in the absence of pre-established models, as demanded by the new relationships in the digital society.[16] (p. 731).

## 5 Narratives of experience of initial teacher education: digital literacy in the continuing education of language teachers

The ecology of knowledges invites us to think beyond traditional forms of teaching and researching in basic and higher education. We consider that the dialogue and interaction between universities of human sciences and segments of the society needs to start with a more intense interaction between universities and schools, because a cognitive democracy does not develop hierarchical relations among different knowledges and does not assign a lower degree of complexity to non-scientific knowledges, considered lay or popular.

In order to question the hierarchical relationships that the university has traditionally established to legitimize its own existence, we have also attempted to horizontalize the relations between monitors/undergraduate Language students and the teacher/researcher. The three monitors act as research assistants on the use of digital technologies in language teaching and during the project are involved in the preparation of activities and contribute with their technological knowledge while expanding their skills in the digital world. As practitioners of performance epistemology (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2003), the monitors can develop research on knowledge building driven by interactions with the digital world and be encouraged to write about digital inclusion and the use of new technological languages for teaching languages.

In this context, Yan, one of the project's monitors and co-author of this article, narrates his experiences with this pedagogy:

With fast political, social, economic and technological changes as consequence of the globalization process, English language has reached the status of a global language. However, the impacts of this process are not equal worldwide (TUPAS, 2015). Most citizens in wealthy countries, for example, have access to different economic and cultural

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[16] Dessa forma, em lugar da priorização do conteúdo concentrado e individualista da epistemologia convencional da modernidade, passa-se agora a priorizar o conhecimento distribuído (GEE, 2004), colaborativo, instável e dinâmico, bem como o desempenho dos sujeitos na utilização de novas estratégias e habilidades, ou tal como nomeiam Lankshear e Knobel (2003), uma epistemologia de desempenho voltada ao saber fazer na ausência de modelos preestabelecidos, conforme demanda das novas relações da sociedade digital.

goods that citizens from other countries do not have. The same happens to English. One of the main reasons for the expansion of this language is technology, mostly the internet, since this technological development was kicked off in English speaking countries, such as England and the United States (PENNYCOOK, 2013).

In the context that this project takes place, in the Federal University of São Paulo – Guarulhos campus – and in the surrounding state schools, in the neighborhood of Pimentas, the access to English language happens mostly through technology. Either because many websites and software programs are available only in English or because computers are used as a language learning tool, since there is a lot of content for studying English on the internet. Having this in mind, we believe technology could be used to provide new strategies for teaching in the schools that the teachers who participate in this project work.

On the other hand, most participants report that they do not use technology in their classes. The main cause cited by them is the lack of resources in the schools, since most of them do not have computer labs. One teacher reported that in the school that she works there was a computer lab. Nonetheless, it was closed and turned into a classroom, because of the large number of students there. She also told us about a new project the State Government of São Paulo will launch for education called "Inova Educação"[17] (Innovate Education, in English). Basically, there will be changes in basic education so that students will have one more class per day[18]. What calls our attention in this project is the creation of a subject called "Technology" that, at first, seems to be an interesting proposal, since it aims to put students in touch with technologies. However, this project seems to be conflictive if we consider the material conditions of the schools mentioned before.

In view of the context in which we are inserted and the availability of resources the teachers have in their schools, we have been testing and using different technological tools to teach and learn the English language. We have used free websites and apps to prepare activities that contribute not only to the teachers' continuing education but also to

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[17] Available on: <http://inovaeducacao.escoladeformacao.sp.gov.br/>. Accessed on June 29, 2019.

[18] In the current timetable for 6th and 9th grade students from elementary and high school in São Paulo State, students have 6 classes of 50 minutes each per day (with a 20-minute-break). In the new timetable, they will have 7 classes of 45 minutes each (with a 20-minute-break). Available on: <http://inovaeducacao.escoladeformacao.sp.gov.br/grade-horaria/>. Accessed on August 21, 2019.

our own, as monitors of the project, since we have to prepare and apply those tasks. Moreover, we design the activities in a way that the teachers can use the appropriate tools for their students in their classrooms.

One of these tools, called *Edmodo*, is a communication network in which teachers can create classrooms that work as groups where the content of our classes is shared and the interaction among the participants takes place. This educational communication network also has apps that help users with several tasks; one of them, which we have been using, helps the users improve their writing skills. This app, called *Write Well*, was useful during the first times we used it, in spite of not offering many advantages for our purposes compared with other writing tools on the internet. However, after some changes in this app the user can download his or her own text only if he or she is registered as a user. This is a stumbling block to its use, since none of the teachers or monitors managed to create accounts on it because errors occurred during this process. In relation to the apps, some of them are not available for users registered as students, which is problematic, because it makes it impossible for the teachers to use it with their students. For our purposes in this project, this app is not very effective as it only stores our documents for our classroom, which could be done by any other cloud storage app. As we do not want to repeat the model "old wine in new bottles", that only repeats the typographic model in an online platform, we decided to use another platform for communicating with each other next semester.
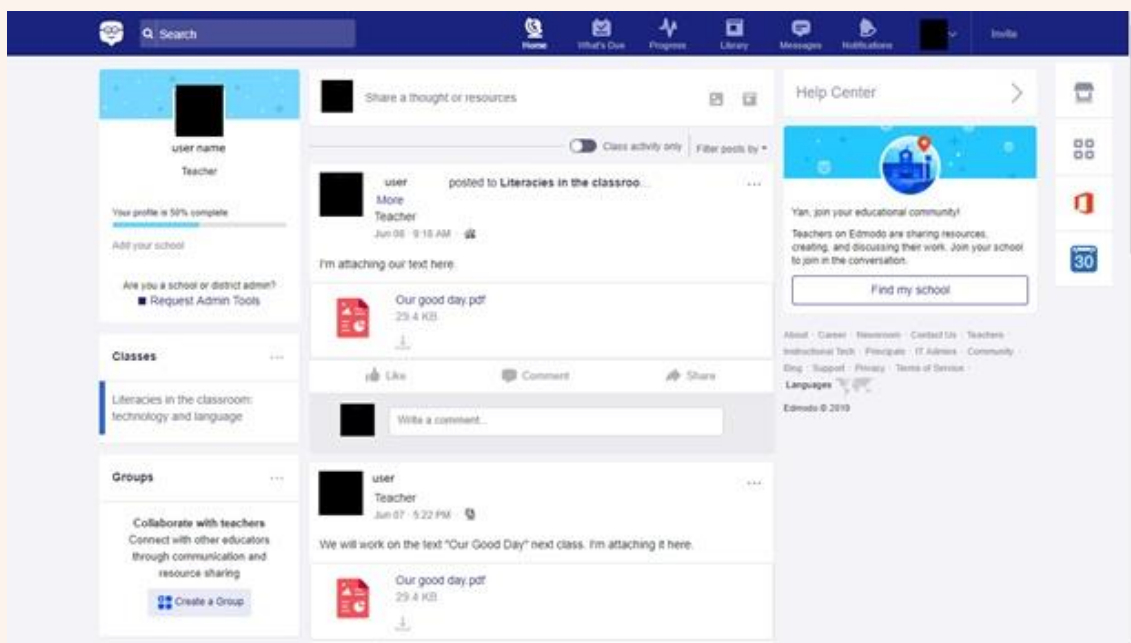
Image 3: Home screen of *Edmodo*.[19]

Furthermore, we have been using some apps to create games. One of them is called *Kahoot*, which is a website used for creating quizzes and using the ones already available there. To use this resource, it is only necessary to create a quiz or use one available there and create a room to project the questions on a computer screen. The student uses a smartphone to access the room by using a pin code. After that, he or she is able to answer the questions as they are projected. One positive point of this website is the possibility of playing in groups using only one smartphone for each group, which reduces the need for additional resources in order to use it in the classroom.

In our classes, we have been using *Kahoot* to prepare quizzes about grammar topics because they are difficult for most students and can be learned with more ease through games. Verônica, one of the monitors of the project, that has prepared tasks using *Kahoot*, highlights that this website is an accessible and easy-to-use tool and that the presentation of contents on this platform makes them more appealing. Another positive point emphasized by her is that by preparing the tasks she also revises the grammar content, showing that this practice does not benefit only the person who is going to play, but also the one who prepares it. One advantage of the game dynamics is the possibility of correction right after the answer is given since the website shows the correct answer.

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[19] Available on: <https://new.edmodo.com/home>. Accessed on June 15, 2019.

This has been an interesting resource to us because we can clarify the teachers' doubts, reinforce some grammar content and confirm if the participants understand the content while we are doing the task.
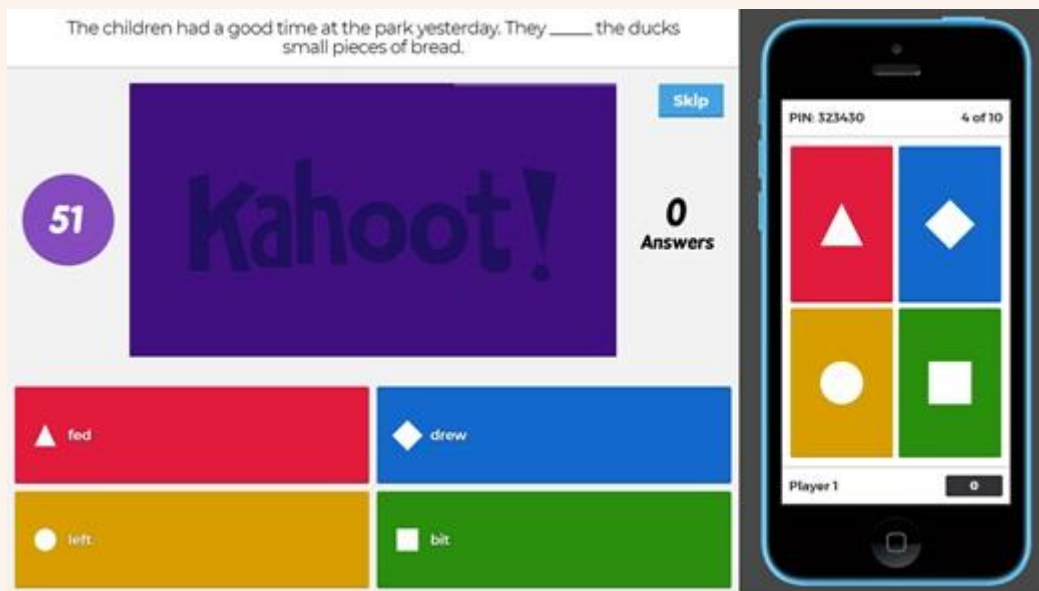


Image 4: Preview of a quiz prepared using *Kahoot*.[20]

We have also been using *ProProfs Brain Games* and *The Teacher's Corner* to create crosswords and we have noticed that both of them work similarly. After an input of words and their correspondent tips, the app generates a crossword. Nonetheless, these websites have some limitations. In the website *Proprofs Brain Games*, for example, it is not possible to number the tips, which makes it confusing to solve, since it is not possible to know to which column and line the tips refer.

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[20] Available on: <https://create.kahoot.it/l/#/preview/6eb4485c-2498-489d-9de0-28695ac870b4> Accessed on June 15, 2019.

Image 5: Home screen in which one creates a crossword on the website *ProProfs Brain Games*[21].

On the other hand, the website *The Teacher's Corner* does not have an online platform for solving crosswords, then it is necessary to print them in order to solve them.



Image 6: Home screen in which one creates a crossword on the website *The Teacher's Corner*.[22]

Vinícius, one of the monitors that has been using these apps, highlights that although they have some problems and limitations, both of them are good educational

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[21] Available on: <https://www.proprofs.com/games/crossword/create/>. Accessed on June 15, 2019.
[22] Available on: <https://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/crossword/>. Accessed on June 15, 2019.

tools, since they offer many possibilities to prepare thematic crosswords. He also indicates that these websites are easy to use, and that preparing crosswords using them does not take long. He also states that they could be used to prepare tasks for classes in public schools. We used them in tasks to revise the vocabulary previously chosen from the literary readings we have done in classroom. With this purpose, crosswords are interesting educational tools for associating words to their respective definitions and they also make the vocabulary practice easier because they make this practice more fun.

Finally, some teachers, participants of this project, reported that they use or have used some apps, such as *Speak* to practice conversation with people abroad. These apps aim to make possible the communication between two people in order to practice any language. At first, these tools seem interesting because they make possible the contact among people with different language and cultural backgrounds. However, as reported by the participants, there are problems that disturb the communication or even make it impossible. These problems are not related to the participants' fluency in the foreign language, but have to do with cultural barriers. One of these barriers is the view some individuals have on Brazilian culture. This view, based mostly on stereotypes, results in aggressions or psychological harassment toward women. The teachers who use these apps report that they often receive disrespectful messages from male users. This problem happens frequently, according to the teachers, with users that live in countries in which women occupy subordinate positions in relation to social, political and economic aspects.

Taking into account that the aim of the project is to contribute with the continuing education of public school English teachers and with the education of university students, the use of technology applied to learning offers many possibilities for preparing tasks and learning contents. It is worth mentioning that the teachers who participate in this project are familiar with the digital world and do not have difficulties to use the websites and apps mentioned before. Digital tools are interesting resources to learn English and can make this process easier. Online games, for example, present contents in an entertaining way, which encourages students to participate in activities. Since these resources have many possibilities of use, they are effective tools that can be used not only in the university but also in the teaching practices of the teachers.

**Closing remarks**

This research on the ecology of knowledges in language learning aims to contribute to language teacher education and thus to participate actively in the language learning of teachers in initial and continuing education. The knowledges built from these meetings foster the research of the teachers in initial education involved with the project and better qualify teachers of basic education, both linguistically and technologically.

The teachers of basic education were able to use the new technologies in language education that we tested. They endorsed and praised the teaching practices that are developed through technology and commented that these practices have more recreational and multimodal effects on the teaching and learning processes. However, they still do not see the possibility of developing these practices in the schools where they teach, due to infrastructure issues of computer labs and the speed of the internet connection.

During the period the project has been running, teachers have demonstrated greater ability to make meaning using the English language in order to talk about their identities, the neighborhood where they live and the schools where they teach. We noticed that they were able to develop a critical linguistic awareness with regard to (1) the English phonetic sounds compared to the Portuguese ones, (2) differences between the meaning of words when translated from one language to another and (3) cultural issues in verbal representations in both languages. In the semester we used new technologies, they admitted that they became more aware of the structure of this language through online exercises on the use of tenses and the use of adjectives and nouns. They also pointed to the expansion of their English language vocabularies by reading literary texts and playing online games

This research shows that despite the current status of English as a global language or a lingua franca, a critical reading of the way this language invades peripheral regions of urban metropolises shows us a neoliberal and capitalist insertion for the purpose of consumption and the attribution of prestige to the products for sale. The questioning of standard English and its hegemony seeks to lead educators and educated to create linguistic repertoires in this language that read local realities while expanding their technological skills to communicate in the globalized world. This situated and creative English resists the power of the "legitimate" centers of hegemonic English:

> I shyly propose the notion of "extralinguistic value" associated with English [White] (and other contextually dominant languages/varieties)

> as a means of explaining the hegemony that English enjoys, as well as of understanding how (hidden) resistance to an infinity of persistent "errors" and "deviations" that characterize non-elite use. (TUPAS, 2015, p. x).

In this sense, it is not the objective of this research to reproduce hegemonic paradigms of English language teaching, but to seek ways to deal with the language in a way that is meaningful for the participants in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the research and the use of new technologies in the classroom aim to provide resources for in-service and pre-service teachers so that they can use them in their local contexts.

The use of these resources does not seek the mere adaptation of written materials to the digital medium, but rather the use of the potentials offered by technological means for language teaching, in order to arouse students' interest through a critical and closer-to-their-reality approach. Having said that, it is important to criticize the notions of native speaker and standard varieties, which do not reflect the real and everyday uses of englishes in the world.

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ANEXOS

## A. Parecer do comitê de ética

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SÃO PAU

São Paulo, 13 de Julho de 2019.

À equipe de produção editorial da Revista Letras Raras

**Parecer sobre questões éticas na pesquisa**

O projeto "Língua global, identidades e saberes: encontros e fronteiras nas zonas de contato", coordenado pela Profa. Dra. Souzana Mizan, está sendo desenvolvido na UNIFESP desde maio de 2018. É um projeto que foi avaliado e credenciado no quesito de ética de pesquisa pela Pró-Reitoria de Extensão e Cultura da UNIFESP e, inclusive, obteve bolsa de monitoria PIBEX da UNIFESP nos anos 2018 e 2019. Os sujeitos da pesquisa participam de forma voluntária e suas identidades estão sendo preservadas na publicação dos resultados do desenvolvimento do trabalho. Como o projeto é credenciado, ele pode utilizar o nome e logo da UNIFESP.

Atenciosamente

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