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                        FACING THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

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ELF and ELT: Facing the Challenges Ahead

Edited by Enrico Grazzi

Chief-Editor Diogo Oliveira

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF RECÔNCAVO DA BAHIA

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ELF and ELT: Facing the Challenges Ahead

Since the processes of globalization have consolidated English as the primary international language, research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and its implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) has expanded significantly. A growing body of empirical studies, applied projects, teacher education initiatives, and international conferences has addressed the complex and often contested relationship between ELF, language norms, pedagogy, and assessment. Together, these contributions have established ELF research as a dynamic field that continues to offer crucial insights into how English is learned, taught, and used in increasingly multilingual and multicultural contexts.

This special issue of Paraguaçu brings together a diverse set of contributions that engage with some of the most pressing challenges currently facing ELF-informed ELT and Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE). The volume originates from the 14th International Conference on English as a Lingua Franca, held at Prague City University in September 2024, in a period marked by renewed international academic exchange following the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its overarching aim is to advance ongoing scholarly debate and to deepen understanding of key, and in some cases still unresolved, issues in ELF research and pedagogy. These include the emergent and variable nature of ELF in classroom practice; the transcultural, multilingual, and multimodal dimensions of ELF in both face-to-face and digitally mediated learning environments; the relationship between ELF variation, learner "error," and the assessment of communicative competence; and the evolving profile of the ELF-informed teacher of English.

A distinctive feature of this special issue is the dialogue it establishes between established and emerging voices in ELF studies. Four of the papers — authored by Yasemin Bayyurt and Martin Dewey, Lili Cavalheiro, Enrico Grazzi, and Sávio Siqueira — follow from a plenary panel convened by Enrico Grazzi at the 14th International Conference on English as a Lingua Franca. These contributions reflect mature theoretical engagement with ELF and address its implications for teacher professionalism, intercultural citizenship education, sociocultural theory, and decolonial perspectives on curriculum and policy. Complementing these studies, the remaining articles showcase the work of emerging scholars whose doctoral research exemplifies the evolving and interdisciplinary landscape of ELF studies. Together, these contributions foreground issues of ideology, material design, translanguaging practices, antiracist pedagogy, EMI contexts, and the role of human–AI interaction in raising ELF awareness.

By bringing these perspectives into conversation, the special issue seeks to bridge theory and practice, responding to long-standing calls in second language teacher education (SLTE) to

make scientific concepts meaningful and actionable for teachers. As Johnson and Golombek[1] (2011, p. 2) remind us, the responsibility of teacher education lies in connecting theory to teachers' goal-directed activity and everyday professional knowledge. In this spirit, the articles collected here aim not only to advance scholarly discussion but also to support educators in navigating the pedagogical, ethical, and ideological challenges of teaching English in a rapidly changing global landscape.

Together, the contributions presented in this volume underscore the enduring relevance of ELF as a lens for understanding linguistic diversity, questioning normative assumptions, and fostering more inclusive, reflexive, and socially responsible approaches to English language education.

Enrico Grazzi

ELF and ELT: Enfrentando os Desafios que se Aproximam

Desde que os processos de globalização consolidaram o inglês como principal língua internacional, as pesquisas sobre o Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF/ELF) e suas implicações para o ensino de língua inglesa (ELT) expandiram-se significativamente. Um número crescente de estudos empíricos, projetos aplicados, iniciativas de formação de professores e conferências internacionais tem abordado a relação complexa e frequentemente contestada entre ELF, normas linguísticas, pedagogia e avaliação. Em conjunto, essas contribuições estabeleceram os estudos de ELF como um campo dinâmico, que continua oferecendo insights fundamentais sobre como o inglês é aprendido, ensinado e utilizado em contextos cada vez mais multilíngues e multiculturais.

Este número especial de Paraguaçu reúne um conjunto diversificado de contribuições que dialogam com alguns dos desafios mais urgentes enfrentados atualmente pelo ensino de inglês informado por ELF e pela formação de professores de línguas (SLTE). O volume tem origem no 14º Congresso Internacional de Inglês como Língua Franca, realizado na Prague City University, em setembro de 2024, num momento marcado pela retomada dos intercâmbios acadêmicos internacionais após as interrupções causadas pela pandemia de Covid-19. Seu objetivo central é impulsionar o debate científico em curso e aprofundar a compreensão de questões fundamentais — e, em alguns casos, ainda não resolvidas — nas pesquisas e pedagogias relacionadas a ELF. Entre elas: a natureza emergente e variável de ELF nas práticas de sala de aula; as dimensões transculturais, multilíngues e multimodais de ELF em ambientes presenciais e digitalmente mediados; a relação entre variação em ELF, "erro" do aprendiz e avaliação da competência comunicativa; e o perfil em evolução do professor de inglês informado por ELF.

Uma característica distintiva deste número especial é o diálogo que se estabelece entre vozes consolidadas e emergentes nos estudos de ELF. Quatro dos artigos — de autoria de Yasemin Bayyurt e Martin Dewey, Lili Cavalheiro, Enrico Grazzi e Sávio Siqueira — derivam de

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[1] JOHNSON, Karen E. and GOLOMBEK, Paula R. (Eds.). **Research on Second Language Teacher Education**. New York and London: Routledge, 2011.

um painel plenário organizado por Enrico Grazzi no 14º Congresso Internacional de Inglês como Língua Franca. Essas contribuições refletem um engajamento teórico amadurecido com ELF e abordam suas implicações para o profissionalismo docente, a educação para a cidadania intercultural, a teoria sociocultural e perspectivas decoloniais sobre currículo e políticas educacionais. Complementando esses estudos, os demais artigos apresentam o trabalho de pesquisadores em formação, cujas investigações de doutorado exemplificam o panorama interdisciplinar e em constante evolução dos estudos de ELF. Em conjunto, essas contribuições destacam questões de ideologia, design de materiais, práticas translíngues, pedagogia antirracista, contextos EMI e o papel da interação humano–IA na promoção da conscientização sobre ELF.

Ao reunir essas perspectivas em diálogo, o número especial busca aproximar teoria e prática, respondendo a apelos recorrentes na formação de professores de línguas (SLTE) para tornar conceitos científicos significativos e aplicáveis no trabalho docente. Como lembram Johnson e Golombek (2011, p. 2), a responsabilidade da formação docente está em conectar a teoria à atividade orientada por objetivos dos professores e ao seu conhecimento profissional cotidiano. Nesse espírito, os artigos aqui reunidos têm como propósito não apenas ampliar as discussões acadêmicas, mas também apoiar educadores na navegação dos desafios pedagógicos, éticos e ideológicos envolvidos no ensino de inglês em um cenário global em rápida transformação.

Conjuntamente, as contribuições apresentadas neste volume destacam a relevância contínua de ELF como lente para compreender a diversidade linguística, questionar pressupostos normativos e promover abordagens mais inclusivas, reflexivas e socialmente responsáveis para o ensino de língua inglesa.

Enrico Grazzi

SYNOPSIS OF THE ARTICLES IN THIS VOLUME

Yasemin Bayyurt & Martin Dewey – *Critical cultural awareness and independent professionalism: A pre-sessional case study on engaging with diversity and multilingualism.*
This article investigates how critical cultural awareness develops in English-medium higher education and how it relates to educators' independent professionalism. Drawing on classroom observations and interviews with EAP tutors in UK pre-sessional courses, the study highlights the role of translanguaging and reflexive multilingual awareness in responding to linguistic and cultural diversity. The authors argue that educators need professional autonomy and critical agency to navigate contemporary academic challenges, including those posed by generative AI.

Júlia Calvet-Terré – *ELF and teacher education: Addressing ideological barriers to ELF-aware teaching practices.*
This study explores how native-speakerism and standard language ideology continue to hinder the adoption of ELF-aware pedagogies. Drawing on research with Spanish pre-service teachers, Calvet-Terré shows how non-standard but intelligible English forms are often negatively evaluated. The article argues for critical teacher education that challenges ideological bias and promotes intelligibility, diversity, and inclusivity.

Silene Cardoso – *ELF in English language textbooks designed in Portugal: Contributions from pre-service teachers.*
Cardoso examines how ELF perspectives can be integrated into Portuguese ELT textbooks through the work of pre-service teachers. The study reports on a workshop in which participants analysed and adapted textbook activities to enhance intercultural awareness and cultural diversity. Findings highlight the need to prepare future teachers to critically evaluate and redesign materials to reflect global English use.

Polyanna Castro Rocha Alves – *ELF-aware teaching practices: Insights from pre-service English language teachers in a Brazilian public university.*
Using action research with Brazilian pre-service teachers, this article investigates how ELF-aware teacher education influences classroom practice. The findings show a shift away from native-speaker norms towards intelligibility, linguistic diversity, and intercultural awareness. The study demonstrates how ELF principles help bridge theory and practice in teacher education.

Lili Cavalheiro – *Rethinking teacher education for culturally diverse English classrooms: An ELF and intercultural citizenship education approach.*
Cavalheiro proposes an integrated ELF and Intercultural Citizenship Education framework for teacher education. Using examples from Portuguese pre-service teacher programmes, the study shows how ELF-informed pedagogy can foster inclusion, empathy, and critical reflection. The paper positions English teaching as a tool for intercultural engagement and democratic participation beyond the classroom.

John Fiorese – *Between grammars and bodies: Rethinking English as a lingua franca through antiracist language education.*

Fiorese rethinks ELF through an antiracist and decolonial lens, highlighting how whiteness and coloniality shape ELT and teacher education. Drawing on racial literacy and decolonial theory, the article argues for integrating critical awareness of race and power into ELF pedagogy. ELF is positioned as a tool for linguistic justice and epistemic transformation.

Enrico Grazzi – *A Vygotskian approach to ELF in the English classroom.*
This paper articulates a sociocultural, Vygotskian approach to ELF in ELT, drawing on Sociocultural Theory and Concept-Based Language Instruction. ELF is framed as a natural outcome of learners' mediated development between languages. Through tools such as SCOBAs, the study demonstrates how conceptual awareness of language can replace rule-based instruction, offering implications for assessment, pedagogy, and teacher education.

Selin Aleyna Gül & Yasemin Bayyurt – *Multilingual questioning practices in EMI universities: Insights from the Turkish context.*
This study examines multilingual questioning and translanguaging practices in English-medium instruction classrooms in Türkiye. Based on classroom recordings and interviews, the findings show how flexible language use supports comprehension, engagement, and conceptual understanding. The authors argue for EMI policies and teacher education that recognise and legitimise multilingual classroom practices.

Sávio Siqueira – *ELF and the Brazilian national core curriculum: The crucial role of teacher education.*
Siqueira critically examines the inclusion of ELF within Brazil's National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), focusing on the role of teacher education in mediating policy and practice. Based on research with pre- and in-service teachers, the paper reveals tensions between progressive curricular discourse and traditional ELT ideologies. Teacher education is presented as a key site for decolonising ELT and promoting context-sensitive, reflective practice.

Tatiana Kozlova – *Comparing the efficiency of human–human and human–AI interaction for raising ELF awareness in young learners' telecollaboration.*
Kozlova compares human–human and human–AI interaction in fostering ELF awareness and intercultural communicative competence among young learners. While human interaction promotes deeper cultural engagement, AI offers personalised and low-anxiety language practice. The study supports a blended pedagogical model and stresses the importance of teacher education in balancing technological tools with human interaction.

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CONSCIÊNCIA CULTURAL CRÍTICA E PROFISSIONALISMO INDEPENDENTE: UM ESTUDO DE CASO PRÉ-SESSÃO SOBRE O ENVOLVIMENTO COM A DIVERSIDADE E O MULTILINGUISMO

Yasemin Bayyurt[1]
Martin Dewey[2]

ABSTRACT: This paper explores how learners and educators develop critical cultural awareness as part of their engagement with transcultural communication. We conceptualize this awareness as an understanding of the diversity that exists within and across societies, essential to recognizing and valuing multiple perspectives. Framed within a critical approach to transcultural communication, the paper draws on insights from language and citizenship education as well as broader debates on cultural dynamics. We explore how learners and educators can relate to cultural nuances they encounter during their language learning and professional development journeys. We examine how learners and practitioners develop expertise for effective communication in diverse multilingua-cultural settings. Building on this foundation, the paper re-examines the notion of independent professionalism as it relates to educators' roles in supporting transcultural engagement. We highlight the transformative potential of translanguaging pedagogy and reflexive awareness of multilingualism in Higher Education. Drawing on classroom observations and interviews with EAP tutors on UK university pre-sessional courses, we investigate perceptions and practices surrounding academic support in increasingly diverse settings. The study considers how tutors respond to linguistic and cultural complexity and reflects implications for both EAP and subject specialists. Finally, we consider how professional autonomy is shaped by current higher education policy and practice. We position educators as reflective professionals situated at the interface of research and practice, arguing that fostering independent, critical engagement is key to navigating today's changing academic landscape, including challenges brought about by generative AI.

Keywords: Critical Cultural Awareness; Diversity in Higher Education; English for Academic Purposes (EAP); Professional Autonomy; Multilingualism; Transcultural Communication.

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RESUMO: Este artigo investiga como aprendizes e educadores desenvolvem consciência cultural crítica a partir de seu envolvimento com a comunicação transcultural. Concebemos essa consciência como a compreensão da diversidade existente dentro e entre sociedades, essencial para reconhecer e valorizar múltiplas perspectivas. Ancorado em uma abordagem crítica da comunicação transcultural, o artigo dialoga com reflexões da educação linguística e cidadã, bem como com debates mais amplos sobre dinâmicas culturais. Exploramos como aprendizes e educadores se relacionam com nuances culturais encontradas ao longo de seus percursos de aprendizagem linguística e de desenvolvimento profissional, examinando como constroem expertise para uma comunicação eficaz em contextos multilingues e multiculturais diversos. A partir dessa base, o artigo reexamina a noção de profissionalismo independente no que se refere ao papel dos educadores no apoio ao engajamento transcultural. Destacamos o potencial transformador da pedagogia translíngue e da consciência reflexiva do multilinguismo no Ensino Superior. Com base em observações de sala de aula e entrevistas com docentes de Inglês para Fins Acadêmicos (EAP) em cursos pre-sessional de universidades britânicas, investigamos percepções e práticas relacionadas ao apoio acadêmico em contextos de crescente diversidade. O estudo considera como esses docentes respondem à complexidade linguística e cultural e reflete sobre as implicações tanto para profissionais de EAP quanto para especialistas de área. Por fim, discutimos como a autonomia profissional é moldada pelas atuais políticas e práticas do ensino superior. Posicionamos os educadores como profissionais reflexivos situados na interface entre pesquisa e prática, argumentando que promover um engajamento crítico e independente é fundamental para navegar no cenário acadêmico em transformação, incluindo os desafios trazidos pela inteligência artificial generativa.
Palavras-chave: Consciência Cultural Crítica; Diversidade no Ensino Superior; Inglês para Fins Acadêmicos (EAP); Autonomia Profissional; Multilinguismo; Comunicação Transcultural.

INTRODUCTION

As English-medium instruction (EMI) expands globally across Higher Education (HE) settings, multilingualism has become an increasingly central feature of academic life. Students and tutors now routinely negotiate diverse linguistic repertoires, heterogeneous cultural expectations, and distinct epistemological traditions within the same classroom. In such settings, *critical cultural awareness*—the capacity to recognise, question, and respond to cultural assumptions, sociopolitical values, and disciplinary norms—has emerged as an essential component of effective academic practice. In culturally and linguistically diverse learning environments, learners not only need to be proficient in their language use but also need to have the ability to navigate differing values, epistemic assumptions, and rules of academic engagement. Within this landscape, the ability to interrogate these norms and recognise their implications for teaching and learning has become an essential requirement.

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In our study, we have set out to research how multilingualism is reshaping EMI provision, particularly in relation to intercultural awareness among educators in HE settings. We also explore how the move from recognising cultural complexity to actively engaging with it can be facilitated through a translanguaging pedagogy, which we see as a means of operationalizing critical cultural awareness in classroom practice. Critical cultural awareness and translanguaging perspectives challenge monolithic views of language and culture, instead promoting plurality, critical thinking, and reflexive engagement. Within university-level EMI contexts, we feel that translanguaging offers tangible strategies to deepen academic understanding and foster inclusive participation.

We also propose that both translanguaging and critical cultural awareness can serve as a pathway to *independent professionalism* – a means of framing those components of educators' professional expertise that are characterised by reflective judgment, autonomy, and responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity. In this article we report on research initiatives undertaken in collaboration with tutors involved in international academic support programmes, exploring to what extent responses to multilingualism and linguacultural diversity are in evidence in current thinking and practices in HE settings in which English functions as medium of instruction. We begin by looking at the role of critical cultural awareness in EMI and HE, moving on to look at both Translanguaging pedagogy and conceptualizations of professionalism, before then detailing our research methods and reporting on our initial findings from one of our case studies. We end with some further discussion, with concluding remarks and a look towards future empirical research opportunities.

1 CRITICAL CULTURAL AWARENESS AND MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA) has emerged as a fundamental construct in understanding how learners and teachers navigate increasingly diverse and multilingual educational contexts. Based on Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework, CCA—defined as *savoir s'engager*—highlights the capacity to critically assess one's own cultural assumptions alongside the practices, values, and perspectives of others. Contemporary conceptions of cultural awareness emphasize the significance of acknowledging the ideological, political, and historical influences that shape cultural representations, in contrast to previous notions that primarily concentrated on understanding cultural differences (Baker, 2022; Holiday, 2018). In this sense, CCA is not merely an attitudinal construct but a reflective and ethical stance towards diversity, power, and communication.

CCA has become an important part of the current educational contexts leading us to explore it further in diverse contexts. Porto (2019) and Risager (2023) argue that global mobility,

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transnational communication, and linguistic superdiversity require learners to engage with complex social issues and embrace their roles as proactive global citizens. CCA transcends mere sensitivity toward others; it also equips students with the ability to think critically about the world and to engage responsibly with individuals who differ from themselves. This knowledge involves awareness of environmental sustainability, migration, social justice, and the dynamics of multilingual interaction. It is important to note that these topics are increasingly incorporated into language curricula and teacher education across the world.

Recently, the understanding of the concept of culture has experienced a substantial transformation concerning multilingual education. Holliday (1999, 2018) distinguishes between "large cultures," which include national or ethnic groups, and "small cultures," which encompass classroom communities, peer groups, and families. He also stresses that culture is not fixed but is constantly changing through the interactions of people in their daily lives. This perspective echoes students' lived experiences, linguistic repertoires, identities, and social trajectories, forming an integral part of their learning environment. CCA therefore involves recognizing cultural difference and understanding how learners actively construct meaning and identity within multilingual, multicultural 'small culture' spaces.

Teacher education research further demonstrates that CCA is foundational for informed pedagogical decision-making in multilingual classrooms. As shown in the ENRICH Continuous Professional Development programme (https://enrichproject.eu) (Sifakis et al., 2022), teachers who develop awareness of multilingualism and linguistic diversity can design more inclusive and context-sensitive instructional practices. CCA enables teachers to be aware of critical issues in their teaching and to question opiniated assumptions about language norms, materials, assessment, and classroom interaction. This can be seen as a crucial step in supporting learners' diverse linguistic trajectories. In multilingual classrooms, CCA is therefore blended with pedagogical flexibility and ethical responsibility. This results in the creation of the learning spaces where the students' linguistic and non-linguistic resources are recognized and valued.

Within these perspectives, CCA constitutes a key dimension of multilingual pedagogy. It encompasses the critical understanding of cultural processes, the recognition of learners' complex identities and repertoires, and the commitment to inclusive and reflective practice. The next section explores how these principles converge with recent developments in translanguaging, a pedagogical orientation that operationalizes many of the critical, multilingual, and socially responsive values embedded within CCA.

1.1 FROM CRITICAL CULTURAL AWARENESS TO TRANSLANGUAGING PEDAGOGY: CONCEPTUAL CONTINUITIES

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CCA provides an ideological framework for understanding multilingual practices, while translanguaging materializes these principles pedagogically within the classroom context. CCA highlights the dynamic and socially contextualized aspects of cultural and linguistic resources. On the other hand, translanguaging enhances the flexible utilization of these resources by learners during the process of meaning-making. These points indicate that learners do not work in defined cultural or linguistic systems. Instead, they use a mix of different sources that are shaped by their pasts, the way their community works, their identity negotiations, and their educational paths. Translanguaging clarifies these processes by framing bilingual and multilingual practices not as 'interference' or 'deviation,' but as intentional, innovative, and epistemically advantageous actions. In this regard, translanguaging can be perceived as the linguistic equivalent of CCA's cultural perspective: both contest essentialist notions, prioritize learners' experiential realities, and emphasize the necessity of critical examination of standard norms.

Consequently, CCA establishes the conceptual framework for accepting translanguaging as a valid and significant pedagogical method. It encourages educators to interrogate monolingual ideologies, acknowledge the cultural entrenchment of linguistic norms, and comprehend how learners' translanguaging practices articulate identity, agency, and cultural positioning. The next section presents translanguaging pedagogy and how it relates to and expands on CCA in multilingual classrooms.

2. TRANSLANGUAGING

Translanguaging has become a significant concept in the context of the multilingual turn, contesting monolingual ideologies that regard "one language–one speaker" as the standard and evaluate bilinguals against (monolingual) native-speaker criteria. Research reveals a comprehensive perspective on bilingualism, recognizing multilinguals as proficient users of a unified, cohesive linguistic repertoire, in contrast to the notion of their being "two monolinguals in one person" (Grosjean, 1989). We can say that from this point of view, attaining native-like proficiency is not the aim of bilingual/second language education. By contrast, the aim can be to employ semiotic resources that help in conceptual development and knowledge building in meaningful interactions in diverse sociocultural contexts.

Translanguaging, as a pedagogical approach, encourages educators and students to utilize their comprehensive linguistic and semiotic resources—including spoken and written language, gestures, visuals, digital tools, and various other modalities—to facilitate comprehension, engagement, and identity development. Studies conducted in bilingual/multilingual and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) environments indicate that these practices can enhance cognitive engagement, facilitate content accessibility, and recognize learners' multilingual

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competencies as valuable assets rather than hindrances (Jenkins & Mauranen, 2019). Simultaneously, the implementation of translanguaging pedagogies must be aligned with the local circumstances, learners' ambitions, institutional language policies, and overarching sociopolitical influences. In addition, the persistent prevalence of standard language ideologies and high-stakes monolingual evaluations can also be integrated into this implementation (García & Wei, 2014). These tensions highlight that translanguaging serves as both a descriptive framework for multilingual practices and a normative epistemological position that contests monolingual standards, while also functioning as an educational initiative aimed at redefining acceptable language use in academic contexts.

2.1 TRANSLANGUAGING PEDAGOGY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Translanguaging pedagogy has emerged as a significant framework within the multilingual turn in education, contesting longstanding monolingual norms that have historically influenced language, content, and assessment practices (Cenoz and Gorter, 2022). Translanguaging pedagogy perceives learners not as mere users of isolated, compartmentalized languages, but as active meaning-makers who adaptively utilize a variety of linguistic, cultural, and multimodal resources. This change has a substantial impact on teaching and learning: instead of seeing multilingual practices problematically, translanguaging pedagogy sees them as important resources for understanding, developing identity, and getting involved.

Although translanguaging originated as a bilingual pedagogical technique in Welsh classrooms—where input and output were deliberately separated across languages (C. Baker, 2001; Lewis, Jones & C. Baker, 2012)—its pedagogical scope expanded considerably in the 2010s, particularly through García and Wei (2014). Early pedagogic formulations highlighted cognitive and academic advantages: translanguaging facilitates content processing across multiple languages, enhances academic registers in both languages, and fosters collaboration among students with varying proficiency levels. These studies comprised the groundwork of translanguaging pedagogy, that is, a framework of instructional approaches that appreciate learners' comprehensive linguistic repertoires and dismiss monolingual limitations in education.

García and Wei (2014) define translanguaging pedagogy as a framework that establishes "translanguaging spaces" wherein learners' varied practices are both valid and essential for the construction of meaning. These spaces promote "epistemic access" by simplifying intricate material and "identity investment" by enabling students to see themselves as informed, active contributors. This dual function aligns translanguaging pedagogy with sociocultural learning

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theories, which stress that knowledge is collaboratively constructed through mediated interaction rather than being internalized in isolation.

Translanguaging pedagogy originates from the idea that the full linguistic repertoires of students—whether home languages, regional varieties, heritage languages, or other semiotic resources—support their learning of languages in a meaningful way. Hence, they are not distractions from a "target language" (Gülle 2023; Paulsrud et al., 2017; Hawkins, 2020). According to translanguaging researchers, meaning-making is inherently multilingual and multimodal. Students naturally draw on different languages and symbols to build and deepen their understanding of concepts across subjects (Wei, 2016). This approach also supports learners' identities by giving them chances to express who they are, claim expertise, navigate classroom hierarchies, and push back against deficit assumptions often reinforced by monolingual norms (Lin, 2013; Simpson, 2020). However, effective translanguaging pedagogy necessitates careful planning, including task design, grouping, multimodal materials, and flexible assessment practices, to guarantee that students' linguistic resources genuinely enhance their learning (García & Lin, 2017).

A growing body of research shows that translanguaging pedagogy has a strong positive impact on students' engagement, understanding, and motivation. Lin (2013) found that when students were encouraged to draw on more than one language as well as visual and embodied resources, they became more active, independent, and willing to participate—particularly those who often remained silent in monolingual classrooms. Simpson (2020) similarly argues that translanguaging challenges long-standing assumptions, such as those embedded in Communicative Language Teaching, that L1 use hinders L2 learning; instead, validating learners' full repertoires supports deeper thinking, richer interaction, and greater confidence. Evidence from writing tasks echoes this trend: Kirkpatrick (2014) shows that students who used their L1 during planning and drafting produced more sophisticated essays than those restricted to English only. These findings align with Cummins' (1979, 1993) interdependence hypothesis, which holds that literacy and conceptual knowledge developed in one language can transfer to another. Translanguaging pedagogy provides a contemporary way of enabling this transfer by allowing learners to mobilize their linguistic knowledge flexibly and purposefully throughout the learning process.

2.2 TRANSLANGUAGING PEDAGOGY IN EMI AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

Building on the principles of Critical Cultural Awareness, translanguaging provides a concrete pedagogical pathway for supporting multilingual learners in higher education. While CCA encourages teachers and students to critically reflect on cultural and linguistic diversity,

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translanguaging operationalizes this stance by recognizing the full range of linguistic and semiotic resources students draw on when making meaning. In multilingual EMI classrooms, where linguistic expectations and students' lived practices often diverge, translanguaging offers a way to bridge this gap by validating learners' repertoires, widening access to disciplinary knowledge, and creating spaces where identity, agency, and learning intersect.

Translanguaging, while originating in bilingual education, has gained significance in English-medium instruction at the tertiary level, where monolingual English standards frequently conflict with students' actual linguistic behaviors. Researchers like Hornberger (2005) observe that encouraging learners to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire enhances both bilingual and EMI classrooms. Restricting students to English alone not only makes comprehension more difficult but also reinforces existing hierarchies and inequities around language. Evidence from higher education further supports this point. Adamson and Fujimoto-Adamson (2021) demonstrate that Japanese EMI instructors who deliberately integrated students' L1—such as permitting reading in Japanese or incorporating Japanese scripts into classroom materials—reported enhanced engagement and a more profound comprehension of disciplinary concepts. Even when translanguaging is not officially encouraged, students still use multilingual resources to help them with EMI tasks. Yüksel et al. (2023) demonstrate that Turkish EMI students routinely use Turkish-language YouTube videos alongside English readings and rely on translation tools to grasp complex content. Taken together, these findings suggest that translanguaging is not an optional "add-on" but a central part of how multilingual students learn in EMI environments.

Recent work also expands translanguaging pedagogy beyond language alone, drawing attention to the range of semiotic resources students use in meaning-making. Scholars such as Hawkins (2020) and Baynham (2020) argue for a broader, more ecological view that includes gesture, visuals, digital tools, embodied actions, and spatial arrangements. This shift toward a "semiotic ecology" reflects the reality of contemporary higher education, where learning increasingly occurs in digitally mediated, visually rich, and interactive spaces. In such contexts, multimodal translanguaging allows students to draw on the full spectrum of communicative tools available to them—resources that are often overlooked or undervalued within traditional monolingual pedagogies. For today's EMI learners, these multimodal practices are not peripheral; they are central to accessing and interpreting disciplinary knowledge.

At the same time, the literature reminds us that translanguaging pedagogy cannot be applied uncritically. Several scholars point to the importance of learner agency and preference. Ruecker (2014) notes that some students may prefer to develop standardized, monolingual academic practices to succeed in high-stakes assessments or to fit into professional communities. Matsuda (2014) also cautions that mandating students to translanguage in writing may disadvantage them if their educators or evaluators fail to comprehend all the linguistic resources

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they elect to employ. Canagarajah (2011) adds an important social dimension by emphasizing that translanguaging is co-constructed through interaction; its success depends on how teachers and students negotiate multilingual practices together. Limited teacher proficiency, monolingual testing regimes, or restrictive institutional ideologies can make it difficult for translanguaging to flourish. These critiques call attention to a context-responsive approach—one that supports multilingual practices without imposing them and recognizes the constraints, aspirations, and power dynamics within each educational setting.

Taken as a whole, the literature positions translanguaging pedagogy as a promising and transformative framework for tertiary EMI education. It offers a way to challenge monolingual assumptions, expand students' access to disciplinary knowledge, and affirm the diverse linguistic and semiotic repertoires they bring to the classroom. At the same time, scholars caution against universalizing or romanticizing translanguaging; its implementation must take into account institutional structures, teaching expertise, learner goals, and assessment expectations. Translanguaging pedagogy, when carefully acknowledged and navigated, provides a robust and flexible foundation for more equitable and responsive multilingual higher education.

The broader implication of this work is that translanguaging pedagogy demands not only methodological flexibility but also a rethinking of teachers' professional identities. Rather than positioning themselves as gatekeepers of monolingual norms, educators in multilingual EMI contexts increasingly act as reflective, adaptive professionals who negotiate classroom realities with sensitivity to students' linguistic trajectories and educational goals. This move toward a more responsive stance aligns with emerging discussions on *independent professionalism*, where teachers exercise informed judgment, draw on research-based understandings of multilingualism, and make contextually grounded decisions about language use. In this sense, translanguaging pedagogy not only enriches learning but also reshapes what it means to teach ethically and professionally in today's diverse higher education landscape.

Hornberger (2005) contends that EMI environments are enhanced when pedagogic approaches encourage students to utilize their entire repertoires. Limiting students to only English not only makes it harder for them to understand, but it also keeps language hierarchies and unfairness alive. Recent research from higher education corroborates this perspective. Adamson and Fujimoto-Adamson (2021) demonstrate that Japanese EMI instructors who strategically integrated students' L1s—facilitating reading in Japanese and writing in English or incorporating Japanese scripts—observed enhancements in student engagement and comprehension of content. Even in situations where translanguaging is not officially used, multilingual practices continue. Yüksel et al. (2021) discovered that Turkish EMI students consistently utilized YouTube videos in Turkish in conjunction with materials in English and depended on translation technologies to comprehend disciplinary content.

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This shows that translanguaging is not only an optional teaching method; it is a necessary part of how multilingual students learn EMI. Acknowledging and institutionalizing these practices can enhance epistemic access and mitigate inequities. EMI literature considers translanguaging pedagogy as a transformative framework that competes with monolingual ideologies, facilitates deep learning, and validates the identities of multilingual learners. Translanguaging improves epistemic access, cognitive engagement, and learner agency in bilingual education, L2 classrooms, and EMI in HE.

2.3 POSITIONING TRANSLANGUAGING AS A BRIDGE TO 'INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONALISM'

Translanguaging pedagogy requires teachers to make informed, context-sensitive, and ethically grounded decisions about language use in the classroom — decisions that cannot be scripted or standardized. This aligns closely with emerging understandings of *independent professionalism* (as elaborated on below) involving for instance reflective judgment, pedagogic autonomy, and principled responsiveness to learners' needs.

Teachers who enact translanguaging must continually navigate questions such as:

1. Which linguistic and semiotic resources are most supportive for learning?

2. How can learners' identities and cultural trajectories be respected and validated?

3. How should classroom norms evolve in response to multilingual interactions?

These are not merely technical questions; they are ethical, cultural, and professional questions that require the teacher to exercise independent, critically informed agency. Thus, translanguaging pedagogy provides a natural conceptual bridge to independent professionalism, foregrounding the teacher's role as an autonomous, reflective, and socially responsive practitioner. The subsequent section develops this connection further by examining how teacher agency and professionalism unfold within the specific pre-sessional context of this study.

3 INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Underpinning our work on investigating knowledge construction from the perspective of lecturers and tutors, is the realisation that educators' knowledge base and expertise can be categorised into different knowledge types and sources of experience. We take as our starting point an understanding that professional knowledge and expertise entail a complex interplay of established norms and practices together with personally derived and contextually shaped experiences of learning and teaching. Since publication of their seminal article, in which Freeman & Johnson (1998) call for a radical overhaul of the way in which we conceptualize the knowledge base for language teacher education, we have seen extensive discussion of this complexity. For reasons of scope and focus, we will not provide an in-depth review of the many developments to have taken place in the almost three decades that have passed since its publication (see Johnson

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& Golombek 2018 for an account of trends in language teacher education pedagogy since 1998). We will instead limit our consideration of professionalism to a particular aspect of its conceptualization that provides us with a theoretical lens through which we have been able to make valuable sense of our research context and findings. We see as especially relevant the concepts of *Sponsored* and *independent Professionalism* as proposed by Leung (2009, 2022).

Sponsored professionalism concerns those aspects of a teacher's professional repertoire that are institutionally endorsed and publicly supported. These comprise the components of professional knowledge and skills as outlined by education authorities, curriculum bodies, and professional organisations, who to various degrees in different educational settings will oversee guidance on what is deemed necessary for teachers to know and do. These authorities may set performance standards and accredit teaching qualifications, which can be reinforced through formal institutional procedures or even legal requirements. Together, these expectations and standards will significantly shape teachers' employability and career trajectories. Sponsored professionalism offers a stable frame of reference for practice, defining the parameters of teaching principles and practices and providing the criteria for evaluating teachers' work. This can give teachers the confidence to know they are acting appropriately. The mechanisms of sponsored professionalism can entail considerable authority in education systems, especially in contexts where public accountability is mandated and reinforced through official oversight. Leung (2009) also notes, however, that sponsored professionalism is of course not fixed; it changes over time and varies across different settings (we consider the nature of this process of change below).

Leung defines *independent professionalism as a* "propensity and a disposition to examine the assumptions and the practices associated with sponsored professionalism with reference to disciplinary knowledge and one's own social values and world views, and to take steps to bring about change in one's own practice (and beyond) where appropriate and possible." (2022: 184). In other words, teachers do not simply develop their knowledge and expertise by being exposed to the theoretical, methodological and practice-base principles they encounter during their education, formal training, or in-service interventions at a "sponsored level". Expertise is derived from the way in which teachers reflect on their own beliefs and values in situ in a continuous process of restructuring experience and knowledge as they make sense of classroom realities and the wider sociocultural environment and school settings.

Differentiating between a sponsored and independent professionalism is a valuable way of understanding how practitioners can navigate their way through a changing educational landscape. In our study we assume that our participating tutors may not make this distinction explicitly but will have a sense that there are differences and tensions between those aspects of their beliefs and practices that are more 'inherited' through professionally formalised learning and those aspects that are more individual to them – that is, those which they themselves have

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arrived at through their own reflective and experiential learning pathways. We see a move towards greater internationalization in HE, along with the consequential increase in linguacultural diversity (among student populations and university staff), as giving rise to a need to critically re-evaluate the impact this move may have/ought to have on policy, the curriculum and pedagogy (including teaching and assessment). From our perspective, we see changes in Sponsored Professionalism as far more gradual and slow moving than those that can take place in practitioners' independent professionalism, as the institutionalized status of established norms will tend to involve a high degree of inertia.

Jónasson (2016) explores the underlying causes of this, identifying multiple types of inertia, organized according to the following themes: "general conservativism, system stability, standards, fuzziness of new ideas, the strength of old ideas, vested interests, teacher education, lack of space and motivation for initiative, and lack of consequence of no change." (2016: 1). Jónasson comments that forms of knowledge once considered essential for understanding the world may now need to be replaced with newer forms of knowledge, often emerging from beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. In addition, a wide range of new skills may be increasingly relevant for future societal demands. Yet numerous barriers impede such transformation, with institutional and contextual constraints inhibiting change and complicating efforts toward reform. Jónasson argues that substantial shifts in educational content are unlikely to occur unless these forms of inertia are explicitly recognised and addressed. We see as fundamental the investigation of individual practitioners' experiences and their ongoing (less inert) and developing independent professionalism. To this end, we turn now to our own study.

4 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, multi-site design to investigate how disciplinary knowledge is constructed and mediated in English-medium instruction (EMI) settings characterized by increasing multilingualism. The empirical basis for the analysis draws on an ongoing collaborative research project conducted at Boğaziçi University (Türkiye) and King's College London (UK), both of which host large international student populations and rely on English as a (dominant) medium of instruction. These institutions provide rich contexts for examining how multilingual students and instructors navigate disciplinary literacies, translanguaging, and multimodal meaning-making in higher education. The research design, data sources, and analytic procedures described below are reconstructed from the project documentation and presentation materials.

4.1 PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXTS

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The participant group[3] includes five academic tutors and two administrators from various departments and academic roles in the UK context, all of whom work with linguistically diverse student groups in pre-sessional, foundation, and disciplinary courses. Parallel data were also collected in Türkiye, where EMI has expanded rapidly in recent years and international student numbers are steadily increasing (Gülle et al., 2024). Participants come from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, including nursing, physics, chemistry, molecular biology, mathematics, electrical engineering, accounting, and informatics. This disciplinary spread enables the analysis of how different fields conceptualize and operationalize disciplinary literacies, including the linguistic, multimodal, and epistemic demands placed on learners.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected across multiple academic terms (Spring, Summer, and Autumn 2024; Spring 2025) through three sources:

1.   **Pre- and post-observation interviews** with tutors and administrators, designed to elicit perspectives on multilingual classrooms, translanguaging, cultural sensitivity, assessment practices, and pedagogical challenges. Interview excerpts reveal emerging themes such as tensions around monolingual norms, concerns about fairness in translanguaging practices, disciplinary specificity, and the pressure of high-stakes assessments.

2.   **Classroom observations** (both face-to-face and online), aimed at capturing authentic instances of knowledge construction, language alternation, multimodal scaffolding, and interactional dynamics. Recordings and field notes document instructional sequences, materials used (e.g., graphs, formulas, models, visuals), and students' translanguaging and trans-semiotic practices.

3.   **Supplementary project documents**, adopting survey instruments from other EMI projects conducted by the researchers.

These data help triangulate how CCA and independent professionalism are connected to language/discipline specific teaching beyond the immediate case study.

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[3] For the purpose of reporting our findings in this article, we refer to our research participants with actual names rather than pseudonyms. We do this in line with ethical guidelines at both institutions, and with the informed written consent of all those involved in the data collection. Our main motive for doing so is that as our project progressed, it became evermore apparent that everyone involved in the interviews and observations was mutually engaged in an exploration of practice, to the extent that it made more sense to see interviewees and observees more as research partners and collaborators than 'participants'. By naming these partners here we also feel we are giving more voice to their experience. It is our plan that in future publications to report on this data, these collaborator-participants will be our co-authors.

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4.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Our analysis follows a combination of thematic and interactional analysis grounded in translanguaging theory and disciplinary literacy frameworks. First, interview transcripts were coded thematically to identify recurring issues in EMI teaching: students' struggles with disciplinary terminology, conceptual complexity, genre expectations, multimodal reasoning, and identity negotiation. Codes were also applied to tutors' self-perceptions of linguistic proficiency, their pedagogical strategies, and their collaboration (or lack thereof) with language specialists. Second, classroom observation data were examined using an interactional lens to trace how lecturers and students co-construct disciplinary knowledge through talk, gesture, visuals, modelling, digital tools, and language alternation. This aligns with recent conceptualizations of knowledge construction in EMI as a multimodal, multilingual process (e.g., Wei, 2018) and with CLILNetLE's multi-semiotic and bi/multilingual dimensions of disciplinary literacies. Third, triangulation across interviews, observations, and COST survey data allowed the researchers to identify convergences between what teachers report, what they do in practice, and what disciplinary experts consider essential for students' bi/multilingual disciplinary literacy development. This multi-layered analytical approach foregrounds both the affordances and constraints of translanguaging within EMI, including tensions arising from assessment regimes, institutional policies, and diverse learner goals.

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Identifying details were anonymized in interview transcripts and observation field notes. Due to the cross-institutional nature of the study, ethical approval was granted separately by Boğaziçi University and King's College London. Participation was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any stage.

5. CASE STUDY: EMI IN 'ANGLOPHONE' CONTEXTS

In our study, the primary aim is to understand how academic tutors and lecturers approach their discipline and subject knowledge from a learning perspective, particularly in light of the multilingual environments of internationalized Higher Education (HE) settings. More specifically, the purpose of the project reported on in this article is to bring a fresh perspective on English medium instruction (EMI) by exploring current practices in Anglophone contexts (e.g. US, UK, etc.). In our research we investigate the increasing multilingualism of these spaces (notwithstanding recent pressures on immigration and linguistic/cultural diversity, with for instance the recent anti-immigration rhetoric in the US and UK), thereby extending the focus of EMI research beyond conventionally named 'non-Anglophone' settings.

EMI has up to now been predominantly defined in relation to settings in which English is not the primary language of education nor the majority language of the wider context, as in the following customary definition in Macaro (2018), in which EMI is explained as:

> the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English.

> (Macaro 2018: 37).

This framing of EMI as English medium provision in 'non-Anglophone' settings continues to be influential. However, as Smit (2023) makes clear in her *Key Concepts* article on EMI, this has become a complex phenomenon with all manner of local realizations, particularly when we take into account the globalized role of English and continued moves towards internationalization in so many HE contexts worldwide. In short, EMI can involve different varieties of English, with all manner of diverse linguistic practices, and may in fact be only one out of several instructional languages, while both students and teachers may bring diverse linguistic backgrounds and varying levels of proficiency across their repertoires. Smit (2023:499) identifies "six *flexible* criteria that allow for a more detailed description of individual EMI instances" (our italics for emphasis), which she lists as: *Educational level; Degree of Coverage; Location; Language Policies; Optionality;* and *Relation to English language education.* It is in connection with the third criterion, *location*, that we move away from the more established conceptualizations of EMI, which, as Macaro (2018) does above, exclude English language majority settings (i.e. US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland), adopting a more inclusive approach.

In our approach, we extend our framing of EMI to include any context (thus not defining EMI locations geographically) in which English essentially functions as a lingua franca in an educational setting as a consequence of large numbers of international students. We do this in line with a growing number of scholars who adopt a similarly expanded definition of what qualifies as EMI, extending this to 'internationalised, multilingual HE sites in Anglophone countries' (Hüttner & Baker 2023: 37). We therefore consider the academic contexts of both authors of our article to be EMI settings at the time of our data collection. The primary research site for our study (KCL) has a large number of international students, increasing substantially as a percentage of overall student numbers in recent years (particularly at postgraduate levels). At the time of writing, the KCL student body comprises 52% international students - out of a total of 33,410 (according to Times Higher Education, University World Rankings data for 2026; https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/kings-college-london). This can be seen in the context of broader trends across the UK HE sector. The following chart (fig. 1)

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shows increases in international student numbers by country of permanent residence in the years leading up to the academic year 2023-24 (the most recent data available) as presented by HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency).

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Figure 1. International student enrolments from 2006-07 to 2023-24)

Entrant students with a permanent address outside the UK by permanent address
Academic years 2006/07 to 2023/24
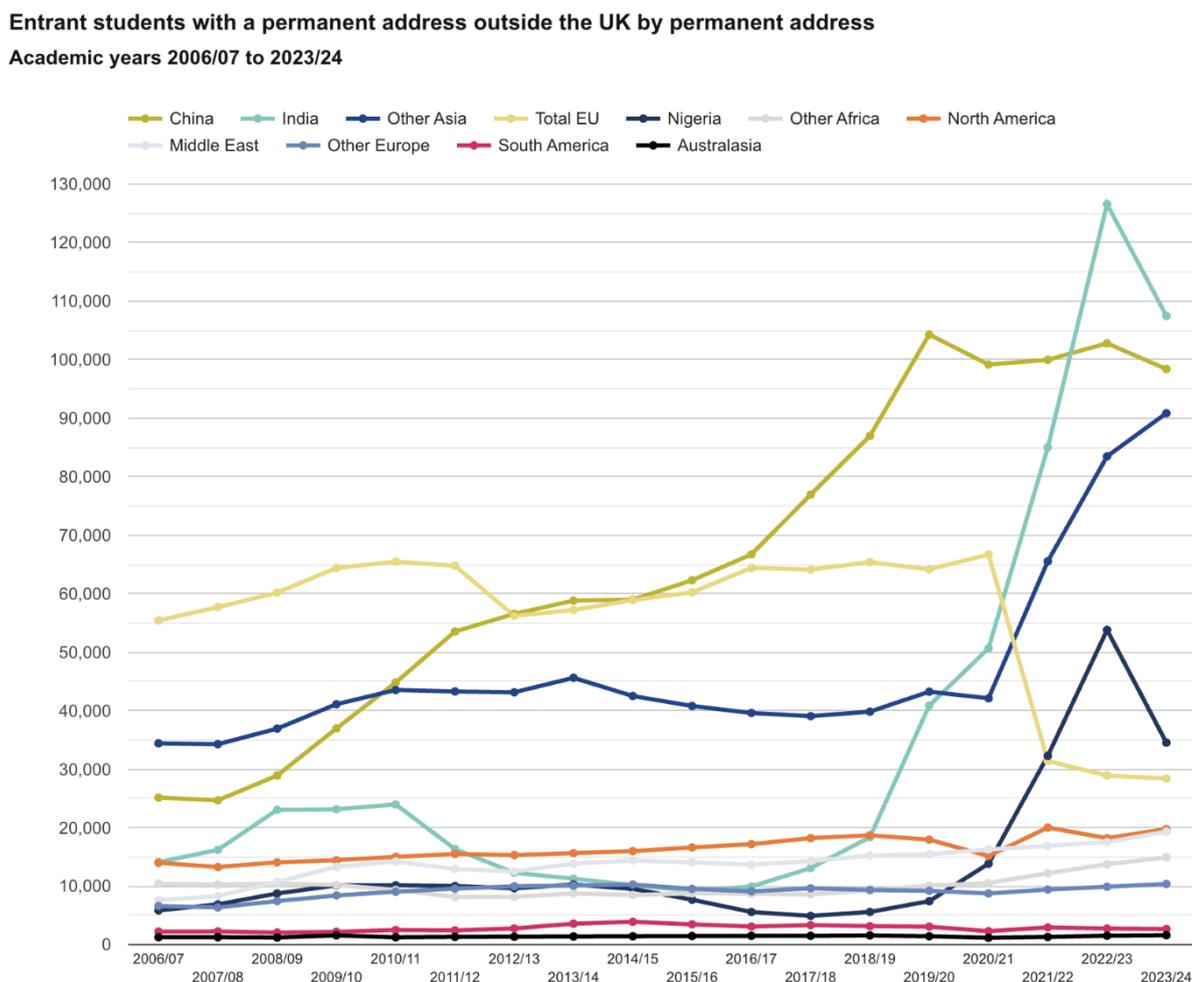
(https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from.) (Accessed 26/11/2025)

The most notable trends illustrated here are: 1) China, which shows a consistent dramatic increase in numbers from around 2008-09 on, levelling out at approximately 100,000 students by 2019-20; 2) India, which shows a very dramatic increase from 50,000 to 120,000+ between 2019-20 to 2022-23; and 3) The EU, whose numbers fall dramatically in 2020-21 following Brexit[4].

In June and July 2024, we jointly interviewed all the research participants with a view to exploring their experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of internationalization in the university In this article we present findings from our preliminary round of interviews, which were carried out in advance of our classroom observation research. Due to the scope of our

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[4] Although the EU referendum took place in the UK in June 2016, the UK only officially exited the EU on January 31st 2020.

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discussion, and as this is our first publication to emerge from the project, we have chosen to present data from the initial interviews only. These illustrate key findings that then informed how we approached subsequent classroom observations and post-observation interviews, which we will pick up on in future publications. (We also do not focus on observation data yet, as the project is ongoing and we have a further round of observations planned for later in this academic cycle).

The following extract is taken from the first interview we carried out with Saul (Foundation Programme Co-ordinator at the time), who is responding here to questions about the size of the Foundation Programme and the increased levels of linguistic and cultural diversity the expansion in student numbers has brought about.

EXTRACT 1

MD>	So I wonder how much you feel that the landscape has changed (,) is changing in terms of level of diversity (,) and the kind of challenges that that might present to students and tutors
SJ>	I mean, this is an area where I'm aware of: changing attitudes, and aware of a change in my own attitudes (.) so obviously, we've got the kind of key drive towards decolonialization (,) we're trying to decolonize our curriculum er: I think some of the curricula that I set up earlier in my career as a foundation coordinator, were actually **quite** colonialised. Erm so when we're decolonial-decolonizing, the syllabus, it's often my syllabuses that we're decolonizing (.) You know, but that's– I think that's, that's part of the natural kind of change in the way I should be seeing things (,) so I'm kind of fully on board with that. I think that absolutely, we need to kind of decolonize curricula where we can, and er we are trying to do that with– it's a direction rather than a destination and we're definitely doing that on the program. I think the key extra new element, which is very, very significant, is the drive to decolonize pedagogy.

In addressing the question of diversity Saul very quickly turns to the notion of 'decolonizing the curriculum' – a movement that has gained currency in recent years to challenge the dominance

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of European-Centric academic knowledge, dismantle asymmetric power structures and promote an anti-racism agenda. (For a recent case study in an HE setting in the UK see Tamimi et al 2024). It is clear that this agenda has begun to have impact on how Saul conceptualises curriculum content. It is not though immediately clear what Saul means at the end of this turn when mentioning "the drive to decolonize pedagogy", which he sees as an additional element to the decolonizing turn in the curriculum.

The notion of a decolonized pedagogy becomes clearer a little later in the interview during subsequent turns, in which Saul first refers to a change in attitude towards international students among Foundation programme colleagues, and then later in reference to pedagogic materials and methods. In the following extract he comments on what he sees as recent changes in attitude and approach.

EXTRACT 2

SJ>	So the idea was that there was a kind of Western seminar that we had these people who were just not very good at it for cultural reasons. We either have to kind of change their culture or to auto kind of weed them out. And I think we definitely within King's foundations, we are very impatient with that attitude now, we would say that these people learn in different ways. They contribute in different ways– they, they engage in different ways (,) And that, we need to: understand that, and we need to be able to appreciate that (,) and we need to find other ways of measuring their engagement (,) if that's what we're doing we have other ways of encouraging their contribution.

In the extract Saul is commenting on the ways in which the programme has needed to adjust specifically to working with large numbers of students from China. This can be seen as a move away from a more normative mindset, in which rather than – as had previously been the case – imposing dominant cultural expectations on engagement with learning, the onus has shifted somewhat, with the presumption that tutors are now required to alter their stance and presuppositions.

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The impact this has on pedagogy is elaborated on further in the following extract, which occurs a little later in the conversation. Here Saul is commenting on curriculum content and use of resources in the *Liberal Arts* strand of the Foundation Programme.

EXTRACT 3

SJ>	But one of the things we early on we do is landscape painting. So that used to be quite Western. But of course we've got people from China, who've got one of the great traditions of landscape painting in the world, it made no sense to talk about landscape painting, without reference to that, where they've got their own kind of their own cultural awareness. So we have now brought that in. So we now contrast, landscape painting, and we have the essay question about it, where they can use Chinese landscape painting. But of course, that raises the question of sources, because we did have a rule whereby you had to use English language sources only. So we were saying, yes, you could talk about Chinese landscape painting, but you can't actually use any Chinese thinkers on this. And obviously, that was kind of a colonial thing that only you can see. And I guess it was kind of there, because we wanted to be able to evaluate how they use sources. We want to evaluate the sources they've chosen. But of course, now we've got Google Translate, that's all gone. And, and we can do those things, even when it's originally in Chinese. So we have just said, absolutely use those, use those sources, try and use some Western sources, just so you get the kind of broader understanding of the issue. But you know, that's– that's just one. That's just one instance of how we've gone from a very heavily Western centric to a much more open one.

Here we see a move towards a less monocentric, and eventually more multilingual approach to the curriculum. This is clearly a gradual shift in mindset, initially involving an extension in content and focus, before then also involving a move towards accepting the multilingualism of the setting by allowing students to draw on resources in Chinese. To what extent this level of

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acceptance extends to all tutors in all subject areas remains to be seen - especially beyond the Foundation programme in each faculty and department (a question we partially take up below in the extracts with Lucy).

This causes us to return to the differentiation between sponsored and independent professionalism. To some extent we can see independence in Saul's stance, in which he acknowledges the need to move away from a monolithic version of curriculum content and pedagogic approach and engage with diversity, in relation to both types of professionalism. First, Saul appears throughout our interactions with him to be reflecting on his own beliefs and practices, signalling how his views have developed critically, stating that he is "aware of a change in my own attitudes" and that "when we're decolonial-decolonizing, the syllabus, it's often my syllabuses that we're decolonizing" (Extract 1). In addition, given Saul's status as Foundation Programme Co-ordinator, we can also see the potential impact of this stance on the practices of EAP tutors across the Foundation Programme, such that a more multilingual perspective may eventually become part of the sponsored notions of expertise in the department.

We turn now to examine our interview with Lucy, who at the time of data collection was Pre-sessional and Short Course co-ordinator. Key themes to emerge from our initial conversation with Lucy were as follows: high-stakes assessment and limitations of available time; the value of formative assessment; tasks to support student learning; recent changes in EAP teaching, including online provision; the need to provide subject-specific content for postgraduates; the relative lack of subject specialists; differences in respective levels of cultural awareness among EAP tutors and subject specialists; and finally, the need for greater collaboration between Foundations and academic tutors across faculties. Several of these themes relate to ongoing wider challenges that have long characterised pre-sessional provision, including very notably the assessment-oriented focus of these courses, particularly in relation to their short intensive nature and the impact this has on their structure and content. For reasons of scope, we will not concern ourselves in this paper with these aspects of the interview with Lucy. Instead, we will concentrate on how Lucy sees the key differences between the knowledge and expertise of subject specialists and tutors on the pre-sessional courses and Foundation Programme, and the challenges this can present in terms of meeting the learning requirements of international students.

In the following extract, Lucy is commenting on levels of interaction between Foundation tutors – especially on pre-sessional courses - and subject specialists, particularly in relation to attempting to provide more targeted, embedded support.

EXTRACT 4

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LP>	and one of my roles, actually, part of the remit of the pre-sessional team, in the past has been to liaise with departments to provide embedded erm sessions (.) so that's kind of another part of my role, which I didn't mention before, we actually have a whole new team looking after that now, but for a number of years, you know, I, I would– ONE of the things I might do would be to liaise with, erm you know, liaise with another faculty to, you know, they will come to us and request a series of academic writing workshops, for example, or some dissertation workshops, and we would then provide those, er and you would obviously want to get as much information as possible about what the students needed. Erm And sometimes you'd be able to speak you know, a lot of the times, you WOULDN'T be able to speak to, you know, an ACADEMIC member of staff, you'd be speaking to a programs officer who had been given some instructions.

The "embedded sessions" Lucy refers to reflect a move towards greater acknowledgement of the enhanced value in providing subject specific academic literacy support, in contrast to adopting a more generic approach. Wingate (2018), for instance, emphasises the shortcomings of generic academic tuition, commenting that difficulties with literacy tend to surface most clearly in students' writing, with the consequence that the majority of teaching and support efforts concentrate solely on writing, even though writing is actually just "the end product of a complex literacy process" (2018: 352). Wingate explains how this process includes locating appropriate sources, assessing these for relevant information, integrating this information into a coherent argument, and finally expressing that in written form. She argues that most writing instruction overlooks these initial stages, focusing only on the final step, the written product. When academic support is generic, i.e. not embedded in the discipline, it cannot address these essential reading stages, since the skills of selecting and evaluating evidence can only be developed through engagement with discipline-specific knowledge and within the context of a particular assignment; consequently, meaningful support must come from the subject specialists.

In Extract 4 above, Lucy alludes to the frustration she felt when assigned the role of liaising with subject specialists for the purpose of setting up academic support sessions that are directly

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linked with the students' discipline area. Lucy reports that it wasn't always possible to communicate directly with relevant subject specialist academics, and that information on students and their subject related needs could be quite limited. These limitations become apparent still further a little later in the interview, as can be seen in Extract 5 below.

EXTRACT 5

LP>	And we'd share, you know, suggestions, I've even, erm I've even delivered a, you know, a TEAMS session with one faculty member from informatics. Yeah, that was a, that was a really nice experience, I'd like to be able to do that a lot more. And then you get, you know get some who will give very sort of sparse details, and you have to really dig a bit to find out exactly er what students need. And I, you know, I think it's coming down from, you know, just not having had, you know, the same level of training in in working with international students, er specifically, and perhaps not knowing, not being able to pinpoint quite so easily what their needs are, and also just not knowing the students as well, as you know, they're not necessarily getting the chance to– you know a lot of these students, you know they'll never interact with one on one, they might, you know, come to their lectures or seminars, they might mark their work, but they're not necessarily their personal tutor, and the students don't necessarily go into their office hour. So, you know, a lot of these students are probably quite anonymous to them.

In this extract, Lucy is initially commenting on what she saw as a very valuable experience of participating in a collaborative academic support session via TEAMS in which she was working together with a subject specialist to provide targeted, in discipline academic literacy support. However, she then goes on to lament that this level of collaboration is not especially typical in current practices, adding that it can be difficult to liaise with subject specialists and gather relevant information on learner needs, with only very "sparse details". Lucy also then comments on the comparative experiences – and by extension her perceptions of relative expertise – of EAP

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tutors and subject specialists. Lucy sees EAP tutors as better equipped to understand and respond to the needs of international students than subject specialists, who have not received specialist training in working with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

This raises all manner of questions about the professional development of subject specialists and the level of support and training provided by the institution that an ongoing internationalization requires. This is an issue we will return to below in our discussion and concluding remarks.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, our research illustrates that critical cultural awareness, multilingual perspectives, and translanguaging pedagogies, when engaged with through independent professionalism, can be mutually reinforcing. Advancing these practices requires sustained collaboration across faculties and academic departments, reflective engagement with diversity, and a willingness to rethink established norms in EMI and HE.

In EMI for HE, translanguaging practices can offer strategies for supporting academic understanding, strengthening participation, and enhancing intercultural dialogue. Yet our research suggests a certain amount of ambivalence among tutors and subject specialists: while many appreciate the pedagogical value of allowing students to use multiple languages, concerns persist regarding fairness, assessment validity, and cultural appropriation. These tensions highlight the need for institutionally informed guidance and professional reflection on how multilingual resources can be harnessed ethically and effectively within EMI contexts.

Tutors who actively engage with students' multilingual practices demonstrate not only inclusive pedagogy but also an emergent professionalism grounded in critical awareness, intercultural engagement, and adaptability. Independent professionalism, however, exists in tension with forms of *sponsored professionalism*—institutionally prescribed expectations about what teachers should know and do. Our findings indicate that while EAP tutors often exhibit high levels of cultural awareness and openness to multilingual practices, subject specialists may be constrained by disciplinary norms, institutional standards, or limited training in working with international cohorts. These dynamics shape classroom practices, cross-faculty collaboration, and the success of programmes. Navigating cultural sensitivity, differing sociopolitical values, and decolonising agendas is highly complex. Limited interaction between faculties and support units further complicates coherent EMI provision, highlighting the need for more integrated institutional structures.

Our preliminary findings also indicate, however, that current provision for academic support among international students is not especially well aligned with the disciplinary setting

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of students' academic needs. Materials and curricula tend to be fairly generic (a factor which also became apparent during our observations), signalling a need for more subject-specific adaptation. While linguistic and cultural diversity is generally well understood and accommodated within pre-sessional and foundation programmes, and has clearly become a consideration when planning syllabus content and approach to pedagogy, this awareness may be less evident among subject-specialists more broadly across faculties. Limited embedded support and minimal liaison between EAP practitioners and faculty may further exacerbate these gaps.

Nonetheless, EAP tutors demonstrate strong professional commitment, a high level of research engagement, and a clear willingness to collaborate more closely with academic departments and students on foundation courses. Taken together, these insights highlight the significant work that still lies ahead. Strengthening collaboration between EAP specialists, subject lecturers, and students will be essential to developing more context-responsive and discipline-informed provision. Central to this endeavour is the cultivation of critical cultural awareness and a deeper appreciation of multilingualism, both of which are key to advancing genuinely independent professionalism in diverse academic settings. Furthermore, translanguaging offers a promising pedagogical approach for fostering intercultural competence and supporting learners' engagement with complex disciplinary content.

Looking forward, several avenues for research merit sustained attention. These include:

- examining how critical cultural awareness can shape pedagogical decision-making across different disciplines;

- investigating the role of multilingual practices—including translanguaging—in supporting academic literacy development;

- exploring effective models of collaboration between EAP tutors and subject specialists; and

- identifying the institutional conditions that enable reflexive, adaptive, and culturally responsive professional practices.

As higher education becomes increasingly multilingual and multicultural, embracing linguistic and cultural diversity will continue to pose challenges. Understanding how best to address these challenges remains an open empirical question and calls for sustained, collaborative research engagement.

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ELF AND TEACHER EDUCATION: ADDRESSING IDEOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO ELF-AWARE TEACHING PRACTICES

ELF E FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES: SUPERANDO BARREIRAS IDEOLÓGICAS PARA PRÁTICAS DE ENSINO CONSCIENTES DE ELF

Júlia Calvet-Terré[1]

ABSTRACT: The emergence of English as a global lingua franca (ELF) has heightened the need for reconceptualizing English language teaching (ELT), urging a re-evaluation of fundamental issues such as learners' goals, the notion of language ownership, the concept of linguistic competence, and the approach to error correction. While several frameworks have been proposed to integrate ELF into ELT (e.g., Dewey; Patsko, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er; Bayyurt, 2019; Sifakis; Bayyurt, 2018), deeply rooted ideologies continue to impede the full adoption of ELF-aware pedagogies. As Lowe (2020) argues, these ideologies serve as "counterframes" that hinder progress toward more inclusive and ELF-aware teaching approaches. Through a critical examination of these ideological barriers, drawing on examples from pre-service English teachers, this paper seeks to illustrate how certain entrenched ideologies –including native-speakerism and standard language ideology– function as significant obstacles to adopting an ELF-informed perspective. It argues that, to bridge the gap between theory and practice, teacher education must emphasize a critical approach that empowers prospective English teachers to question and challenge these deeply rooted beliefs. By fostering a more nuanced and critical understanding of English as a dynamic, global means of communication, teacher education can better equip future educators to embrace ELF-aware pedagogies that align with the diverse and multilingual contexts in which English is used today.

KEYWORDS: ELF; ELF-aware teaching; teacher education; native speakerism; standard language ideology.

RESUMO: A emergência do inglês como uma língua franca global (ELF) aumentou a necessidade de reconceituar o ensino da língua inglesa (ELT), exigindo uma reavaliação de questões fundamentais, como os objetivos dos aprendizes, a noção de posse da língua, o conceito de competência linguística e a abordagem da correção de erros. Embora várias abordagens tenham sido propostas para integrar o ELF no ELT (por exemplo, Dewey; Patsko, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er; Bayyurt, 2019; Sifakis; Bayyurt, 2018), ideologias profundamente enraizadas continuam a impedir a adoção plena de pedagogias sensíveis

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ao ELF. Como argumenta Lowe (2020), essas ideologias funcionam como "counterframes" que dificultam o avanço em direção a abordagens de ensino mais inclusivas e conscientes do ELF. Por meio de uma análise crítica dessas barreiras ideológicas, com exemplos de futuros professores de inglês, este artigo busca ilustrar como certas ideologias profundamente enraizadas – incluindo o nativismo e a ideologia da língua padrão – funcionam como obstáculos significativos para a adoção de uma perspectiva informada pelo ELF. O artigo argumenta que, para reduzir a lacuna entre teoria e prática, a formação de professores deve enfatizar uma abordagem crítica que capacite os futuros professores de inglês a questionar e desafiar essas crenças profundamente enraizadas. Ao promover uma compreensão mais refinada e crítica do inglês como um meio de comunicação dinâmico e global, a formação de professores pode preparar melhor os futuros educadores para abraçar pedagogias sensíveis ao ELF, alinhadas aos contextos diversos e multilíngues nos quais o inglês é usado hoje.

Palavras-chave: Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF); Ensino consciente do Inglês como Língua Franca; Formação de professores; Nativismo linguístico; Ideologia da língua padrão.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of English as a global lingua franca (ELF) has fundamentally transformed the landscape of English Language Teaching (henceforth, ELT), compelling educators and scholars to rethink traditional pedagogical approaches. With the vast majority of English speakers now being non-native, the growing recognition of ELF highlights the need for a comprehensive re-evaluation of key concepts within ELT, such as linguistic competence, error correction, and the very ownership of the language itself. While theoretical frameworks advocating for ELF-informed teaching have gained traction (e.g., Dewey; Patsko, 2018; Kemaloglu-Er; Bayyurt, 2019; Sifakis; Bayyurt, 2018), deeply embedded ideological barriers continue to hinder their widespread implementation. Among these, the persistent belief in native-speakerism –the notion that native speakers represent the ideal models for language use and teaching– remains a significant obstacle. Such ideology not only perpetuates discriminatory hierarchies but also limits the pedagogical potential of ELF-aware practices in classrooms worldwide (Llurda; Calvet-Terré, 2024).

In particular, the influence of native-speakerism and related ideologies, such as the standard language ideology, has been shown to impede the adoption of ELF-aware teaching practices. While these ideologies continue to shape teacher beliefs and instructional methods, recent research suggests that teacher education can play a pivotal role in challenging these ingrained perspectives. Such ideologies act as what Lowe (2020) terms as "counterframes", constraining progress toward ELF-aware pedagogies. This

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paper explores how these ideologícal frameworks, especially native-speakerism and standard language ideology, manifest in the realm of ELT, and examines the implications for teacher education. By advocating for a critical, ELF-informed approach in teacher training, this work argues that future educators must be equipped not only with linguistic knowledge but also with the tools to question and deconstruct deeply rooted assumptions that continue to shape English language instruction.

1 ELF-AWARENESS IN ELT

The global spread of English has led to a significant shift in the way English is taught and learned. Once seen primarily as the language of native speakers, English is now recognized as a global lingua franca, used predominantly for communication among non-native speakers. This transformation has raised pressing questions about how to teach English in a way that reflects its current role as a global tool for communication. Given the increasing multilingual use of English worldwide, this new reality calls for a shift in pedagogical approaches that were traditionally grounded in native-speaker norms and standards.

An ELF-aware approach in ELT responds to this shift by rethinking not only the content of language teaching but also the underlying assumptions that shape how English is taught. The goal of adopting an ELF-aware perspective is not to replace existing ELT practices but to enhance them by acknowledging the diversity of English use globally (Sifakis *et al.*, 2018). In this view, the purpose of ELF-aware teaching is to enrich current pedagogies by expanding their scope to include the realities of how English is spoken, understood, and used across the world, especially in contexts where non-native speakers predominate.

The fundamental shift in perspective required for ELF-aware teaching begins with acknowledging that English is no longer the sole domain of native speakers. Instead, English is a flexible and dynamic means of communication that transcends national boundaries. Research on ELF interactions highlights that communication in English often occurs between non-native speakers, with mutual intelligibility being prioritized over conformity to native-speaker norms (Seidlhofer, 2003). This perspective shifts the focus of ELT from an emphasis on native-like competence to one that values effective communication across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. It also challenges the

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longstanding assumption that native-speaker norms –especially in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary– are the gold standard for language learners.

In practical terms, adopting an ELF-aware approach requires a thorough reconsideration of teaching materials, instructional practices, and assessment methods. In this light, it is crucial to examine the materials used in ELT to determine whether they reflect the global realities of English use. For instance, many textbooks and curricula continue to feature native-speaker models of language use, often overlooking the increasing diversity of English varieties around the world (Kiczkowiak, 2021). This trend can be observed not only in general ELT but also in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where similar native-speaker biases persist (Calvet-Terré; Llurda, 2025). In contrast, an ELF-aware approach encourages educators to integrate a broader range of English varieties into the classroom, showcasing the fluidity and flexibility of the language. This includes recognizing that learners may encounter a variety of English accents, dialects, and communication styles in real-world interactions and should be equipped to engage with these variations confidently.

As Galloway (2018) and Seidlhofer (2003, 2021) point out, one of the key elements of ELF-aware teaching is the recognition that English learners do not need to mimic native speakers in order to communicate effectively. Instead, the focus shifts to developing intelligibility, fluency, and communicative competence. ELF-aware teaching prioritizes communicational goals over accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary. Native-like pronunciation is not necessary in ELF contexts; instead, learners are encouraged to focus on achieving intelligibility—making sure that their speech is understood, even if it differs from native speaker norms. This approach fosters an environment in which learners feel empowered to use English in ways that suit their own linguistic backgrounds and communication needs (Llurda; Calvet-Terré, 2024).

In this light, ELF-aware pedagogies also reconsider the role of error correction. In traditional ELT, errors are often treated as deviations from standardized norms and are corrected immediately to align learners' language use with the "proper" model. However, ELF-aware teaching takes a more nuanced approach, suggesting that errors should only be considered problematic when they hinder communication (Sifakis; Tsantila, 2020). This shift allows teachers to focus on the communicative purpose of language use, rather than treating every mistake as a flaw that needs to be corrected. Such an approach is

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particularly important in ELF contexts, where learners are more likely to interact with other non-native speakers who may share similar challenges.

The integration of ELF-awareness into teacher education is therefore central to the successful implementation of these principles. As Sifakis and Bayyurt (2018) outline, ELF-aware teacher education programs should involve multiple phases, starting with raising teachers' awareness of the ELF literature and exposing them to authentic ELF interactions. Teachers need to understand the global spread of English and the diverse contexts in which it is used. This phase helps them recognize the variety of English accents and uses in real-life communication, as well as the importance of accommodation skills in fostering effective communication among non-native speakers.

In the second phase of ELF-aware teacher education, teachers are encouraged to reflect critically on their own teaching practices and assumptions about English. This involves examining whether the materials they use acknowledge ELF and whether their instructional practices align with the diverse needs of their learners. Teachers should consider whether the target interlocutors in their teaching materials reflect the multilingual nature of English use and whether their pedagogical models represent a range of non-native speakers as legitimate users of English. This reflection helps teachers move beyond traditional Anglophone models and embrace a more pluralistic view of English.

The final phase of ELF-aware teacher education focuses on action: how to apply ELF-awareness in the classroom. Sifakis *et al.* (2018) argue that teachers should incorporate activities and materials that expose learners to real-life ELF interactions. For example, teachers can integrate videos, recordings, and discussions that feature non-native speakers using English in a variety of contexts. These resources help students recognize that English is not owned by any single group of speakers and that proficiency is not synonymous with conforming to native-speaker norms. Instead, successful communication is about mutual intelligibility, accommodating different English varieties, and fostering a shared understanding among speakers.

In essence, ELF-awareness in ELT requires a paradigm shift that redefines what it means to be "fluent" in English. Teachers must critically examine their own teaching practices and engage with the global reality of English use. By incorporating ELF-awareness into teacher education, future educators can better prepare their students for

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the diverse linguistic environments they will encounter, moving beyond the limitations of native-speakerism and embracing English as a dynamic, flexible tool for global communication. In this way, "ELF will eventually appear a desirable goal rather than a poor version of an idealised NS model" (Llurda; Mocanu, 2019, p. 175).

2 IDEOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO ELF-AWARE EDUCATION

2.1. NATIVE-SPEAKERISM

In the landscape of ELT, native-speakerism represents one of the most entrenched ideologies that perpetuate a narrow and exclusionary view of English language proficiency. This ideology, which holds that Native English-Speaking Teachers (henceforth, NESTs) embody the ideal linguistic and pedagogical standards, continues to undermine the diverse ways in which English is used around the world. Rooted in the belief that native speakers possess an inherent superiority in language competence and teaching skills, native-speakerism creates a rigid divide between NESTs and NNESTs. Even though a majority of English teachers and users globally are non-native speakers of the language, the pervasive notion that NESTs are the most qualified educators positions NNESTs as second-class professionals. This ideological hierarchy has profound implications for teaching practices, hiring policies, and learners' expectations within ELT (Selvi *et al.*, 2024).

The enduring presence of native-speakerism in ELT is evident across various spheres of ELT, including discriminatory hiring practices and the design and implementation of teaching materials that prioritise native-like proficiency as the gold standard. For example, many institutions continue to advertise English teaching positions with an implicit or explicit preference for NESTs, reflecting a deep-seated bias that equates "native" status with teaching expertise (Kiczkowiak, 2020; Paciorkowski, 2022). Such practices marginalize highly qualified non-native teachers and often limit their career advancement, reinforcing the myth that only those with native-like accents or fluency can effectively teach English. This situation has led to what Phillipson (1992) termed the "native-speaker fallacy", the erroneous belief that NESTs are inherently better equipped to teach English, an assumption that has profoundly shaped ELT practices for decades.

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Holliday (2005) expanded on this concept, arguing that native-speakerism in ELT not only elevates native speakers as models of language proficiency but also culturally positions them as the bearers of an "authentic" form of English. This framework links language proficiency to cultural authenticity, fostering an "us" versus "them" mindset that marginalizes non-native speakers both as teachers and as users of the language. By elevating native speakers, this ideology ignores the global multilingual nature of English, wherein non-native speakers now vastly outnumber their native counterparts.

The pervasive focus on achieving native-like proficiency is not only unrealistic but counterproductive. Learners are often led to believe that their English learning journey will culminate in emulating a "native" speaker, ignoring the functional, communicative competence that is crucial in real-world contexts. As a result, many students set unrealistic goals of fluency that mirror native speech patterns, sidelining the practical language skills they would actually need to succeed in diverse, multilingual contexts where English operates as a lingua franca, in which intelligibility and adaptability are valued far more than adherence to native norms (Seidlhofer, 2011). Consequently, this ideology distorts learners' expectations, shaping them to view English through a lens that prioritizes accent, pronunciation, rather than communicative effectiveness in a variety of international and intercultural settings.

Furthermore, native-speakerism significantly influences teaching materials and curriculum design, which are often geared toward the norms of Inner Circle varieties of English, such as British or American English. This emphasis on specific varieties of English fails to account for the multilingual and multicultural nature of English as it is used globally today. As a result, students are often ill-prepared to engage with English in its global context, where interactions occur predominantly among non-native speakers (Jenkins, 2015). By perpetuating the notion of a single "correct" form of English, ELT materials promote a limited view of language proficiency, disconnected from how English functions in the world. These materials do not equip students with the necessary skills to navigate ELF interactions, where communication often occurs between speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, each bringing their own communicative norms and strategies to the conversation (Seidlhofer, 2011; Kohn, 2024).

The persistence of native-speakerism also has consequences for language assessment, where non-native speakers are often evaluated according to native-like

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criteria, leading to unfair assessments of their language abilities. The undue emphasis on accent, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary choice can disadvantage learners who demonstrate high functional proficiency in English but do not conform to native-like norms. This focus on "idealized" native-speaker standard overlooks that fluency and intelligibility –rather than native-like pronunciation or accent– are the true indicators of successful communication in ELF contexts. As a result, learners may fail to recognize that they, too, are legitimate users of English, and may internalize the belief that they must "correct" their language to meet the unattainable standard of native proficiency.

In this light, traditional approaches to language teaching, deeply rooted in native-speakerist ideology, often prioritize adherence to prescriptive norms of grammar, pronunciation, and use that are considered representative of native varieties of English. This leads to a disproportionate focus on accuracy, particularly native-like pronunciation and grammar, rather than on communicative effectiveness. In ELF contexts, where English is used as a bridge between speakers of diverse linguistic backgrounds, intelligibility and clarity are far more crucial than conforming to native-speaker norms. Yet, in many classrooms, error correction tends to reinforce the belief that deviations from these norms constitute mistakes that must be corrected. Consequently, learners may develop a distorted understanding of what language proficiency truly involves, believing they must sound like native speakers to be understood or accepted. This fixation on native-like standards discourages learners from experimenting with language and hinders their ability to use English flexibly in real-world communication. An ELF-aware approach to error correction, on the other hand, would focus on ensuring that communication remains effective and intelligible, rather than enforcing conformity to prescriptive norms. By shifting the focus from native-speaker accuracy to communicative competence, teachers can better prepare learners for authentic ELF interactions, where the primary goal is mutual understanding, rather than rigid adherence to native-speaker norms (Seidlhofer; Widdowson, 2019; Grazzi, 2024).

Native-speakerism continues to serve as a formidable barrier to the integration of ELF-aware pedagogies in ELT. The challenge extends beyond simply integrating ELF as an additional framework in language teaching; it involves dismantling the deeply entrenched beliefs that shape our perceptions of who qualifies as a legitimate speaker and teacher of English. A move towards ELF-aware pedagogies requires not only the revision of teaching

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materials and practices but also a profound shift in how we conceptualize language competence itself. By embracing a more inclusive understanding of English that values linguistic diversity and communicative effectiveness over the pursuit of native-like competence, ELT can evolve into a field that truly reflects the role of English as a global lingua franca.

2.2. STANDARD LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

Standard language ideology, which posits a uniform, prestigious variety of a language as the "correct" or ideal form, continues to play a significant role in language teaching and assessment. This ideology is grounded in the assumption that a standardized form, often tied to written language and the speech of upper-middle-class groups, represents the ideal mode of communication. Lippi-Green (2012) challenges this perspective, arguing that the standard variety is typically codified by dominant institutions, which impose it as the norm while relegating other language varieties –such as regional dialects or non-standard forms– to inferior status. As a result, non-standard speakers are often viewed as linguistically "deficient", even though their forms are fully legitimate within their respective communities.

In language teaching, this ideology has fostered an emphasis on instructing learners in a singular, "correct" version of the language, typically the standardized variety. Teachers are often trained to prioritize grammatical accuracy, formal language use, and strict adherence to prescriptive norms, reinforcing the notion that linguistic competence is measured by conformity to these standards. Standardized language tests further entrench this perspective by penalizing deviations from the "correct" form, regardless of their impact on intelligibility or communication. This creates a paradox: learners are encouraged to conform to an idealized linguistic standard that does not align with the realities of global communication, where English functions as a lingua franca among speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

This tension between standardization and communication has sparked significant criticism from sociolinguists and applied linguists. Scholars like Blommaert (2010), Lippi-Green (2012), and Fairclough (2015) argue that standard language ideology not only undermines the legitimacy of non-standard forms but also reinforces social hierarchies by equating language proficiency with conformity to dominant linguistic norms. In multilingual contexts, particularly those involving ELF, the very notion of "error" becomes

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contentious, as linguistic variation is a natural and functional aspect of global communication rather than a deviation from a fixed standard.

The enduring influence of standard language ideology profoundly shapes approaches to error correction in language teaching. From this lens, many educators focus on identifying and "correcting" deviations from the standardized variety, often perceiving any non-standard form as an error. This creates a rigid framework where learners' language use is constantly evaluated against prescriptive norms, regardless of the context or communicative effectiveness of the form in question. Such an approach marginalizes learners who use non-standard varieties or whose so-called errors stem not from misunderstandings but from diverse linguistic backgrounds and communicative styles.

In multilingual settings, where speakers may blend various linguistic resources to convey meaning, this approach can be counterproductive. It may discourage learners from experimenting with the language, inhibiting creativity and authentic communication. Moreover, it reinforces the notion that there is only one "correct" way to speak, ultimately undermining learners' confidence and their sense of linguistic identity. As a result, error correction risks becoming less about fostering meaningful communication and more about enforcing linguistic conformity as a marker of social hierarchy. To move beyond this limitation, educators must adopt a more inclusive, flexible view of error correction –one that recognizes the legitimacy of different linguistic forms and values the communicative function of language over strict adherence to standardized norms.

At the heart of this critique is a call to deconstruct the social hierarchies that standard language ideology has long perpetuated. By framing non-standard varieties as "incorrect" or "inferior", this ideology has reinforced power structures that privilege certain social groups while marginalizing others. Language education, therefore, holds a critical dual role: it has the potential to either perpetuate these inequalities or help dismantle them. To achieve the latter, language teaching must move beyond an exclusive focus on standardized forms and instead foster respect for linguistic diversity, both in the classroom and in the broader social context. This involves not only reimagining curricula and assessments but also fostering an inclusive view of language that acknowledges the legitimacy of all linguistic varieties and recognizes their value in real-world communication.

To this end, a growing body of applied linguists advocates for moving beyond the prescriptive focus on standardized language toward a more descriptive approach that acknowledges and embraces linguistic diversity. Researchers in ELF studies emphasize that language teaching should reflect the dynamic, fluid nature of language use in the global context. For instance, Canagarajah (2007), Garcia and Li Wei (2014), and Pennycook and Otsuji (2018) highlight the importance of recognizing and valuing the varied forms of English spoken by multilingual speakers, who often adapt the language to meet the communicative needs of their specific contexts. This approach advocates for a pedagogy that is not bound by rigid norms but instead embraces the flexibility and creativity inherent in language use.

Ultimately, challenging standard language ideology is essential for creating a more equitable and inclusive approach to language teaching. This shift demands educators to critically examine the assumptions that have long underpinned language education, particularly the notion that there is a single, "correct" way to use a language. By adopting a more flexible, context-sensitive approach to instruction, teachers can empower learners to communicate effectively in a multilingual world, one where linguistic diversity is not merely tolerated but actively valued and celebrated.

3 A CASE IN POINT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ERROR GRAVITY

A case in point that further illustrates how entrenched ideologies such as native-speakerism and standard language ideology continue to influence perceptions of English language errors among future educators is the study reported in Calvet-Terré and Llurda (2023), conducted with 569 pre-service teachers of English from various universities in Spain. The primary objective of the study that is relevant here was to explore how these pre-service teachers perceive and evaluate non-standard forms of English, particularly how their educational backgrounds –shaped by factors such as study-abroad experiences, exposure to ELF-related courses, and their year of study– affect these perceptions.

The study was designed to examine the attitudes of these students towards four non-standard English sentences, each deviating from the prescriptive norms of Standard English. These sentences varied in both intelligibility and grammatical conformity. Participants rated the severity of each sentence on a 5-point scale, from 1 (least serious) to 5 (most serious), based on how "erroneous" they perceived them to be. The sentences

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differed in both grammatical structure and clarity of meaning: two were relatively intelligible despite their grammatical deviations, while the other two were less intelligible, with one being completely unclear. By presenting participants with carefully constructed sentences that vary in grammaticality and intelligibility, the research sought to reveal the ideological underpinnings behind what is perceived as a serious "error"— and why.

Importantly, these sentence types were carefully selected to reflect error categories that frequently occur in ELF contexts. That is, errors such as omission of the third person singular "-s" or use of double negatives often surface in ELF interactions without obstructing comprehension. Yet, they are consistently penalized in formal education.

The results, with mean scores detailed in Table 1, were consistent with the prevailing ideologies of native-speakerism and standard language ideology. The first two sentences, though non-standard in their features, were still intelligible and received relatively high gravity ratings, indicating that participants recognized them as significant errors. Sentences like "He sing well" and "She didn't do nothing" exemplify non-standard structures that, while deviant from standard grammar, remain easily comprehensible to English speakers. However, it is worth noting that the rating for *He sing well* (3.84) was surprisingly high in comparison to *She didn't do nothing* (3.11), despite the former being arguably more intelligible. This discrepancy suggests that participants' responses are influenced not solely by considerations of communicative efficiency, but by a deeply ingrained grammatical hierarchy that privileges conformity to prescriptive norms, especially those reinforced through formal education. Specifically, the third person singular "-s" appears to carry symbolic weight: its absence is interpreted not simply as a surface-level grammatical omission, but as a signifier of linguistic inadequacy or lack of proficiency. This highlights the symbolic significance attributed to certain "errors", revealing an underlying linguistic ideology that elevates form over communicative function.

Table 1. Mean score of perceived error gravity

Sentence	Perceived Error Gravity Mean
a. She didn't do nothing	3.11

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b. He sing well	3.84
c. The father of my mother is not at all	3.92
d. My book is not feel anything	4.29

In contrast, the last two sentences –*The father of my mother is not at all* and *My book is not feel anything*– were perceived as significantly more serious errors by the study's participants. These two sentences received the highest average error gravity scores, with 3.92 and 4.29 out of 5, respectively. This indicates that the participants, most of whom are training to become English teachers, found these constructions particularly problematic.

This suggests that when intelligibility breaks down, as in the case of sentence (d), participants do penalize the utterance more severely – but what is significant is that unintelligibility is not the only driver of perceived error. Both sentences deviate from standard grammar *and* fail to clearly convey meaning, especially in the absence of contextual cues. The sentence *My book is not feel anything*, in particular, was almost entirely unintelligible to respondents.

However, it is critical to emphasize that intelligibility alone does not fully account for the severity ratings. Sentence (c) – "The father of my mother is not at all" – despite being partially interpretable (some participants understood it to mean "My grandfather is not here"), still scored nearly as high as the entirely unintelligible sentence (d). This points to a default punitive response toward syntactic structures that are perceived as deviant, even when they do not significantly impede comprehension.

In this light, one of the more revealing findings in the study emerged when comparing the perceived gravity of *He sing well* with *The father of my mother is not at all.* Surprisingly, despite the stark difference in intelligibility between the two –*He sing well* being grammatically incorrect but entirely clear in meaning, and *The father of my mother is not at all* being both ungrammatical and semantically confusing– the participants rated them almost equally. The difference in their average scores was only 0.08 points, a margin so small that it suggests other forces at play beyond intelligibility. This finding exemplifies ideological filtering in action: certain non-standard features –such as the omission of the third person singular -s– trigger disproportionately negative evaluations due to their symbolic role in the construction of 'correct' English. This unexpected result points toward the deep internalization of traditional grammatical rules, particularly the

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enforcement of third person singular '-s' in English (*"He sings well"*). This feature is often presented as a fundamental marker of correctness in English language teaching, and thus its omission appears to trigger a strong negative response, even among advanced learners and pre-service teachers who might otherwise tolerate intelligible, non-standard forms. What emerges, then, is an educational reflex driven less by considerations of communicative adequacy and more by entrenched linguistic ideologies.

An analysis of these responses offers valuable insight into how pre-service teachers' attitudes are shaped not merely by their linguistic knowledge, but by their socialization into dominant ideologies surrounding language correctness and ownership. Their evaluations of error severity reveal an implicit alignment with native-speaker norms, even when such norms contradict principles of communicative effectiveness. The findings imply that certain errors retain a disproportionate weight in educational contexts due to their symbolic association with correctness, rather than any real impact on communication.

Furthermore, Calvet-Terré and Llurda (2023) revealed that exposure to ELF courses had a statistically significant but limited mitigating effect on severity ratings, particularly for sentence (b), suggesting that ideological beliefs are deeply entrenched and not easily shifted through brief pedagogical interventions. This indicates the need for sustained critical engagement in teacher education programs to challenge the authority of native norms and promote a more pluralistic orientation toward English.

These insights reinforce the argument that ideological barriers continue to hinder the integration of ELF principles in teacher education. Despite academic recognition of ELF's legitimacy, pre-service teachers remain largely governed by standard language ideology, which positions native-speaker English as the unquestioned ideal. Overall, the results of this study underscore the persistence of native-speakerism and standard language ideology in shaping ELF perceptions. Although the field increasingly acknowledges English as a global lingua franca, with diverse varieties spoken fluently and effectively by non-native speakers worldwide, this recognition has yet to fully permeate teacher education. The strong preference for standard English forms, as well as the harsh judgments against intelligible but non-standard usages, demonstrate that many pre-service teachers in Spain still view native-speaker English as the benchmark of correctness. This mindset goes beyond a matter of habit or lack of awareness; it is a

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reflection of systemic discourses that perpetuate linguistic hierarchies through curriculum design, assessment practices, and teacher education.

To address these challenges within the Spanish educational context, teacher education programs must adopt a more explicitly critical framework. This entails not only incorporating ELF-aware content but also actively engaging pre-service teachers in reflective dialogue about their own language ideologies and the broader sociolinguistic implications of English use. For example, courses might include analysis of authentic ELF interactions, critical reflection on standard language tests, tasks in which students assess intelligibility and communicative success rather than grammatical conformity and critically interrogate the privileging of native-speaker norms. If future educators continue to assess language use primarily through the lens of conformity to native norms, they may struggle to recognize and validate the legitimate, functional uses of English that emerge in global, multicultural contexts. The study highlights the urgent need for pedagogical reforms that challenge these persistent ideologies and prepare teachers to embrace a more pluralistic understanding of English use worldwide.

FINAL REMARKS: TOWARDS CRITICAL THINKING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The integration of an ELF-aware perspective into ELT largely depends on the training of pre-service teachers. As the future professionals who will shape students' understanding of English, pre-service teachers hold a crucial role in either reinforcing native-speakerist orientations or advocating for a more inclusive view of English as a global lingua franca. As Dewey and Pineda (2020) argue, pre-service teachers undergo a complex and gradual process of change, during which their inherited beliefs and practices give way to more progressive orientations. This transition is particularly evident as students advance in their studies, as they begin to recognize and critically assess the role of English in global communication. Calvet-Terré and Llurda's (2023) research indicates that as pre-service teachers progress further in their education, they are less susceptible to the influence of the native-speaker myth, which stands as a key ideological barrier in ELT. However, this transformation does not occur automatically; it requires deliberate intervention to foster critical thinking and reflection about the ways in which English is taught, learned, and adapted to meet its evolving role as a global lingua franca.

One of the key challenges in teacher training is the deeply ingrained nature of native-speakerism, which continues to dominate many language teaching paradigms. As outlined

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by Phillipson (1992), this ideology positions NESTs as the ideal models of language proficiency and pedagogy. Such beliefs persist despite the fact that non-native speakers now vastly outnumber native speakers, both as learners and teachers of English. Pre-service teachers are often exposed to this dominant ideology, leading them to view native-like proficiency as the gold standard. For non-native teachers, this can contribute to feelings of inadequacy or foster an internalized "impostor syndrome" (Bernat, 2008). In order to challenge this bias, teachers must first recognize its presence and critically reflect on how it shapes their teaching practices. This requires a fundamental shift in their understanding of what it means to be a competent user and educator of English, a shift that is crucial for advancing towards an ELF-aware pedagogy.

As Dewey (2014) argues, teachers need to be encouraged to develop critical awareness, a quality that can only be nurtured through continuous reflection on their professional beliefs and practices. To support this, teacher education programs must offer pre-service teachers opportunities for self-examination, prompting them to question established assumptions about language and its teaching. This goes beyond merely recognizing the diversity of English varieties; it requires asking deeper questions about the implications of these varieties in the classroom. For instance, teachers must critically evaluate whether emphasizing native-speaker norms in their curriculum truly meets their students' needs or whether it reinforces outdated ideas about language ownership and proficiency. As teachers develop critical awareness, they come to understand that English is not a rigid, prescriptive system, but rather a dynamic language spoken by a wide range of multilingual and multicultural speakers in diverse contexts. This shift in perspective is vital for breaking free from the constraints of native-speakerism.

To support this shift, Dewey and Pineda (2020) emphasize the importance of fostering a progressive orientation among pre-service teachers, one that enables them to connect theory, research, and practice in ways that challenge traditional pedagogical frameworks. As Dewey (2014) suggests, narrative inquiry is a powerful tool for promoting critical reflection. Through narrative inquiry, teachers can engage in self-examination and reassess their beliefs and practices in response to the realities of ELF communication. This approach encourages teachers to reflect on how their own experiences and assumptions influence their teaching, enabling them to adopt a more flexible, context-sensitive approach to language instruction.

At the heart of an ELF-aware pedagogy is the recognition that English serves as a global tool for communication among people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, teaching English should not be confined to promoting native-like proficiency but should prioritize fostering communicative competence across a range of contexts. As Sifakis and Bayyurt (2018) outline, ELF-aware teacher education follows a three-phase approach, starting with exposure to the expanding body of ELF literature and real-world examples of ELF communication. This exposure phase helps teachers recognize the global relevance of English and the importance of effective communication skills in diverse settings. However, the process must extend beyond mere exposure; teachers need to develop critical awareness of how these insights apply to their specific teaching contexts. This phase encourages teachers to reflect on their prior assumptions about language acquisition, the role of native speakers, and the relevance of Standard English for their students. Only through such reflection can teachers begin to question the deeply ingrained assumptions that continue to shape language teaching practices.

The final phase of Sifakis and Bayyurt's approach –*action plan*– requires teachers to translate their reflections into practice by critically evaluating and revising their teaching materials. This process enables teachers to align their materials and practices with the global role of English as a lingua franca. However, many current teacher training programs, particularly in Spain, fall short in supporting pre-service teachers as they transition from exposure and critical awareness to action. While some programs introduce ELF concepts, they often fail to provide adequate opportunities for teachers to apply these ideas in real-world teaching contexts, especially during practicum experiences. The lack of meaningful integration between theory, research, and practice means that pre-service teachers may graduate without a clear understanding of how to incorporate ELF principles into their teaching.

In this light, Miao *et al.* (2025) found that while brief exposure to diverse Global English varieties in an 8-week intervention led to short-term improvements in listening comprehension, the effects were not sustained over time. This highlights a significant challenge in integrating ELF perspectives. Although initial exposure can enhance learners' comprehension skills, these improvements may not be long-lasting unless sustained engagement and more production-oriented instruction are incorporated. This reinforces the need for teacher training programs to incorporate not only awareness-raising

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activities but also opportunities for active engagement with diverse English varieties in real-world contexts.

To bridge this gap, teacher education programs must offer more opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in sustained, reflective practice. Teachers should be encouraged not only to explore how ELF concepts can be integrated into classroom activities and materials but also to reflect on broader issues such as the cultural assumptions embedded in their teaching resources, the role of Standard English, and whether their materials adequately represent the diverse contexts in which English is used. By guiding pre-service teachers through critical reflection on these issues, teacher education programs can help them develop the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of English as a global lingua franca. Such an approach will empower them to design teaching practices that are more inclusive and aligned with the sociolinguistic realities of contemporary English.

The findings from Calvet-Terré and Llurda (2023) study further underscore this need. They reveal how deeply internalized ideologies –such as the prioritization of native-like forms and intolerance toward intelligible yet non-standard usage– persist even among pre-service teachers nearing the end of their training. These insights emphasize that simply introducing ELF concepts is insufficient; without targeted opportunities for critical reflection and guided application in authentic teaching contexts, these ideological barriers remain largely unchallenged. Therefore, teacher education programs in Spain must actively address such findings by embedding systematic reflection, practice-oriented ELF tasks, and ongoing mentorship.

Ultimately, fostering ELF awareness in pre-service teachers extends beyond adapting teaching materials; it involves transforming how teachers perceive the role of English in the world. If teacher education programs equip future educators with the tools to critically reflect on their own practices, challenge dominant ideologies like native-speakerism and standard language ideology, and embrace the diversity of Englishes, they will be better prepared to create inclusive, communicative learning environments that prepare students for real-world interaction in a multilingual world. In this way, pre-service teachers will play a central role in reshaping the landscape of ELT to reflect the global nature of English, and in equipping their students with the skills they need to communicate effectively and confidently in diverse, cross-cultural interactions.

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ILF NO LIVRO DIDÁTICO DE INGLÊS PRODUZIDO EM PORTUGAL: CONTRIBUIÇÕES DE PROFESSORES EM FORMAÇÃO

Silene Cardoso[1]

ABSTRACT: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been widely acknowledged in diverse areas (Seidlhofer, 2011; Baker, 2015; Mauranen, 2018), particularly in English language teaching (ELT), as classrooms become more linguistically and culturally diverse. However, most EFL textbooks still prioritize cultural representations from the UK and the US and their standard varieties (Leung; Lewkowicz, 2018; Guerra et al., 2022). In the Portuguese context, state schools have also become increasingly multilingual/multicultural (Oliveira, 2023). These contexts where ELF is naturally used are ideal for promoting Intercultural Communication (IC) and Intercultural Awareness (ICA; Baker, 2015). In this study, I discuss the perspectives of a group of pre-service teachers regarding cultural and accent representations in EFL textbooks, based on a questionnaire. These participants adapted two textbook activities (grades 7 and 10th) in a workshop session to address IC and ICA. Also, further suggestions for adapting teaching materials are provided. Therefore, this paper offers additional ideas and strategies for teachers to develop and adjust their materials to better address IC and ICA.
KEYWORDS: English as a Lingua Franca, Intercultural Communication, EFL textbooks

RESUMO: O Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF) tem sido amplamente reconhecido em diversas áreas (Seidlhofer, 2011; Baker, 2015; Mauranen, 2018), sobretudo no ensino da língua inglesa, à medida que as salas de aula se tornam mais linguística e culturalmente diversas. Entretanto, a maioria dos livros didáticos de inglês ainda prioriza representações culturais do Reino Unido e dos Estados Unidos, e suas variedades padrão (Leung; Lewkowicz, 2018; Guerra et al., 2022). No contexto português, as escolas públicas também vêm se tornando mais multilíngues/multiculturais (Oliveira, 2023). Esses ambientes, nos quais o ILF é naturalmente utilizado, são propícios à promoção da Comunicação Intercultural (IC) e da Consciência Intercultural (ICA; Baker, 2015). Neste estudo, discuto as perspectivas de um grupo de professores em formação acerca das

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representações culturais e dos sotaques nos livros didáticos de ILE, coletadas por meio de um questionário. Em um *workshop,* os participantes adaptaram duas atividades (do 7º e do 10º anos) para explorar a IC e ICA. Além disso, apresento sugestões adicionais para professores desenvolverem e ajustarem seus materiais visando abordar IC e ICA mais eficazmente.

Palavras-chave: Inglês como Língua Franca, Comunicação Intercultural, Livro Didático de Inglês

INTRODUCTION

Communicating across cultures has become increasingly complex, especially in recent decades. As the number of immigrants and refugees rises, tensions and conflicts of all kinds are globally evident. Consequently, the rise in immigration and global mobility has posed various societal challenges, and education is no exception. Schools are becoming more diverse, and equipping students to communicate effectively and respectfully across boundaries is essential.

Since English is the global lingua franca, connecting it to specific nations or cultural groups is progressively difficult. Speaking mostly as a second or international language (Crystal, 2020), English is usually the common shared language between immigrant learners and their peers/teachers. The number of people speaking English as a second or international language has vastly surpassed the number of native speakers. Despite these facts, English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks continue to overrepresent native speakers and Standard British English (SBE) and Standard American English (SAE) varieties as the only legitimate models to be followed by learners. ELT materials often fail to portray the great majority of cultural backgrounds involved in current interactions in English.

Drawing on these facts and the literature of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Intercultural Communication (IC), and Intercultural Awareness (ICA), a workshop on textbook adaptation was developed for pre-service teachers, specifically a group of MA students enrolled in the professional ELT master's programs.

This paper begins by outlining the current context of immigrant students in Portuguese schools and presenting the theoretical background. The methodology involved a workshop format that included an introductory presentation of the key concepts (IC, Intercultural Competence [ICC], ICA, and ELF), followed by a brief questionnaire completed by the participants, the presentation of a case study regarding

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cultural representation in textbooks, and the adaptation of two selected activities. Participants' responses and suggestions for adaptations are presented and discussed. It concludes with further suggestions for adapting textbook activities to better reflect IC and ICA from an ELF perspective.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate a group of pre-service teachers' perceptions of cultural and accent representation in English Language textbooks designed in Portugal and analyze their suggestions for adapting textbook activities to align more closely with IC and ICA from an ELF perspective.

The high importance of professional development programs focused on the adaptation and design of ELT materials to particularly reflect an ELF perspective has been increasingly documented for both in-service (e.g., Sifakis et al., 2022; Cavalheiro; Guerra; Pereira, 2022; Chen, 2023) and pre-service teacher education (e.g., Cavalheiro, 2016; Chien, 2022; Bayyurt; Lopriore; Vettorel, 2018). Despite its limitations, the present study is expected to highlight the growing need for more targeted professional initiatives within pre-service teacher education in Portugal, specifically focused on adapting and creating ELT materials that reflect greater cultural and linguistic diversity, and explicitly integrating IC and ICA strategies from an ELF perspective.

1 SITUATING THE RESEARCH

1.1 CONTEXT

In recent years, a substantial increase in immigration flows and the refugee crisis have posed significant challenges worldwide. This influx of immigrants has profoundly impacted the educational landscape across Europe, and Portugal is no exception, as it has seen a notable rise in immigrant and refugee students.

Portugal saw the most significant increase in immigrant/refugee students among the OECD countries between 2018 and 2022 (OECD, 2022). The *2023 Immigration Report* (Oliveira, 2023) indicates that in the academic year 2021/2022, students from diverse national backgrounds accounted for 8.7% of enrollments in basic and secondary state schools in mainland Portugal. Since the academic year 2015/2016, when non-Portuguese students represented just 3.5% (37,939) of all enrolled students, their numbers have more than doubled in less than a decade. A more recent document regarding the academic

year 2022/2023, *The Profile of Student* (DGEEC, 2024), reports that approximately 12% of students in basic education and 9.7% in secondary education are from diverse origins. Although the *Profile of Student* includes students from both state and private schools, almost 90% of learners in basic education and over 70% in secondary education are reported to be enrolled in public education. Additionally, it is also important to note that this figure may not fully capture the diversity of learners in classrooms. This discrepancy arises because many students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds who obtain Portuguese citizenship are excluded from the immigration reports. Table 1 displays the 10 most represented nationalities in Portugal's basic and secondary state education system for the academic year 2022/2023.

TABLE 1: 10 MOST REPRESENTED NATIONALITIES IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS

School year: 2022/2023			
Nationality	Basic Education	Secondary Education	Total
Brazil	52512	15320	67832
Angola	9219	3900	13119
Cape Verde	3658	2362	6020
Guinea-Bissau	3148	1422	4570
France	3132	821	3953
Ukraine	5508	1167	6675
São Tomé and Príncipe	2537	3325	5862
China	2148	802	2950
India	2148	488	2636
United Kingdom	1851	378	2229

Source: Translated from *The Profile of Student* (DGEEC, 2024)

While many of the most represented nationalities are from former Portuguese colonies, and these students speak different varieties of Portuguese (or creole), they certainly do not share the same cultural backgrounds. Since many of these students communicate in English regardless of their proficiency level, the English language classroom may offer a valuable space for bridging cultural gaps.

Another point to consider is the Portuguese curricular documents, namely *"Essential Learnings" (Aprendizagens Essenciais;* Ministério da Educação, 2018), which outline the content for each school grade. English is a compulsory subject from grades 3 to 11; in grade 12, it depends on the students' course choices (scientific-humanistic, vocational, or artistic). Although intercultural competences and diversity are emphasized in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* for the English subject across all levels of education, the focus still remains on Anglophone cultures. Consequently, textbooks developed in the country must adhere to the content and principles outlined in the curriculum. The pedagogical council of each school or school cluster selects textbooks from the certified lists through the online platform SIME-MEGA. As described on the website of the Directorate-General for Education, textbooks are assessed and certified by accredited higher education institutions to ensure their scientific and pedagogical quality and guarantee compliance with the official curriculum guidelines (Ministry of Education/DGE, 2025). Therefore, equipping future teachers to adapt textbook activities to better incorporate intercultural communication strategies, considering the linguistic and cultural diversity of English speakers and the specific needs of their teaching contexts, is essential.

1.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The global spread of English has been shaped by a range of factors, including colonization, economic and political power, globalization, technological advancements, and migration flows (Graddol, 2006; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024), to mention a few. Large-scale immigration flows have contributed to greater linguistic diversity in English, as multilingual English users integrate the language into their daily interactions, leading to the emergence of new varieties and localized adaptations (Blommaert, 2010; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024). Furthermore, English plays a dominant role in international business, higher education, scientific research, and digital communication, further reinforcing its global status (Crystal, 2012; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024).

As noted by Crystal (2019), there are more than 80 territories where English is used as a first language (L1) or is an official or institutionalized language (L2). It has been estimated that there are more than 388 million L1 English speakers and around 897 million L2 speakers. However, determining the overall number of people who currently speak English worldwide is challenging, as this figure continues to grow. It has been estimated that more than 2 billion people use English globally (Crystal 2019). Consequently, English is solidifying its position as the world's primary lingua franca, serving as a bridge for communication among billions across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been reconceptualized over the decades. Jennifer Jenkins (2015) outlines the evolution of ELF research into three overlapping phases: ELF 1, ELF 2, and ELF 3. ELF 1 focused on coding the common linguistic features among non-native speakers, whereas ELF 2 shifted toward recognizing the fluid and dynamic interactions among natives, non-natives, and mixed groups. ELF 3 focuses on multilingual repertoires, identity, and translingual practices among English speakers (Jenkins, 2015), referring to a multi-lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024). The centrality of intercultural awareness (Baker, 2015) is therefore increasingly relevant in ELF interactions. The fourth phase of ELF, still in early development as noted by Jenkins and Morán Panero (2024), focuses on decolonizing research and practices related to multilingualism with English through principles of social justice.

Despite the diversity and fluid dynamics recognized in ELF research, English language textbooks continue to focus mostly on the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers, portraying the former as the sole and ideal model to be achieved. While some advancements have been made in reflecting diversity, EFL textbooks often overlook the diverse backgrounds of English speakers involved in these interactions or fail to incorporate intercultural communication strategies effectively. Since no text is culturally neutral, Leung and Lewkowicz emphasize that "textbooks provide learners with a perception of the English-speaking world through the lens of the textbook writers/publishers. Typically, this world continues to be viewed from the vantage point of the idealised Anglophone world user." (2018, p. 65). Most importantly, textbooks are also commercial products: while following curricular guidelines, they are also shaped by market demands. Therefore, it is essential that these curricular documents establish clear

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guidelines for the inclusion of diversity, intercultural communication strategies through an ELF approach in ELT.

For example, Brazil's Common National Curriculum Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular — BNCC) specifies that English language teaching should adopt an English as a Lingua Franca approach. Despite the controversy around BNCC, mainly because the document lacks more practical guidance on how to implement this perspective, the inclusion of the ELF approach is valuable, as it encourages critical discussions on the topic and prompts publishers to adopt a broader view of language education (Siqueira, 2025). In conjunction with the curriculum, the National Textbook Program (*Programa Nacional do Livro Didático – PNLD*) plays a decisive role. The guidelines issued in the official calls have reinforced a more intercultural and diverse perspective for English language textbooks.

Culture has long been regarded as an essential element in language education, particularly in the field of ELT. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, culture has traditionally been approached from an essentialist view (Baker, 2015). Nonetheless, the increasing number of studies (e.g., Baker, 2011; 2022; Byram, 2021; Cogo, 2018; Cavalheiro, 2015; Jenkins; Baker; Dewey, 2018) highlight the need for a more inclusive, non-essentialist approach to culture in ELT.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is an approach developed by Michael Byram (1997, 2021) that has widely contributed to including a more inclusive view of culture. Widely adopted in the Western world, particularly in European documents, ICC combines intercultural competence with linguistic/communicative competence to form the "intercultural speaker". This broader perspective of language learning and teaching better reflects the concept of ELF, as the intercultural speaker needs competencies beyond just linguistic skills. However, as Baker and Ishikawa (2021) note, this model presents some challenges for the ELF approach because it still focuses on national cultures. A broader and more fluid view of culture, which recognizes the dynamic and multifaceted nature of cultural identities, better relates to the reality of ELF contexts.

In this context, a valuable concept for this study is Intercultural Awareness (ICA):

[A] conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication. (Baker 2015, p. 163).

As explained by Baker (2022), the term "intercultural awareness" is used over "cultural awareness" to highlight the focus on the processes of intercultural communication, rather than on understanding specific "other" cultures and languages. In this context, culture is not linked to specific nations or nationalities, nor does it imply a distinction between "our" culture and that of the "other." ICA is seen as an ongoing process and not a static set of knowledge (Baker, 2022). The author further explains that while it is possible to see an attempt to incorporate a more international perspective on culture in more recent ELT materials, these resources still largely reflect a predominance of the "native" speaker norm and the Anglophone cultures. Other uses of English, particularly in intercultural and multilingual contexts, are rarely represented. In the Portuguese context, as previously discussed, despite the inclusion of cultural diversity in the curricular documents, namely the *Aprendizagens Essenciais*, there remains a clear emphasis on Anglophone cultures, particularly in basic education.

As highlighted by some scholars (e.g., Sales & Gimenez, 2010; Pennycook, 2004), while English is connected to prestigious positions in many societies, it also creates or reinforces forms of exclusion. This creates a paradox: English can open up opportunities and possibilities for communication, but at the same time, it can also create barriers of exclusion. However, when the ELF perspective is adopted in ELT, it may be fertile soil to develop ICA (Baker, 2015) because it helps connect learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This research also draws on findings from previous studies on textbooks designed in Portugal (Cardoso, 2023; Guerra et al., 2022; and Guerra; Cavalheiro, 2019). These studies find that cultural representations of the UK and the US are clearly emphasized in locally designed English textbooks. This trend is also true for English language varieties, where British and American Standards are clearly predominant in audiovisual resources. While these findings highlight a limitation concerning culture and linguistic diversity in ELT materials developed in Portugal, this study aims to contribute by sharing the voices of pre-service teachers who are already engaging with these materials during their training and are likely to continue relying on them throughout their teaching careers. Also,

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it also aims to emphasize the importance of deepening IC, ICA, and ELF concepts and practices in teacher education programs.

Therefore, it is relevant to stress the importance of an ELF awareness approach in teacher education. Broadly, ELF awareness involves a critical reflection about native-speakerism, including awareness of language use, instructional choices, and the essential learnings for international communication (Sifakis; Kordia, 2021).

2 METHODOLOGY

The workshop aimed to explore IC and ICA through practical work that involved adapting activities from locally designed ELT textbooks. It was designed for pre-service teachers, specifically MA students enrolled in a professional ELT Master's program. Although the participants are referred to here as "pre-service" teachers, some of them had previous teaching experience in different contexts.

The workshop was conducted during a 1.5-hour session and delivered to two groups, a total of 23 MA students. These pre-service teachers had already been presented with the concepts of IC, ICC, and ICA. The objective was to provide participants with additional opportunities to enhance their understanding and application of the above-mentioned concepts, especially ICA, in their teaching practices, through simple yet effective adaptations to existing textbook activities. After a brief recap of these key concepts and an introduction to ELF, participants were asked to complete a short online questionnaire (Appendix A), which consisted of four questions. This questionnaire aimed to assess their perceptions of cultural and language representation in English language textbooks designed in Portugal.

Following the questionnaire, the workshop proceeded with a presentation of a case study on an analysis of cultural representation related to countries in EFL textbooks. The analysis presented focused on two locally designed textbooks, *Engaging 7* (Esteves; Viana; Moreira, 2021) and *MySelfie 10* (Rodrigues; Mendes, 2021), which are intended for Grades 7 and 10, respectively. The key findings demonstrated a cultural overrepresentation of the UK (primarily England) and the USA (Cardoso, 2023). This discussion encouraged critical reflection on the depiction of cultural elements in ELT materials and the extent to which they fail to follow the principles of ICC, ICA, and ELF. The pre-service teachers were

organized into groups, and two activities from the aforementioned textbooks were presented for adaptation. Each group was tasked with suggesting practical and feasible adaptations to one of the two activities presented. Therefore, they were not required to change the core resources of the activities (e.g., rewriting or searching for a new text), but rather to propose adaptations that would be viable in the context of multilingual/multicultural classrooms, as well as other challenges, such as time constraints.

The first activity proposed for adaptation was a reading task from the textbook *Engaging 7*. The original reading activity presented a text about houses owned by two celebrities: John Travolta (American) and Naomi Campbell (British). The activity centered on reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises, lacking critical thinking questions. This reading task was linked to a controlled writing exercise in which learners would complete a description of another American celebrity's house (Will Smith). In this exercise, learners read a profile of Smith's house and complete the description.

In addition to emphasizing American and British cultural icons only, the text depicts realities that are disconnected from learners' experiences. While the text includes curious information (a park for Travolta's plane; Campbell's spaceship-house), which could initially capture learners' interest due to its novelty, it fails to address themes that 12-year-olds would identify with. Furthermore, a high native-speaker centrality is potentially irrelevant for L2 learners and "will have limited motivational potential for learners in lingua franca contexts" (Prodromou; Mishan, 2008).

The second activity presented for adaptation was a listening and writing task from the textbook *MySelfie 10*. The original listening activity focused on "The Cracked Pot", described as an ancient Indian folktale. The story is about a water bearer who carries two pots, one of which is cracked and leaks water along the path. This cracked pot feels it has nothing but flaws and laments its imperfections. However, the water bearer explains that he had noticed the pot was leaking and had planted flowers along the way on that side of the pot. The flowers blossomed only because they received water through the pot's cracks.

The listening task included comprehension questions and an exercise to rewrite the story based on images of the key events. The illustrations featured a brown-skinned man wearing a turban and carrying water pots. While the story provides a valuable

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opportunity to discuss self-acceptance and creativity, which are relevant themes, especially for adolescent learners, it also reinforces cultural stereotypes. Additionally, the audio resource was narrated by a British male, using Received Pronunciation, which raises concerns about cultural authenticity, representation, and power relations. The critical thinking questions related to this activity focused on the self-helping/self-acceptance part of the story, which is undoubtedly beneficial, but overlooked the underlying cultural bias. For example, the concepts of what is understood as "qualities" and "faults" are not suggested for further reflection or discussion, nor is the illustration of the Indian bearer or the British narrator, which may convey the idea of an ancient Indian story told by the colonizer.

After the participants elaborated their suggestions for adapting one of the two activities, each group presented their ideas, followed by a discussion. The workshop aimed to provide these pre-service teachers with a practical opportunity to adapt a piece of material that would highlight the significance of fostering intercultural awareness in language education.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire (Appendix A) completed by the participants consisted of four questions. The first three questions focused on their perceptions regarding: 1. the representation of nations (portrayed as cultural groups and icons), 2. the use of authentic texts, and 3. accents in audio and video materials in ELT textbooks designed in Portugal. The final question (4) explored the participants' insights on IC-related topics. Respondents used a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (with a neutral option available), to express their opinion on topics such as: the representations of Portuguese culture; the depiction of nations and cultural groups, the diversity of English varieties/accents beyond Standard British and Standard American; interactions among diverse English speakers (L1/L2/multilingual/a mix of them); strategies to develop IC, and reflections on learners' own culture. The data were analyzed quantitatively, and the findings are also discussed qualitatively, being organized into themes to better explain patterns and categories.

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The findings from the first question revealed that approximately 65% of the respondents (n = 15) believe that the UK and the US are always represented. Over 69% of them (n = 16) consider that non-English speaking nations are rarely represented. In contrast, around 48% of respondents (n = 11) indicate that other English-speaking countries are sometimes represented. Therefore, it is relevant to note that even other English-speaking nations are culturally underrepresented compared to the UK and the US. Chart 1 illustrates their answers.

Chart 1. Perceptions of a group of pre-service teachers on the representation of nations in textbooks designed in Portugal
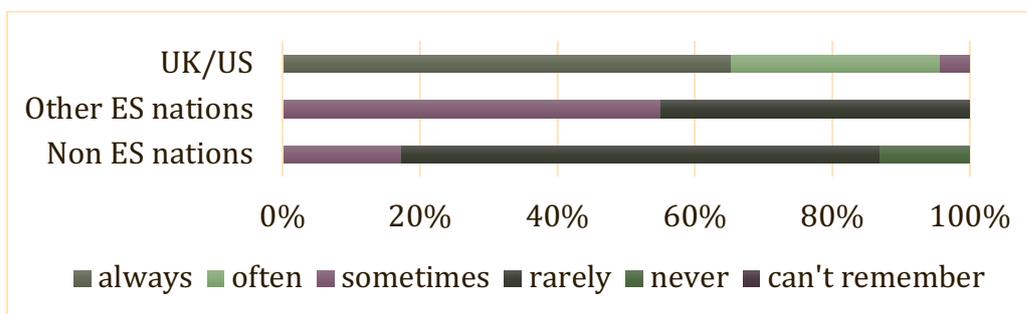
The findings on perceptions of the English accent representation (Q3) reveal that around 65% of respondents (n = 15) believe that the Standard British English (SBE) accent, primarily associated with Received Pronunciation, is always present in ELT textbook resources. Similarly, almost 61% of the respondents (n = 14) think that the Standard American English (SAE) accent is often included. Interestingly, only a small percentage, 13% (n = 3), believe that SAE are always present. In contrast, over 52% of them (n = 12) indicated that non-native speaker accents are never represented. Moreover, other native English accents, beyond SBE and SAE, are perceived as rarely represented by almost 48% of the respondents (n = 11), and only approximately 8% (n = 2) of the participants feel that these accents are often included. Chart 2 illustrates these findings.

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Chart 2. Perceptions of a group of pre-service teachers on the representation of English accents in textbooks designed in Portugal
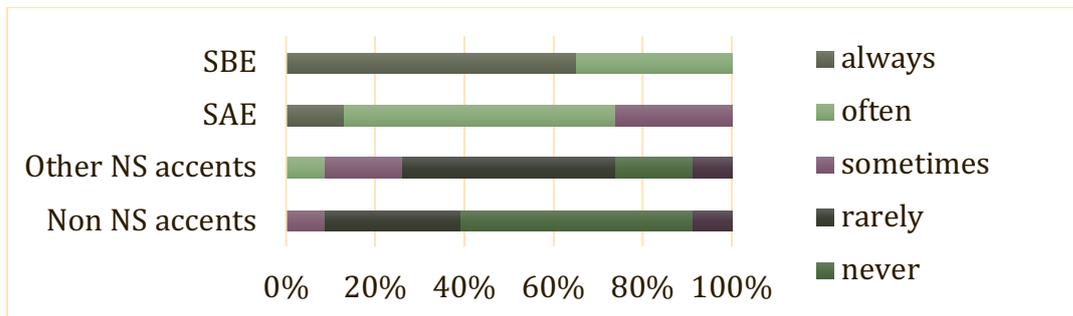
The findings from Q2 also reinforce the participants' perceptions regarding the predominance of SAE and SBE compared to other English-speaking accents, and even more so of non-English-speaking accents, which most believe are never included.

The terms Standard American English (SAE) and Standard British English (SBE) are used here in a broader sense to refer to the main characteristics of English that are commonly associated with these two major varieties and usually approached in ELT. Also, in line with Lippi-Green's (2012) position, the term standard (and consequently, non-standard) is applied in this study only for descriptive purposes, with no intention to attach intrinsic values to them.

Participants' perceptions of the use of authentic texts have been examined in Q2. Authentic texts are defined in this study as texts written for any purpose other than teaching/learning English, whether written, audio, or audiovisual. Over 65% of the respondents (n = 15) believe that a small percentage of texts, including audio and video clips, are authentic and presented without adaptation. In fact, most written texts in Portuguese English textbooks tend to be adapted. Fortunately, as Luís (2024) pointed out, these adaptations primarily involve the length of the texts, with minimal changes to the language.

The questionnaire also explored the perspectives of these pre-service teachers regarding diverse aspects of cultural representation, accent/ language variety awareness, and IC strategies. The majority (82%; n = 19) strongly agree that textbooks should feature cultural groups related to English-speaking nations beyond the UK and the US. Also, over 65% (n = 15) strongly agree that it is essential to have a greater diversity of cultural groups in English language textbooks. Over 69% (n = 16) of the respondents view the

portrayal of individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as highly relevant. Similar findings are observed in relation to diverse English accents and varieties. Over 60% (n = 14) of the respondents acknowledge that English textbooks should not only portray representations of SAE or SBE accents but also include other varieties. Consequently, for over 43% (n = 10) of the participants, including diverse foreign accents in English, such as the Portuguese accent, this is particularly important. Also, more than 47% (n = 11) of these pre-service teachers strongly agree that textbooks must incorporate interactions among diverse English speakers (natives and non-natives, and only non-native speakers). In relation to intercultural communication, over 73% (n = 17) strongly agree that it is crucial for textbooks to focus on strategies to develop IC. The same proportion agreed that even for beginner-level learners (A1/A2), it is relevant to cover activities to raise awareness about the cultural and linguistic diversity of English speakers worldwide.

Overall, these findings suggest that these pre-service teachers perceive the need to move beyond traditional norms and integrate more diversity regarding English-speaking communities, accents, and intercultural communication strategies in English language textbooks.

3.2 PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SUGGESTIONS

Following the questionnaire, the participants were organized into five groups to adapt one of the two activities previously described. Two groups adapted Activity A (Reading activity – Grade 7), and three other groups presented suggestions for Activity B (Listening activity – Grade 10). The suggested adaptations were analyzed using the Intercultural Awareness model (Baker, 2015).

Original Activity A

The original Activity A, extracted from *Engaging 7* (pp. 84-85), consisted of five exercises: 1) making predictions as a pre-reading exercise, 2) reading and confirming predictions, 3) and 4) comprehension, 5) vocabulary. While the exercises on form and vocabulary are useful, the absence of critical thinking questions, along with the exclusive focus on British and American celebrities whose lifestyles are disconnected from students' reality, does not reflect the role of English as a global lingua franca.

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Adaptations – Activity I

Group A – For the pre-reading task, instead of asking students about how they think celebrities' houses look, the group suggested a comparison among celebrities' houses they would know about, in a quick discussion. For the while-reading section, the group suggested a vocabulary exercise focusing on accommodations that students might not be familiar with and find unusual. During the while-reading task, students would be required to observe what the celebrities in the text value in a house. As a follow-up discussion, learners would share what they value in a house with the whole group. Finally, as a production and post-reading task, learners would work in groups to describe their dream house. The suggestion was also analyzed against the three levels of ICA (Baker, 2015), namely Basic Cultural Awareness, Advanced Cultural Awareness, and Intercultural Awareness. The activity proposed explores the first level of the model, focusing on the awareness of superficial cultural elements and preferences while comparing them to those of other cultural groups. However, it lacks a more critical reflection on cultural values and identity.

Group B suggested keeping the activities from the textbook and adding an extension task. After the reading exercises from the textbook, learners would be organized into groups to discuss their houses, favorite areas in their houses, and the similarities and differences in their preferences. This type of discussion would personalize their learning experience, and by sharing their favorite places within their homes, students from different cultural backgrounds could discover similarities, fostering engagement between them. In the second part of this extension discussion, learners would revisit the text and identify elements in celebrities' houses that may hold emotional significance for their owners rather than just monetary value. These discussions would serve as scaffolding to inspire students to acknowledge and identify the areas or elements in their own houses that they feel most personally connected to. Similarly to the previous activity, this one mainly explores the first level of ICA model, and touches on some aspects of the second level, for instance, when students share and find similarities in their preferences within their own cultural grouping.

The suggestions made for Activity I aimed primarily to align the topic with students' prior knowledge and experiences. While fostering discussions that connect to students'

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experiences can support a more intercultural perspective, a more explicit focus on IC would be beneficial. For example, in multicultural/multilingual settings, strategically organizing students into diverse groups could facilitate meaningful interactions across diverse cultural backgrounds. This approach would enable students to compare and contrast their ideas on favorite places within a house, thereby promoting an intercultural perspective. While describing their dream house would foster their creativity and imagination, describing the houses they are familiar with would be another option that could support intercultural awareness. As discussing houses may be a sensitive topic for many students whose families are facing housing issues, extra care should be taken in these discussions. Consequently, a text describing celebrities' houses could cause increased frustration in many learners. Also, focusing on vocabulary items commonly associated with luxurious houses is not very useful for application in different cultural settings. The emphasis solely on the text and the exercises provided in the textbook would probably miss a valuable opportunity for students to reflect upon an important topic and engage with other peers from diverse cultural backgrounds in a more meaningful way.

Original Activity II

The original activity II, extracted from *MySelfie 10*, consisted of: 1) test-format listening comprehension; 2) rewriting the story according to the illustrations provided; 3) writing a sentence conveying the message of the story. Groups C, D, and E adapted this activity.

Adaptations – Activity II

Group C proposed an activity organized into pre-, while-, and after-listening exercises, incorporating some of the activities from the textbook. For the pre-listening section, learners would be provided with a copy of the illustrations presented in the original exercise 2. First, learners would analyze the first image, which shows the water bearer carrying the pots. Based on this first picture, they would predict the context and discuss possible scenarios, language uses, and cultural settings relevant for the story. Afterwards, learners would sequence the remaining images to anticipate the narrative structure. During the listening task, students would listen to an audio recording and verify

their predictions. The group suggésted that the audio should be recorded by an Indian English speaker to incorporate diverse linguistic exposure. While having the audio recorded by a particular narrator would be almost impossible for most teachers, generating text-to-audio content with a specific accent is feasible with some technological tools (e.g., Narakeet and TTsmaker). Although not perfect, it could be an option to offer students more diversity in the audio resources. In the post-listening exercise, learners would deepen their cultural awareness by sharing and comparing stories from their backgrounds that may convey similar messages. These discussions would foster dialogues about diverse cultural narratives and perspectives. They would compare tales from their own backgrounds, identifying similarities and differences to broaden their knowledge about narratives from diverse cultural backgrounds. Finally, students would engage in a final discussion where they personalize the story by relating it to their own lives. This would help reinforce the connection between language learning and intercultural understanding.

Similar to the previous suggestion, Group D also recommended changing the narrator to one with an Indian English accent to expose students to another variety. After the listening comprehension task, the group suggested questions that would encourage students to consider whether the story would make sense within their cultural background, what differences would be perceived as qualities, and to reflect on cultural expectations that individuals would face. One of the questions would also invite students to critically examine gender roles and stereotyping associated with certain tasks within their own cultural context. This approach fosters deeper engagement with the audio resource while promoting a more nuanced understanding of diversity and social constructs.

Instead of changing the activity, Group E suggested an expansion discussion, in which learners would explore cultural parallels within *The Cracked Pot*. Students would be required to examine how diverse cultures interpret themes of acceptance and diversity. The discussion, moderated by the teacher, could begin by exploring different cultural perspectives on the two pots, focusing on themes of acceptance and self-acceptance. Next, students would share personal insights on how diverse cultural groups could approach these topics. Additionally, learners would reflect on their own cultural experiences, relate them to the tale, and recognize the variety of viewpoints within the

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classroom. The activity culminates with a reflective writing exercise, in which students apply the tale's message to their own lives, emphasizing the significance of self-acceptance and valuing differences. This approach encourages both critical thinking and personal growth, reinforcing the relevance of intercultural awareness in everyday life.

Adaptations suggested by groups C, D, and E go up to some extent beyond the basic cultural awareness of ICA model (Baker, 2015) and explore a few components of levels 2 (advanced cultural awareness) and 3 (intercultural awareness). These activities include a critical reflection about cultures and personal and social development, for example, the awareness of multiple perspectives, sharing stories from their backgrounds, and personalizing the narrative.

It is interesting to note that suggestions for the Grade 7 activity do not go further in developing ICA compared to the adaptations for the Grade 10 activity. This may be due to the pre-service teacher's concern that learners may lack the necessary linguistic proficiency to understand and discuss intercultural topics in English. However, adopting an ELF perspective, where learners are encouraged to apply communication strategies, could facilitate engagement even at basic levels.

4 FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

While the pre-service teachers' suggestions incorporate a more intercultural approach compared to the original activities, there remain opportunities to include strategies to better address IC and ICA from an ELF perspective. Therefore, these suggestions aim to provide further ideas for adapting or extending existing textbook activities. Although further suggestions are presented for the specific activities from the textbooks discussed here, they can be adjusted to different contexts and activities.

For the reading activity (Activity 1, celebrities' houses), a warm-up discussion about "house" and "home" could prompt learners to reflect on these concepts and relate them to their meaning. Given that learners in Grade 7 are expected to have an elementary level of English (CEFR A2; Council of Europe, 2001), they could be prompted to say different words for each definition, and then the teacher would create two-word clouds on the board—one for "home" and another for "house". Proverbs and quotes related to these concepts could also be introduced for students' reflection. Examples include, "Home is

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where the heart is" or "A house is made of bricks and beams. A home is made of hopes and dreams". Further questions could be used to deepen their reflection, such as, "What's the difference between 'house' and 'home'?", "What does 'home' mean to you?". After this, simple definitions of 'house' and 'home' would be provided to support the interaction, followed by further questions, such as "What makes a house comfortable/a home?" "What makes a house special for us?" This warm-up includes exploring personal interpretations of "home", identifying the characteristics that would make a house special.

After reading the original text and completing the exercises provided in the textbook, students would identify in the text the elements that could transform a house into a home, and the unusual spaces and furniture in the celebrities' houses compared to the houses they are familiar with.

As an after-reading exercise, critical reflection and group discussion would help students to broaden their perspectives and relate their experiences from an intercultural viewpoint. Questions that could guide this discussion include "Did you like to read about these celebrities' houses? Why (not)?, Do you think these homes are practical and actually comfortable, or just for showing off? Why?, Why do you think celebrities choose to live in such unique houses? Do you think they are sustainable houses? Which one is better for the environment? Some people don't have a house to live in. Why does it happen? What could be done about it?" While these questions should be tailored to fit each specific context, after-reading critical reflection and discussion mediated by the teacher would address key topics related to intercultural communication and the development of global citizenship. These topics include social issues like the environment, justice, and housing.

Finally, an extension exercise could be proposed. In multilingual/multicultural classrooms, students would be organized into small groups. Ideally, learners from diverse cultural backgrounds would be placed in the same groups to promote diversity. This arrangement could be a key factor in promoting interaction in an authentic ELF environment. It may happen that students from diverse cultural backgrounds would hesitate to work together, and they would need to be encouraged to interact effectively. For example, this became evident during a visit to a school in Lisbon a few years ago, where students of the same nationality tended to group together and seemed uncomfortable interacting with other groups.

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A possibility for this production activity is for students to take pictures of houses and buildings they see on their way to school, or near their homes. They could either print these pictures or send them to be printed at school. In a subsequent lesson, each group would discuss the houses they photographed and choose one or two images to present to the class. To guide their discussion, simple questions may be provided regarding colors, shapes, and whether these houses are modern or old. Additional questions to connect to students' experiences would also be valuable, for example, "Does any of the houses remind you of any other houses you have seen or lived in? When? Where?" "Would you like to live in these houses?" Why (not)?" Besides describing the house/building physically and expressing their opinions about it, other follow-up questions could foster their critical thinking and intercultural values. These may include, "How different/similar are houses in different places/neighborhoods/cities/countries?", "How similar/different are the houses you photographed in your group?", "What stories can you imagine could happen in these houses?" For this last question, students could draw some scenes to support them in telling the story they think about. These steps would be adapted according to each context to meet learners' best interests. Another extension exercise possibility is for groups to draw a floor plan of a house and describe the rooms and furniture. Students could be encouraged to reflect on all the houses they know and have lived in. At the end, they present their floor plans to the class. This sequence encourages both analytical and creative thinking while supporting vocabulary development and critical engagement with the themes of dwelling and belonging.

In any of the suggestions, communication strategies explicitly explained and exemplified by the teacher would be meaningful in enriching ELF interactions. These strategies may include negotiation of meaning (e.g., repetition, rephrasing, self-repair, etc.); accommodation (e.g., adjusting their language, expectations); and use of learners' linguistic and cultural repertoire (e.g., code-switching, *translanguaging*), to mention a few. Learners would then be encouraged to incorporate elements unique to their cultural backgrounds. They could also explain, use, and teach their classmates vocabulary in their L1 to convey particular meanings. These strategies would support intercultural encounters and encourage multilingualism, another key aspect in ELF communication (Cogo, 2018).

Mediation strategies, as emphasized by the Companion Volume of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), are a valuable aspect to be considered, especially in multicultural and multilingual settings (Sperti, 2021), in an ELF approach. The emphasis should then be put on intelligibility. Therefore, negotiation of meaning and use of multilingual resources are valid and encouraged, since these aspects exist in ELF encounters outside the classroom (Bayyurt; Şentürk, 2021).

The warm-up and follow-up exercises aim to address Level 1—Basic cultural awareness (Baker, 2015), more specifically related to shared behaviors, beliefs, and values, and the comparison among these interpretations. Level 2—advanced cultural awareness, and Level 3—intercultural awareness are primarily addressed in the critical reflection that follows the comprehension exercises and during the production phase. In these parts, cultural values and social issues are discussed, along with engagement with multiple perspectives within their respective groups. In level 3 (intercultural awareness), empathy and a critical thinking perspective are encouraged, as well as creativity through stories they create and narrate. Finally, the emphasis on communication strategies, the use of a multilingual and multicultural repertoire, and mediation strategies aims at helping students develop their critical perspectives through intercultural communication.

For the second activity (Activity II, "The Cracked Pot"), originally designed for Grade 10, an additional suggestion would also involve three steps. In the pre-listening exercises, students would be invited to predict the story based on the illustrations provided in the textbook. The completion of the original listening exercise, fostering comprehension and vocabulary, could be further enriched with a follow-up discussion focusing on interpreting the symbolic meanings and metaphors associated with the pots depicted in the narrative, encouraging analytical and critical thinking.

In the after-listening part, a discussion would focus on empathy, an essential skill for developing intercultural competence (Ostman, 2019). Students would be encouraged to reflect for a few moments on how the "cracked pot," if it were a person, would feel. In pairs, they would engage in a pair role-play activity where they would introduce themselves as the cracked pot, tell their story (in the first person), and share feelings and emotions, according to the audio. They would also be welcome to include any additional details they find relevant to personalizing the story. Since adolescent students might be

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reluctant to share personal stories with their peers (Asscheman et al., 2020), adopting others' perspectives could help them deal with shyness and develop empathy by stepping into someone's shoes. The learners should be encouraged to practice attentive speaking and listening.

In a second step, they would reflect on situations where someone feels like a cracked pot. Since Grade 10 students tend to have a higher level of communication skills (B1 level), this discussion could be deepened with more critical thinking questions about the cracked pot's feelings and perceptions of its imperfections. Possible questions that could support this discussion include "Why is it important to recognize our own flaws? What can we learn from them?", "How did the cracked pot see itself at the beginning of the story? What about the end? What changed?", "What are small things we can do every day to be kind to ourselves?", "Why do you think it's important to see the value in other people?", "What can we say or do to friends who think they are not good enough?"

Similar to the reading activity for Grade 7, an extension production exercise could be proposed. Learners would likewise be arranged in small groups (diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds) to engage in comparative discussions about traditional stories that carry a positive message in their opinion. They would reflect on their cultural origins and thematic similarities. In this part of the activity, communication strategies should also be reinforced. Students could practice telling these traditional narratives to each other, highlighting the feelings, thoughts, and emotions related to them, while practicing attentive listening.

The final stage involves a creative writing task, which would start with exploring the defining features of folk tales. This exploration would involve reading examples of these tales in languages the students are familiar with. The Portuguese teacher and other language teachers at school could work together to read and analyze different stories with students. Learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds would use their repertoire and experience to write a simple story in English that would resonate with them, regardless of their origin. This sequence aims not only to develop linguistic and intercultural awareness but also to foster critical thinking and storytelling skills.

This activity aims to address the three stages of the ICA model, but with a stronger emphasis on level 3. It begins with the recognition element, leading to an understanding

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of cultural behaviors, and then engages students in critical thinking, empathy, negotiation, storytelling, and multilingual collaboration.

In summary, both suggestions aim to provide useful ideas for addressing the three levels of ICA (Baker, 2015), particularly Level 3 from an ELF perspective, while also encouraging multilingualism and effective communication strategies, even at lower language levels.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The group of pre-service teachers who participated in the workshop recognizes the lack of cultural and accent diversity in EFL textbooks designed in Portugal. Their views are consistent with findings from previous studies on Portuguese ELT textbooks (e.g., Guerra, 2005; Guerra & Cavalheiro, 2019; Guerra et al., 2022; Cardoso, 2023). As a result, most participants advocate for the inclusion of a greater cultural and accent representation in textbooks in the country, stating that it is not only desirable but also necessary.

The adaptations proposed by these pre-service teachers reflect their concern for more culturally diverse activities from a critical perspective. While their suggestions include an intercultural component, mainly through discussions, a stronger emphasis on implementing specific strategies to develop IC from an ELF perspective could further strengthen their approach. For instance, explicit instructions on using language to ask for clarification, repetition, paraphrasing, confirmation checks, negotiation, and translanguaging (Baker; Ishikawa, 2021; Cogo, 2018) would facilitate their discussions. In this sense, focusing on learners' language and cultural repertoire would further enrich the activities, especially during these authentic ELF interactions. To make it clear, translanguaging "includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures" (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). According to this concept, learners would be allowed to use all the languages they know to make meaning within their contexts, including a series of multimodal means of communication (speaking, writing, signing, etc.). When addressing intercultural issues, the focus on the learners' stories is often a way to make connections between them and bridge the gaps between cultures. Consequently, translanguaging builds a social space for multilingual learners because it integrates several aspects of their identity (stories,

experiences, beliefs, etc.) into a dynamic, personal, and meaningful way of communicating (Wei, 2011).

The scarcity of clear and direct strategies in the suggested adaptations by the workshop participants demonstrates one of the workshop's limitations and highlights the need for future improvements. Extended time limits and additional instructions could facilitate the adaptation process. Additionally, these constraints also emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for pre-service teachers regarding strategies in adapting and creating materials to address IC and ICA from an ELF perspective. Furthermore, the validity of the suggestions proposed in this study would be consolidated by piloting the activities in real classroom settings with students from both grades.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the need for greater cultural and accent diversity in Portuguese EFL textbooks and underscores the importance of ongoing pre-service teacher education in IC, ICA, and ELF. It reinforces the value of expanding intercultural education from an ELF perspective in such contexts. Although the adaptations reflect participants' concern for more diverse and inclusive materials, a focus on specific strategies to incorporate an ELF perspective is encouraged. Incorporating a continuous ELF-awareness approach into teacher education can better equip educators to meet intercultural needs for ELF learners and help them bridge the gaps among their multilingual and multicultural peers.

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Paraguaçu

REVISTA DE ESTUDOS
LINGUÍSTICOS E LITERÁRIOS

ELF-AWARE TEACHING PRACTICES:
INSIGHTS FROM PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN A BRAZILIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

PRÁTICAS DE ENSINO CONSCIENTES DO ILF: INSIGHTS DE ALUNOS-PROFESSORES DE INGLÊS EM UMA UNIVERSIDADE PÚBLICA BRASILEIRA

Polyanna Castro Rocha Alves[1]

ABSTRACT: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been widely acknowledged in diverse areas (Seidlhofer, 2011; Baker, 2015; Mauranen, 2018), particularly in English language teaching (ELT), as classrooms become more linguistically and culturally diverse. However, most EFL textbooks still prioritize cultural representations from the UK and the US and their standard varieties (Leung; Lewkowicz, 2018; Guerra et al., 2022). In the Portuguese context, state schools have also become increasingly multilingual/multicultural (Oliveira, 2023). These contexts where ELF is naturally used are ideal for promoting Intercultural Communication (IC) and Intercultural Awareness (ICA; Baker, 2015). In this study, I discuss the perspectives of a group of pre-service teachers regarding cultural and accent representations in EFL textbooks, based on a questionnaire. These participants adapted two textbook activities (grades 7 and 10th) in a workshop session to address IC and ICA. Also, further suggestions for adapting teaching materials are provided. Therefore, this paper offers additional ideas and strategies for teachers to develop and adjust their materials to better address IC and ICA.
KEYWORDS: English as a Lingua Franca, Intercultural Communication, EFL textbooks

RESUMO: A relevância do Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF) no cenário sociolinguístico atual traz uma série de implicações pedagógicas que ainda não lograram a repercussão desejada na agenda do Ensino de Língua Inglesa. Posto que a formação inicial constitui momento e espaço oportunos para que os futuros professores de inglês possam encontrar maneiras de diminuir a lacuna existente entre as descobertas das pesquisas acadêmicas e as aplicações práticas em sala de aula, o presente estudo – recorte de uma pesquisa de Doutorado – busca investigar de que maneira a abordagem transformadora para a formação de professores conscientes do ILF pode impactar as práticas pedagógicas de alunos-professores do curso de Letras/Língua Inglesa e Literaturas de uma universidade pública brasileira. O estudo em pauta apresenta-se metodologicamente ancorado na

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pesquisa-ação e foi realizado com a participação cooperativa de 15 (quinze) estagiários ao longo do período em que cursaram componentes de Estágio Curricular Supervisionado. Os dados gerados por meio das notas descritivas e reflexivas do diário da professora-pesquisadora e dos relatórios de estágio II foram submetidos à análise temática (Braun; Clarke, 2006). Alinhado às teorizações do ILF *made in Brazil* (Duboc, 2019), este trabalho fundamentou-se em autores afiliados ao campo de estudos do ILF, a exemplo de Sifakis (2007, 2009, 2017, 2018, 2021), Cavalheiro (2015, 2017), Kohn (2015, 2019), Bayyurt; Dewey (2020), e Siqueira (2020a, 2020b). Os resultados evidenciam que a partir da imersão em um processo de conscientização sobre o ILF, os alunos-professores adotaram um conjunto de macroestratégias que possibilitou a integração dessa perspectiva em suas experiências práticas de ensino, tornando-as mais alinhadas com as demandas emergentes do ensino e aprendizagem de Língua Inglesa.

Palavras-chave: Inglês como Língua Franca. Conscientização sobre o ILF. Formação inicial de professores de inglês.

INTRODUCTION

The *status* of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in today's sociolinguistic landscape undeniably influences both English Language Teaching (ELT) and teacher education programs, as it is grounded in a set of assumptions that challenge the *status quo* of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. In this context, the need to transform ELT practices and establish a link between ELF and EFL has become a recurring theme in recent ELF scholarship (Sifakis, 2017, 2018; Kohn, 2015, 2019; Siqueira, 2020a, 2020b; Bayyurt; Dewey, 2020).

Yet, as Bayyurt and Dewey (2020, p. 373) point out, "While we have seen extensive and in-depth discussion of the implications of ELF for ELT, there has so far been relatively little uptake in terms of application". From my perspective as a professor in the Supervised Teaching Practicum course in the English Language and Literature program at State University of Bahia (UNEB), Department of Human Sciences (DCH), Campus VI, I have observed that, even after engaging in discussions on the social and political role of English, as proposed by theorizations of ELF *feito no Brasil*[2], pre-service teachers often remain unsure about how to design and implement practices that move beyond a

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[2] The Brazilian academic production that delimits the *locus of enunciation* (Menezes de Souza, 2019), that is, the specific site of speech, and constructs localized knowledge of the notion of ELF, with emphasis on the critical and political nature of the English language and the processes of its teaching and learning, is referred to by Duboc (2019) as *ELF feito no Brasil*.

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structuralist view of language, one rooted in models shaped by colonialities[3] and informed by the normative and purist logic of modernity. Similarly, Jordão (2023, p. 350) observes:

> Although many initial language teacher education courses (at undergraduate level) do include discussions on the importance of critical work within their syllabus—emphasizing how languages in general, and English more specifically, can be spaces of oppression needing to undergo critical conscientization—there is a distance between discussing and implementing.

In light of these reflections, and recognizing the potential of pre-service education as a space for bridging theory and practice, this paper – part of a PhD thesis – aims to investigate how an ELF-aware teacher education model can impact the pedagogical practices of student-teachers enrolled in the English Language and Literature program at a Brazilian public university.

To this end, as a first step, I present the theoretical-practical model proposed by Sifakis (2007, 2009), which enables both in-service and pre-service teachers to engage with ELF research, understand its implications for ELT, and envision how theoretical concepts can be applied in their own teaching contexts through critical, ongoing reflection. Next, I outline macrostrategies that have the potential to support teachers in translating these theoretical insights into ELF-aware practices.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 ELF-AWARE TEACHER EDUCATION MODEL

In response to the imperative need to reform ELT practices to address the challenges posed by ELF, Sifakis (2007, 2009) proposes an ELF-aware transformative framework as a feasible approach to preparing in-service teachers to meet the new

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[3] Although the colonialities are interconnected, it is possible to understand them separately: the *coloniality of power* (Quijano, 2005) refers to the interrelation between modern forms of exploitation and domination, positioning the white European man in a superior role; the *coloniality of knowledge* (Lander, 2005) concerns the role of epistemology and its influence in establishing a logic that excludes non-hegemonic forms of knowledge, privileging the thought, reason, and knowledge of the Global North; and finally, the *coloniality of being* (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), which involves invisibility and dehumanization as its primary expressions, pertains to the ontological level of the colonial difference, wherein people whose practices and knowledge are not legitimized are perceived as less capable.

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demands of English language teaching. This model not only fosters a shift in teacher mindsets but also supports the development, implementation, and evaluation of action plans that are both contextually meaningful and sustainable.

It is worth noting that Sifakis (2007, 2009) develops this transformative approach, drawing on the theory of transformative learning developed by the American scholar Jack Mezirow in 1978, which, in turn, is based on and expands Freire's (1970) emancipatory model of social transformation and Boyd's (1991) analytical perspective on transformative education. Essentially, Mezirow's transformative learning theory – widely applied in adult education – aims at fostering autonomy, self-directed learning, and individual empowerment by

> [...] bringing participants to confront and change their established viewpoints about a particular issue by providing hands-on information and asking them to (a) realize and critically examine their assumptions, (b) openly explore new terrains by trying new roles, (c) plan a course of action, (d) acquire knowledge and skills for implementing that plan, (d) build self-confidence in the new roles and (e) become reintegrated on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective (Sifakis, 2009, p. 346).

Building on these foundations, the framework proposed by Sifakis (2007, 2009) offers a structured five-stage process that guides participants through critical reflection and action planning.

In the *Preparation Stage,* the goal is to help participants get to know each other and the process itself. They discuss their educational backgrounds, teaching experiences, and professional interests. Participants also reflect on the English they use – its contexts, interlocutors, and purposes – and on basic concepts such as the notion of errors, which are revisited in later stages.

The *Identification Stage* invites participants to examine their implicit beliefs, attitudes, and reactions to what Sifakis calls *primary issues* of ELF discourse. They engage with authentic examples of spoken ELF to observe its features, including lexicogrammatical choices, intelligibility, negotiation of meaning, breakdown repair, L1 influence, communication strategies, and mutual support.

During the *Awareness Stage*, participants explore *secondary issues*, such as the hegemonic role of native speakers, the concept of Standard English versus global

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varieties, the legitimacy of variation, and the broader cultural and ideological dimensions of English teaching. Selected readings, discussions, and group work encourage participants to critically examine these topics in relation to their own views of English.

The *Transformation Stage* focuses on sustained reflection about the influences and choices that shape participant's professional identities. They discuss their motivations for becoming teachers, the advantages and challenges of the profession, their future aspirations, teaching contexts, and adopted methodologies. By this stage, participants are encouraged to critically evaluate to what extent their role as guardians of Standard English matters to themselves, their students, and their wider communities.

Finally, the *Planning Stage* supports participants in translating theoretical insights into real-world practice. They are guided to design, implement, and evaluate an action plan informed by the principles discussed throughout the program. This stage reintegrates them into their teaching contexts and promotes the application of an ELF-aware perspective in ways that are meaningful and appropriate.

Although this model was originally designed for in-service teacher education, Cavalheiro (2015) highlights its adaptability to pre-service contexts and identifies two key reasons for this feasibility. First, many pre-service teachers already have some level of involvement in English teaching, whether in basic-level classes, private language schools, or through tutoring. Second, even those without prior professional teaching experience typically engage with real classrooms during their practicum, beginning with observation, moving on to collaborative teaching with mentor teachers, and ultimately taking responsibility for teaching a class unit. As Cavalheiro (2015, p. 191) notes, "In both cases, trainees gain classroom experience and the opportunity to reflect on certain practices and attitudes in order to later incorporate their new perspectives into their teaching practice."

Importantly, the framework does not prescribe fixed ways of incorporating ELF into ELT. Rather, it empowers ELF-aware educators to make informed pedagogical decisions based on their specific teaching contexts (Sifakis, 2018). As Siqueira (2020a) argues, the more pluralistic the approaches to navigating the differences between EFL and ELF, the richer and more aligned with today's world ELT classrooms are likely to become.

However, it is important to acknowledge that while awareness of ELF is a necessary first step, it alone may not enable (future) teachers to implement this

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perspective in their classrooms. With this in mind, and drawing on the extensive literature on the topic, I examine a set of macrostrategies intended to facilitate the integration of ELF into their own teaching contexts.

1.2. MACROSTRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING ELF INTO ELT

The macrostrategies for integrating ELF into EFL teaching presented here are informed by theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical knowledge from ELF research. They are situated within the postmethod condition and align with the strategic framework for second language teaching proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1994). According to him,

> A macrostrategy is a broad guideline, based on which teachers can generate their own situation-specific, need-based microstrategies or classroom techniques. In other words, macrostrategies are made operational in the classroom through microstrategies (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 32).

Therefore, the macrostrategies in this section offer insights to support the development of microstrategies suited to local teaching needs and contexts.

1.2.1 Raising students' awareness of ELF

The first macrostrategy centers on raising learners' awareness of ELF, echoing Sifakis and Bayyurt's (2018) view that being an ELF-aware teacher means empowering learners to become competent, conscious users of English. Promoting this awareness helps free students from the unrealistic goal of imitating native speakers, reducing anxiety and frustration often tied to achieving "perfect" pronunciation and accent.

By understanding that English is not the exclusive domain of native speakers and that Standard English is just one reference among many, learners can position themselves as equal participants in global communication. This shift fosters confidence and ownership of the language, enabling them to see themselves as responsible contributors to the dynamic, evolving landscape of ELF (Bordon, 2020).

To achieve this, teaching goals should be reframed to promote both metalinguistic awareness (understanding how English functions globally) and metacognitive awareness

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(reflecting on one's beliefs, attitudes, and willingness to change). Sifakis (2021) suggests using reflective questions to support these dimensions – metalinguistic questions prompt learners to undertake critical reflection on the diverse ways in which English functions worldwide, while metacognitive questions encourage learners to examine and potentially revise their beliefs about English.

Teachers aiming to make their practice more ELF-aware should integrate these reflective activities alongside regular textbook tasks, enriching classroom learning with opportunities to prepare learners for real-world communicative situations beyond the classroom.

1.2.2 Emphasizing learner agency

The global spread and localization of English call for pedagogical practices that recognize non-native speakers' ownership of the language, making learning more responsive to their needs and aspirations (Kohn, 2011). In this light, Kohn introduces the idea of "My English", rooted in a socioconstructivist model where all learning and communication arise from individual cognitive and emotional construction shaped by social collaboration.

This macrostrategy emphasizes learners as active agents in creatively building their own version of English, moving away from the rigid pursuit of a single standard norm. Their "ownership" of the language emerges through individual construction influenced by their experiences, goals, and social interactions (Kohn, 2015).

Developing "My English" means learners adapt and negotiate their communicative competence based on personal needs and contexts, with success criteria open to change. Embracing this approach in the classroom aligns with ELF-aware teaching by empowering learners to see themselves as legitimate owners of the language, fostering agency, emancipation, and personal communicative success (Kohn, 2022b).

1.2.3 Exposing learners to different English varieties

This macrostrategy emphasizes exposing learners to a wide range of English varieties from Kachru's (1985) circles, reducing the dominance of US and UK models. Traditional EFL teaching has favored a static, monolithic view of English, overlooking its

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linguistic, cultural, and functional diversity. Matsuda and Friedrich (2012) highlight the need to revisit these practices and pose the question: Which variety should serve as the instructional model?

They discuss three options: I) teaching an international variety, like the Lingua Franca Core, which risks being context-dependent and impractical while potentially creating new hierarchies; II) incorporating learners' own local varieties to better meet their communicative needs, though these are often undervalued and lack clear instructional models; and III) adopting a well-established, widely accepted standard variety as the main instructional model while also exposing students to other varieties to reflect English's global diversity and prepare them for variation in real-world communication.

In line with Matsuda and Friedrich (2012), there is nothing wrong with using American or British English as the main instructional variety, as is common in Expanding Circle countries. The problem arises when these are presented as the only or superior varieties, ignoring course goals and learners' needs. Relying on a single model can create the impression that it is the only correct variety and may foster negative attitudes toward other varieties of English.

Kohn (2022a) further argues that, for teaching comprehension, exposing learners to diverse varieties enhances their inferential skills and ability to handle variation in ELF interactions. However, for production, this diversity can be counterproductive due to its inherent heterogeneity and instability. Instead, he calls for rethinking the role of Standard English, moving from rigid norms to a more open orientation that supports learners' emancipatory development of speaking and writing skills.

1.2.4 Prioritizing intelligibility

This macrostrategy argues that effective communication in international ELF contexts requires prioritizing intelligibility over strict adherence to Standard English norms or imitating native accents. Pronunciation is especially important given its link to speakers' identities. However, not all pronunciation features equally affect mutual understanding.

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Jenkins's (2000) Lingua Franca Core (LFC) identifies key phonological features essential for intelligibility, such as consonant inventory, consonant clusters, vowel length, nuclear stress, and certain phonetic requirements. Other features, like /th/ pronunciation or vowel reduction, were deliberately excluded from the LFC due to their minimal impact on intelligibility.

Importantly, adopting LFC principles encourages teachers to focus on features that truly support mutual intelligibility while respecting learners' L1-influenced accents as expressions of identity. This approach helps avoid framing non-native speech as deficient and allows for conscious, context-sensitive choices about which pronunciation features to teach (Bordon, 2020).

Furthermore, exposure to diverse English varieties can enhance intelligibility by fostering familiarity, positive attitudes, and strategies for navigating linguistic differences. Rather than teaching specific "correct" sounds, educators can help learners develop the ability to understand, respond to, and repair communication across diverse global contexts (Bayyurt, 2018).

1.2.5 Fostering Intercultural Awareness

ELF communication is inherently intercultural, involving speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Baker (2015, 2018) argues that both ELF and intercultural communication studies adopt a post-structuralist view, treating language, identity, community, and culture as fluid, negotiable, and dynamic rather than fixed within national boundaries. This perspective rejects the idea that English is inherently tied to Anglophone cultures, emphasizing instead its capacity to adapt and merge with diverse cultural practices through negotiation and co-construction of meaning.

To prepare learners for such fluid, complex interactions, traditional models of Communicative Competence (CC), which focus on native-speaker norms and static cultural content, are insufficient. Instead, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), as theorized by Byram (1997), is proposed to address this gap. ICC includes knowledge of one's own and other cultures, openness to differences, the ability to mediate between cultures, and a critical approach to cultural representations. However, ICC has been critiqued for its focus on specific national cultures, making it less suited to ELF contexts.

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In response, the concept of Intercultural Awareness emerges, preserving ICC's focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes while emphasizing the fluid, emergent relationship between language and culture in ELF communication (Baker, 2015). Intercultural awareness includes levels ranging from basic recognition of cultural practices to critical, advanced understanding of intercultural communication as inherently flexible and dynamic.

As Bordon (2020) notes, many textbooks only develop basic cultural awareness, which risks reinforcing stereotypes. More advanced levels acknowledge that cultural differences are not fixed, and misunderstandings can still occur despite knowledge of other cultures. Ultimately, intercultural awareness aims to prepare learners to navigate the hybrid, evolving cultural landscapes of real ELF interactions by decentering Anglophone norms and tailoring teaching to locally relevant communicative and cultural needs.

Building on this, Baker (2022) introduces the notion of transcultural communication, which challenges methodological nationalism by foregrounding hybrid and emergent cultural practices that transcend national boundaries. In ELF contexts, transcultural awareness complements intercultural awareness by equipping learners not only to recognize diversity but also to engage with the complex, interconnected realities of global communication.

1.2.6 Developing Communicative Strategies

Successful communication in ELF contexts relies on using the language flexibly, adapting it to the interlocutor and the communicative situation. Communicative strategies are essential in this process because they help speakers construct, negotiate, and adapt meaning in intercultural interactions. Sperti (2021) notes that these strategies are employed to address linguistic and cultural challenges – such as lexical gaps or pragmatic differences – through linguistic resources as well as paralinguistic (intonation, gestures) and extralinguistic cues (eye contact), demonstrating a cooperative attitude and constant negotiation of meaning.

Therefore, it becomes clear that native-speaker norms are not decisive for mutual understanding in ELF interactions. Instead, teaching should explicitly address and raise

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awareness of the pragmatic strategies widely used in these contexts. Incorporating such strategies into English language teaching materials and practices recognizes learners' own languages as valuable resources and legitimizes plurilingual practices such as code-switching (Vettorel, 2017).

Cavalheiro (2017) points out that traditional language teaching often overlooks these strategies in favor of promoting perfection and native-like performance, leaving little room for negotiation and natural communication. Thus, it is necessary to create opportunities for learners to practice these strategies in spontaneous conversations, using resources such as online corpora (VOICE, ACE), videos, or intercultural telecollaboration activities (Kohn, 2019), bringing English language teaching closer to the real demands of global communication.

Still grounded in Kumaravadivelu's (1994) principles, the macrostrategies above are not prescriptive or final. Rather than a fixed set of solutions, they are alternatives to be continuously reflected on, expanded, and refined in light of teachers' experiences, choices, actions, and the discourses they enact in the classroom.

2 METHOD

2.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Seeking to bridge the gap between academic research and classroom practice in teacher education, this study adopts action research as its methodological foundation. The dialectical nature of this approach, involving continuous cycles of reflection and action, shaped the development of both individual and collective understandings throughout the process (Franco, 2005). This approach allowed participants to engage critically with their own beliefs and practices while collaboratively developing context-sensitive solutions.

2.2 PARTICIPANTS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, I served as both the course instructor and teacher–researcher, enabling the integration of classroom practice with systematic observation. This investigation involved 15 student-teachers (STs) enrolled in the English Language and Literature program at UNEB/DCH-VI. They were in their 5th semester during Supervised

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Teaching Practicum I and in their 6th semester during Supervised Teaching Practicum II – two of the four 100-hour practicum courses in the program's final four semesters. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent after being fully briefed on the study's objectives and ethical guidelines. To ensure confidentiality, they selected their own pseudonyms.

2.3 RESEARCH STAGES

2.3.1 First Stage: Familiarization and Reflection

The first stage of the research, designed to familiarize pre-service teachers with the theoretical and practical implications of the ELF teaching perspective, took place in the third unit of the Supervised Teaching Practicum I course in the second semester of 2019. It comprised eight 5-hour sessions, with sessions two through seven structured around Sifakis's (2007, 2009) five-stage ELF-aware transformative framework (see Table 1).

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Table 1. Structure of the First Research Stage Sessions

Session	Phase	Description
1	Preliminary	Preliminary phase for action research (Franco, 2005).
2	Preparation	Gathering participants' beliefs, convictions, and experiences about using and teaching English.
3	Identification	Introducing how ELF functions and analyzing authentic ELF interactions to highlight its international nature.
4–5	Awareness	Reading and discussing academic texts on ELF to challenge existing perceptions.
6	Transformation	Encouraging critical reflection on changes in views about English use and teaching, as well as non-native English teacher identities.
7	Planning	Due to its complexity, this stage extended into the second research stage. This session focused on reflecting on practical implications for integrating ELF in EFL contexts, with particular attention to ELF-aware lessons analysis.
8	Evaluation	Collective evaluation of the formative process.

Source: Prepared by the Author

In addition to these sessions, participants completed 20 hours of observation in middle and high school classrooms. They were then divided into three groups of five to draft a Pedagogical Curricular Workshop proposal, as a prerequisite for Practicum I. Grounded in their theoretical discussions on ELF and drawing on the challenges they observed, each team identified a specific problem, outlined workshop's sequential stages, and designed corresponding activities and resources. Refinement, presentation, and implementation took place in the study's second stage.

2.3.2 Second Stage: Planning and Implementation

The second stage of the research occurred during the Supervised Teaching Practicum II course and comprised two main phases, both conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 2).

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Table 2. Structure of the Second Research Stage

Phase	Unit	Duration	Focus and Activities
1	First unit of the course (second semester of 2020)	25 class hours: • Five 4-hour sessions • One 5-hour session	Presentation and discussion of a set of macrostrategies for effectively integrating ELF-informed theories and concepts into classroom practice.
2	Second unit of the course (first semester of 2021)	30 class hours: six sessions (each with 3 synchronous + 2 asynchronous hours)	Planning, promotion, and implementation of virtual Pedagogical Curricular Workshops.

Source: Prepared by the Author

When engaged in the cycle of pedagogical curricular workshops, each group developed three action plans, totaling 8 class hours. During the planning and refinement stages, STs were encouraged to tap into their individual potential, move beyond pre-set answers, and collaboratively design teaching strategies aligned with the sociolinguistic realities of English.

Consistent with a core principle of action research – which emphasizes the researcher's active involvement at every stage of the project (Franco, 2005) – I observed selected segments of the pedagogical workshops conducted by each of the three groups.

2.4 INSTRUMENTS AND ANALYSIS

To meet the specific aims of this study, the phases of thematic analysis (Braun; Clarke, 2006), designed to identify, categorize, and report patterns and emerging themes, were applied to a data set comprising entries from the teacher-researcher's journal as well as materials from the Practicum II Report related to the workshops. In the following section, I describe the ELF-aware teaching practices developed and enacted throughout these workshops, and then discuss how the effects of an ELF-aware teacher education model resonated in the ST's pedagogical actions.

To protect participants' identities, I refer to the workshops generically as Workshop 1, Workshop 2, and Workshop 3.

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3 AN OUTLINE OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ELF-AWARE PRACTICES

Workshop 1, designed by Esther, Maria, Nathan, Penny, and Renata (hereafter Group 1), aimed to foster high school students' autonomy in learning English through apps, games, audiovisual materials, comics, and music, while highlighting ELF-related issues throughout the activities. In their Practicum II report, when discussing Krashen's hypotheses, the group noted that:

> awareness of ELF is directly linked to the affective filter hypothesis, since discovering that they do not need to imitate native speakers to become competent users of English can boost learners' motivation and self-confidence, while reducing anxiety, as their goals may seem more attainable. (Group 1/ Practicum II Report)

With this in mind, on the first day of the workshop, before diving into the main topic – using apps and games to learn English – the group ran an interactive activity on the Mentimeter app featuring questions on key ELF-related concepts. During this discussion, they defined and critically examined the terms 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker', questioned the relevance of sounding like a native English speaker, and addressed the diversity of English accents.

They then played the video Foreign English Accents[4], showcasing native and non-native English speakers from countries such as China, Brazil, India, the United States, Italy, Indonesia, Spain, and Iraq. This was followed by a discussion on English varieties, intelligibility, and language ownership. Drawing from the slides used to support the discussion, the group made it clear that intelligibility does not depend on standard English or native accents; rather, the focus should be on clear communication. They also highlighted English's role as a global lingua franca and explained why it no longer fits neatly within the category of a foreign language.

On the second day of Workshop 1, I had the opportunity to closely observe the group. Maria opened the session by encouraging participants to see English as a global resource belonging to all its users, challenging the idea that it is tied exclusively to the U. S. or the U. K. After this moment of ELF-awareness, the group discussed how platforms

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[4] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpcG-xqPgRM>. Accessed May 30, 2021.

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like YouTube, streaming services, and social media can support autonomous English learning.

Penny recommended various YouTube channels for both formal instruction and exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity. Maria also highlighted the usefulness of TED Talks as learning tools. As an example, they played *3 Ways to Speak English*[5], in which African-American speaker Jamila Lyiscott reflects on the variations in her own use of English when communicating with friends, classmates, and her parents. The speaker challenges Eurocentric ideals and celebrates linguistic diversity, emphasizing that English is multifaceted. After an interactive Kahoot activity based on the video's vocabulary and content, Penny connected some of Lyiscott's points to earlier discussion on ELF, noting that

> [...] even in a native speaker's discourse, it's important to recognize that linguistic variation exists depending on the communicative situation. Just like here in Brazil—such a vast country—Portuguese varies a lot! [...] So, can we say these variations are incorrect? What happens with Jamila's English, and also with Brazilian Portuguese, helps us understand what's happening with English worldwide! (Excerpt from Penny's statement/ Teacher-Researcher's Journal)

On the third day, the group focused on learning English through music and introduced different apps that support this approach. According to the methodology outlined in their action plan, the group not only emphasized how music can improve listening and vocabulary, but also pointed out how it can expose learners to English's linguistic and cultural diversity.

To explore this, the group presented non-native English-speaking artists from various cultural backgrounds, showing their photos, nationalities, and interesting facts about them. They then played the music video *Cheap Thrills*[6] by Australian singer Sia, featuring Jamaican artist Sean Paul, and led an interactive activity using the "Open the Box" feature on the Wordwall platform. This activity addressed metalinguistic and

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[5] Available at <https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_lyiscott_3_ways_to_speak_english>. Accesses May 30, 2021.

[6] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYh-n7EOtMA>. Accessed May 25, 2021.

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metacognitive questions related to the native and non-native English varieties as demonstrated by the artists.

Workshop 2 was facilitated by Gabriela, Helena, Marcelo, Paulo, and Viviane (Group 2). Its main objective was to raise awareness among high school students about the importance of learning English through the lens of ELF, using digital technologies to promote innovative, interactive, and dynamic teaching. In the introductory section of the Practicum II report, Group 2 justified their choice of topic by noting that this perspective remains largely absent from English classes. They argued that an ELF-oriented approach could increase student's interest in learning the language, as it helps deconstruct linguistic ideologies that often hinder their progress towards their goals.

As the central theme of Workshop 2, ELF was systematically integrated into every activity. On the first day, right after a brief introduction, the group presented key ELF-related concepts to set the stage for upcoming activities. After providing an overview of terms such as standard English, native/non-native speaker, intelligibility, World Englishes, interculturality, stereotypes, and communicative strategies, the group led the "Open the Box" activity on the Wordwall platform aimed to assess participants' understanding of the terms, as well as to assess their English proficiency level. As part of the asynchronous component of the session, participants were asked to watch *Chimamanda Adichie: The Danger of a Single Story*[7] and take note on points they found most compelling for discussion in the next session.

I joined the second day of the workshop. When I entered the virtual room, the discussion of the video was already underway. As participants shared their insights, the facilitators enriched the dialogue, fostering a deeper understanding of stereotypes, cultural representation, and diversity. While discussing stereotypes, Marcelo stated the following reflection:

> [...] we have the tradition of Carnival in Brazil, which takes place in February, but foreigners often believe there's Carnival every day throughout the year. So, they generalize that every Brazilian knows how to samba and that Brazil is synonymous with parties and Carnival. These generalizations are harmful because, besides being inaccurate – since Carnival doesn't happen year-round – many Brazilian don't feel represented by this tradition or even dislike it, which can led to misunderstandings

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[7] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC-bh1YARsc>. Accessed May 30, 2021.

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in intercultural interactions. (Excerpt from Marcelo's statement/ Teacher-Researcher's journal)

Next, participants completed a Google Forms activity addressing metalinguistic and metacognitive questions prompted by the video. Gabriela then introduced the topic of English varieties. She began comparing American and British English, as well as European and Brazilian Portuguese, before expanding the conversation to include global varieties of English – not just naming but legitimizing Jamaican English, Indian English, South African English, Canadian English, among others.

To illustrate the topic, the facilitators presented flags from twelve countries representing Kachru's (1985) concentric circles, including the USA, Portugal, Brazil, South Korea, Colombia, and India. Next, they carried out an activity based on excerpts of English songs by artists from those countries. Participants were asked to analyze lyrics and melodies and identify their country of origin. It was emphasized that songs reflect the unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds of artists, serving as meaningful expressions of identity around the world.

In the final activity of the day, Viviane presented Kachru's concentric circles diagram and offered a detailed explanation of the theory, while also addressing common criticisms of the model. For the asynchronous task, participants were asked to research a country from one of the circles and post the most relevant findings on an interactive Padlet wall, highlighting the role of English in that country.

On the third and final day of Workshop 2, facilitators revisited ELF concepts through interactive activities based on movie and TV clips created with the ISLCollective platform, as well as games developed on Kahoot. They also dedicated time to sharing apps that could support participants in learning English independently.

Workshop 3, organized by Amora, Bruna, Juliana, Katy, and Lenir (Group 3), invited first-year high school students to reflect interactively on the contemporary use of English, emphasizing its role as a global lingua franca. With this in mind, the group aimed to: "identify participants' possible learning blocks and beliefs, challenge the ideal of linguistic perfection, and encourage them to be confident as users of English, understanding it as a diverse and dynamic language" (Group 3/ Practicum II Report).

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On the first day of the workshop, I observed Group 3 putting their planned methodology into practice. To prompt discussion on the relevance of English in contemporary society and, more specifically, raise awareness of ELF, the group used the 'Random Wheel', an interactive tool available on the Wordwall platform. Even as the initial task, it encouraged lively and meaningful engagement.

The next activity involved the music video *How Would You Think That Love*[8] by the international pop group Now United. Each group member, representing a different country, was introduced, opening space for a discussion on the linguistic and cultural diversity of English and how such diversity is shaped by individual background and experience. Highlights from the discussion included:

Now United engages in truly intercultural interaction. Regardless of one's L1 or cultural background, English can be used to express identity. The group embodies this diversity, each member communicates in English while proudly showcasing their national origins to the world. (Excerpt from Lenir's statement/ Teacher-Researcher's journal)

It's a real mix of cultures. Given this diversity, we can't claim that "correct" English is the one spoken by native speakers. Now United reflects global reality—people from various nations using English to interact. What matters is being understood, not mimicking native speakers. (Excerpt from Juliana's statement/ Teacher-Researcher's journal)

Participants then engaged in an interactive Wordwall activity (Open the Box), where they shared reflections prompted by the video. Katy followed by linking the nationalities of Now United members to Kachru's concentric circles. After a brief explanation of the theory, participants were assigned an asynchronous task in which they had to research a country within one of Kachru's circles and post the following information on Padlet: (i) which circle the country belongs to; (ii) justification for this categorization; and (iii) two interesting facts about the country.

On day two, after participants had shared their Padlet posts, the group used the submitted cultural facts to initiate a discussion on stereotypes and generalizations, which expanded into broader themes of cultural diversity and interculturality.

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[8] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTbYpSIF22s>. Accessed May 25, 2021.

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Next, the group used the song *Cheap Thrills*, by a native English-speaking singer featuring a non-native English-speaking singer, to explore native speaker ideology and standard language norms. The Jamaican accent featured in the song led to rich discussion on norm decentralization and intelligibility, followed by a Kahoot quiz with true-or-false questions.

For the asynchronous component, participants were asked to find and share on Padlet a video of a non-native English speaker, answering the following questions: *Why did you choose this video? What did you think of the speaker's English?* and *What was the video about?*

On the final day, Group 3 reviewed participants' Padlet contributions, prompting metalinguistic and metacognitive reflection on non-native English usage. To enrich the discussion, they played the video *Brazilian celebrities speaking English*[9], followed by new guiding questions to enhance participants understanding of English language diversity.

4 DISCUSSION

Given the outline of the STs' pedagogical practices, it is clear that all groups made a great effort to integrate the ELF perspective into the activities planned for the three-day workshop. They explored various macrostrategies for incorporating ELF, implementing different microstrategies and the using of a range of online tools and resources. Although the macro/microstrategies are often intertwined, Table 3 presents them separately to offer a clear look on the emerging themes.

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[9] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTbYpSIF22s>. Accessed May 10, 2021.

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Table 3. Macro/Microstrategies applied in the workshops

MACROSTRATEGIES	MICROSTRATEGIES
I. Raising students' awareness of ELF	i) Introduction of ELF as a concept and perspective; ii) Reflection on the global spread of English; iii) Use of metalinguistic and metacognitive questions; iv) Reconceptualization of the reasons for learning English;
II. Emphasizing learner agency	v) Identification of learners' needs and learning goals; vi) Encouragement of students' autonomy in the English learning process; vii) Promotion of English as a global resource;
III. Exposing learners to different English varieties	viii) Reflection on the dynamic and adaptable nature of languages; ix) Exposure to the broad variety of English, including both hegemonic and non-hegemonic countries; x) Presentation of successful and multilingual non-native English speakers as role models; xi) Use of authentic materials;
IV. Prioritizing intelligibility	xii) Focus on intelligible communication; xiii) Decentralization of linguistic normativity;
V. Fostering intercultural awareness	xiv) Deconstruction of traditional cultural categories; xv) Integration of cultural elements from different parts of the world; xvi) Discussion of stereotypes and generalizations; xvii) Reference to learners' own cultural context;
VI. Developing communication strategies	xviii) Discussion of the importance of communicative strategies.

Source: Alves, 2024

Most of the themes identified were shared across the three workshops. All groups were committed to explicitly raising participants' awareness of ELF. On the first day of each workshop, one of the initial actions taken by the STs was to introduce the concept of

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ELF and briefly discuss related issues. In order to emphasize the status of English as a global lingua franca and the spread of non-native English speakers worldwide, Groups 2 and 3 presented Kachru's (1985) model of concentric circles. Group 1, in turn, highlighted that English can no longer be viewed solely as a foreign language, given its dominant global role.

All three groups posed metalinguistic and metacognitive questions to guide reflections throughout the workshops. In each case, it was clear that facilitators encouraged participants to reconsider their motivations for learning English and reflect on the meaning of aiming for native-like pronunciation. As a result, participants reportedly felt more comfortable, motivated, and confident in their learning.

Aligned with the macrostrategy of emphasizing learner agency, the groups expressed, from the very beginning of the workshops, a genuine interest in understanding participants' motivations for joining the workshops, their reasons for studying English, and the significance of this language in their lives. This seemingly simple initiative demonstrated a clear commitment to creating space for learners to reflect on their goals and take responsibility of their learning processes.

While many learners feel connected to the global community and aim to use English as a lingua franca, others may also aspire to align with more privileged Anglo-American varieties. As Kohn (2015, 2022b) argues, learners construct their own version of English based on their personal requirements. Therefore, teachers must navigate the tension between global realities, local needs, and personal aspiration, incorporating these elements into curricula, methodologies, and assessments (Selvi, Galloway; Rose, 2023).

Still focusing on learner agency, Workshop 1 centered on encouraging learners' autonomy in constructing their own linguistic knowledge. Workshop 2, particularly on its final day, also addressed this goal. Both groups introduced a variety of resources – websites, apps, games, streaming platforms, social media, music, series, and films – to demonstrate that learners can take responsibility for their own learning beyond the classroom.

Group 1 also emphasized the idea that English belongs to a global community rather than being exclusively "owned" by inner-circle countries. The facilitators in this group appeared to have transcended feelings of linguistic inferiority imposed by hegemonic norms by actively rejecting native-speakerism and embracing English as a pluricentric,

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dynamic language. This stance aimed to empower learners by validating their identities and promoting confidence in their language learning journeys.

A key macrostrategy present in all workshops was exposing learners to different English varieties. Each group contributed to raise participants' awareness of the linguistic diversity within English by incorporating models from the Kachru's three concentric circles, underscoring the dynamic and evolving nature of languages. In Workshop 1, facilitators highlighted that even within the UK and the US, English is spoken in variety of ways. Jamila's TED talk was particulary impactful, providing a native speaker's perspective that reinforced the complexity of English and the impracticality of adhering to a single global standard.

The groups integrated multiple English varieties into listening tasks, not with the goal of teaching their specific features, but rather to raise awareness of linguistic diversity. This approach helps prevent learners from perceiving unfamiliar varieties as incorrect or inferior. As Selvi, Galloway, and Rose (2023, p. 34) argue:

> Unlike many other foreign languages where 'native speakers' are in majority and may serve as the ultimate (and in some cases, only) future target interlocutor in communication, the situation in English is drastically different. [...] If materials, curricula, and assessment represent only 'native English speakers' from a particular Inner Circle country (e.g., the United States), or an exclusive focus on 'native English speakers' from Inner Circle countries communicating with 'non-native speakers', it means that they are not in sync with the current realities of English users around the world.

To help learners set realistic and achievable goals while reconsidering the ideal of native-like fluency, all groups presented successful, multicompetent non-native English speakers as role models. The videos featured individuals from diverse backgrounds, including Brazilian celebrities, alongside music by globally recognized artists such as Now United[10].

To incorporate real-world diversity into the classroom, the groups used authentic materials such as YouTube videos, TED talks, music videos, popular songs, social media, blogs, and other resources. Unlike the view that inadvertently considers authentic

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[10]In addition to their songs, Now United members, like other public figures, share behind-the-scenes videos, interviews, and extra content on social media. These authentic materials offer opportunities to explore how they communicate in English in informal contexts, highlighting the diversity of linguistic styles and accents among them.

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materials as those including native English speakers in contexts where Standard English is the norm (e.g., real newspapers, magazine articles, horoscopes, and advertisements), I am in line with Widdowson (1994), understanding that materials are truly authentic when they are rooted in the learners' own contexts of use.

Another common theme across all workshops was the emphasis on intelligibility. The groups reinforced that effective communication does not depend on sounding like a native speaker, but rather on conveying a clear message. Learners were encouraged to value their own voices and linguistic identities, which contributed, at times implicitly, to challenging native-speaker norms and promoting greater acceptance of variation.

It is true that many teachers are trained to correct every deviation from standard norms, often mirroring their own learning experiences. However, adopting a more flexible approach to language use promotes risk-taking, learning from mistakes, and the development of communicative competence.

Fostering intercultural awareness was another recurring theme, particularly emphasized in Workshops 2 and 3. Group 1 focused on raising awareness of cultural diversity and suggesting ways to engage with other cultures, but fell short of developing a deeper, more advanced level of intercultural awareness. As Baker (2018, p. 33) explains, intercultural awareness encompasses

[...] different levels of awareness moving from a general or basic awareness of communication as a cultural practice, to a more critical awareness of varied intercultural communicative practices and finally an advanced level of intercultural awareness where flexibility, dynamism and complexity are the norm.

This limited initial engagement reflects what Selvi, Galloway, and Rose (2023), describe as a common first step in intercultural work, in which teachers compare American or British cultures with students' own. However, the authors warn that "[...] this intuitive first step may lead to essentialised understandings of cultures and nationalistic characteristics of individuals" (Selvi; Galloway; Rose, 2023, p. 48).

In contrast, the practices observed in Groups 2 and 3 revealed more refined intercultural lenses, aligned with the idea of deconstructing traditional categories of

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culture. These groups moved beyond static and superficial representations, fostering a more dynamic, critical, and context-sensitive understanding of cultural diversity. Both workshops intentionally integrated cultural elements from different parts of the world. Workshop 2 addressed cultural identities through songs by artists of diverse nationalities, while Workshop 3 explored the cultural diversity of Now United members and engaged participants in discussion about countries represented across Kachru's three concentric circles.

Demonstrating an awareness of the fluid and dynamic nature of culture, the groups engaged critically with stereotypes and generalizations. In Workshop 2, Chimamanda Adichie's video provided a springboard for discussing the danger of single stories. In Workshop 3, participants shared cultural facts – many of them stereotypical – about different countries. The facilitators responded by acknowledging the existence of such views and encouraging critical reflection, as recommended by Baker (2015). Building on these discussions, both groups addressed the complexity of intercultural interactions, promoting deeper reflection on the diversity and richness of cultures worldwide.

Throughout the workshops, all groups demonstrated sensitivity to learners' cultural backgrounds. By including Brazilian cultural references, showcasing varieties of Brazilian Portuguese, drawing comparisons between Brazilian and European Portuguese, and featuring successful Brazilians communicating in English, they fostered a sense of representation. This approach helped learners feel empowered and valued, creating a more inclusive environment and encouraging greater openness to exploring other cultures.

The macrostrategy of developing communicative strategies was explicitly addressed only in Workshop 2. On the first day, Group 2 underlined their relevance to intercultural competence and provided a few illustrative examples, but no practical applications were observed.

By drawing on the methodological procedures implemented throughout the workshops, this study showed that the experience not only prompted a significant shift in the STs' perceptions of English usage, teaching, and learning, but also enabled them to engage with ELF in a more concrete and practical way. Their growing awareness of this

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perspective suggests that they are likely to make informed and reflective pedagogical choices in their future teaching contexts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study aimed to contribute to the initial education of a new generation of teachers who are not only aware of ELF, but also confident in engaging with the linguistic and cultural diversity it brings into the classroom. By adopting an ELF-oriented perspective that fosters learner motivation and engagement, embraces linguistic and cultural diversity, and promotes more equitable and inclusive approaches to language education, participants demonstrated a growing awareness of the potential to reimagine English teaching and ground it in socially responsive pedagogical practices.

In this light, the findings offer a valuable contribution to the ongoing dialogue on integrating ELF into pre-service teacher education by advocating for pedagogical practices that reflect the plural, dynamic, and interconnected nature of today's globalized world. The outcomes of this research are especially relevant for fostering a critical, transformative, and proactive stance among pre-service teachers, supporting them in moving beyond abstract theoretical debates and enabling them to make autonomous, well-informed decisions about how ELF-related issues can be meaningfully integrated into their teaching. It is also hoped that this study may serve as a catalyst for further research, particularly on the long-term impacts of ELF-informed teacher education on classroom practices and educational policies.

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REPENSAR A FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES PARA SALAS DE AULA CULTURALMENTE DIVERSIFICADAS: UMA ABORDAGEM CENTRADA NO ILF E EDUCAÇÃO INTERCULTURAL PARA A CIDADANIA

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ABSTRACT: As societies become more culturally diverse due to migration, schools also reflect this shift, presenting teachers with new challenges, and the English language classroom is no exception. In these contexts, English is often the only shared means of communication as a lingua franca (ELF) both in and outside school settings. ELF can, therefore, facilitate successful intercultural communication, fostering an openness and willingness to connect with others across cultural boundaries. However, to achieve this, English language teachers should not only develop an understanding of ELF and ELF-aware pedagogical approaches (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis et al., 2018) but also explore how these may be connected with intercultural and global citizenship education (Grazzi, 2020; Porto, 2018a, 2018b). By integrating these perspectives, teachers may encourage learners' critical thinking, empathy, and intercultural competence, all of which are necessary for students to navigate our current society as global citizens. As de Costa (2022, p. 118) highlights, the goal is for ELF users to "move between and across local, national, and global contexts in dynamic ways." Thus, pre-service teacher education plays a crucial role in preparing future teachers to meet these challenges and shape learners who are responsive to our societal needs. This paper considers how these issues have been implemented within a pre-service teacher education program in Portugal, analyzing their impact on teacher trainees and examples of their pedagogical practices.
KEYWORDS: ELF. Intercultural citizenship. Pre-service teacher education.

RESUMO: À medida que as sociedades se tornam cada vez mais culturalmente diversificadas devido ao aumento da migração, as escolas refletem essa realidade,

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colocando novos desafios aos professores – incluindo na sala de aula de língua inglesa. Nestes contextos, o inglês surge frequentemente como o único meio de comunicação, funcionando como **língua franca (ILF)** tanto dentro como fora do ambiente escolar. O uso do inglês como língua franca tem, assim, o potencial de promover uma comunicação intercultural bem-sucedida, incentivando a abertura e a disposição para interagir com o outro além das fronteiras culturais. No entanto, para explorar este potencial, os professores de inglês devem não só desenvolver uma compreensão do conceito de ILF e de abordagens pedagógicas sensíveis a esta realidade (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis et al., 2018), como também refletir sobre a forma como estas podem articular-se com a educação intercultural e a educação para a cidadania global (Grazzi, 2020; Porto, 2018a, 2018b). A integração destas perspetivas pode contribuir para o desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico, da empatia e da competência intercultural dos alunos, capacidades essenciais para uma comunicação internacional eficaz e para uma cidadania global ativa. Como refere de Costa (2022, p. 118), pretende-se que os utilizadores de ILF circulem entre contextos locais, nacionais e globais de forma dinâmica. Neste sentido, a formação inicial de professores desempenha um papel fundamental na preparação de futuros docentes para estes desafios. Este artigo analisa a implementação destes princípios num programa de formação inicial de professores em Portugal, explorando o seu impacto nos formandos e nas suas perspetivas pedagógicas.

Palavras-chave: ILF. Cidadania intercultural. Formação inicial de professores.

INTRODUCTION

At a time of increasingly sociocultural diversity and global mobility, students need to be prepared for today's multicultural and multilingual world. Many classrooms, consequently, mirror this society, which is influenced by the flow of people, ideas, and languages across borders. Since English often functions in these contexts as a lingua franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2011), that is, as a common language of communication among speakers of various first languages within and outside the classroom, English language teaching (ELT) must take on new dimensions. This change has significant implications not only on how English is taught and learned but also on the pedagogical principles that guide teacher education.

Despite this diversity, a monocultural standpoint and preference for native-speaker norms continue to be perpetrated by many teachers who ignore the multilingual, multicultural realities of their students. To move beyond these limitations, there is a growing need for pre- and in-service English language teacher education to embrace ELF and ELF-awareness (e.g., Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2025) as well as an

intercultural approach where intercultural citizenship education (ICE) (e.g., Byram, 2008; Grazzi, 2020; Porto, 2018a, 2018b) may be explored to equip students for today's current communicative demands as well as promote stronger social integration in communities. Such approaches are crucial when preparing teachers to critically engage with language ideologies, foster intercultural dialogue, and empower learners to participate actively in their communities as global citizens.

This paper, therefore, begins by delving into the concepts of ELF and ICE, followed by a discussion on how these key theoretical perspectives may play a vital role in English language teacher education by fostering inclusive and transformative pedagogies for teachers and students alike. By doing so, the aim is to cultivate reflective and responsive educators equipped to contend with the complexities of culturally diverse English classrooms. The following section considers how these issues have been implemented within a pre-service teacher education program in Portugal, analyzing their impact on teacher trainees along with some examples of their pedagogical practices.

1 DEALING WITH THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

When I was doing fieldwork for a project a few years ago at a school in the heart of Lisbon, I came across a startling example of the difficulties and lost opportunities that arise in classrooms with a diverse student body. The middle school English language class I visited had students from every continent, representing a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. What surprised me the most was not the diversity itself, but the lack of interaction between those students. There seemed to be little attempt to overcome these barriers, and communication was limited to small, culturally homogeneous groups. The teacher justified the lack of integration by pointing out that the group had an overall low level of English, that many did not know Portuguese and that some of these students were only in Portugal temporarily. The overall feeling seemed to be to let things simply run their course, rather than seeing this as a pedagogical and social issue that should be addressed. As with this teacher, many others are possibly in similar situations, unaware of how to manage these contexts. In such cases, classrooms risk reinforcing existing social divisions rather than serving as spaces for meaningful connection and inclusion. Without intentional efforts to foster critical reflection, empathy, and active intercultural engagement, these environments may inadvertently exacerbate social divisions.

1.1 TAKING AN ELF-AWARE APPROACH

Much has been published on ELF since the early 2000s (e.g., Jenkins, 2005, 2007; Mauranen, 2005; Seidlhofer, 2001), however, the concept continues to raise questions among uninformed educators in the field. As a result, it is vital to first stress the inclusive stance of ELF, as it focuses on English language use in Kachru's (1985) Expanding Circle as well as the Inner and Outer Circles, especially in multicultural and international contexts. More recently, Selvi and Yazan (2021) have also highlighted how ELF serves as a "common linguistic link and context bringing together individuals from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds" (Selvi & Yazan, 2021, p. 1).

Given the diverse nature of various communicative scenarios, it is evident that traditional native speaker norms, which have long dominated in ELT, seem increasingly inadequate for today's needs (Seidlhofer, 2011). Instead, a paradigm shift toward ELF calls for rethinking the objectives and methods of ELT to prioritize intercultural communication over native-speaker likeness. This reorientation presents opportunities to transform the language classroom into a space of intercultural learning. Adopting an ELF-aware approach (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2025), therefore, emphasizes the dynamic, negotiated nature of communication among speakers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It resists the notion of English as a fixed set of native-speaker norms and, alternatively, highlights adaptability, mutual understanding, and meaning-making in context. As a result, an ELF perspective can lead to more inclusive and relevant pedagogical practices (Lopriore & Vettorel, 2025), where ELF-aware teachers are encouraged to rethink and reflect upon several issues, namely the importance of increasing ELF exposure in language curricula, emphasizing respect for multilingualism in ELT, raising awareness of Global Englishes in ELT, advocating ELF strategies in language curricula or emphasizing respect for diverse cultures and identities (Galloway & Rose, 2021, p. 13). This can ideally be achieved through tasks that simulate real-world ELF interactions (e.g., interviews, debates, podcasts), validating different varieties and uses of English as well as fostering critical awareness of linguistic ideologies and power relations. Such practices will enhance learners' communicative effectiveness and prepare

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them to engage with linguistic diversity in globalized contexts. In doing so, ELF-aware teaching aligns naturally with the intercultural education objectives.

1.2 ARTICULATING ELF WITH INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

As previously discussed, learning English in today's superdiverse world entails much more than simply being grammatically proficient. Interculturality also plays a central role in achieving effective communication in ELF scenarios and should thus be problematized to avoid its reification. As Holmes and Dervin (2016) stress, "(…) ELF users do not meet cultures, but complex subjects who 'do' identity and culture with each other" (Holmes & Dervin, 2016, p. 9). This issue may be observed in publications like the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) at the beginning of the 21st century as well as in the work developed by Michael Bryam (e.g., 1997, 2008) on Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Will Baker (e.g., 2011, 2015) on Intercultural Awareness (ICA) or, more recently, in works dedicated to Intercultural Citizenship Education (e.g., Byram et al., 2017; Grazzi, 2020; Porto et al., 2018), which builds on the former two concepts.

As one of the key documents guiding language education in Europe (and even beyond), the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) has played a vital role in urging learners to develop their plurilingual and pluricultural skills to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. Although the document does not openly address Byram's (1997) ICC model, its core values are inherent in the framework's approach to intercultural awareness, attitudinal openness, and sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence, hence promoting the idea of the language learner as an intercultural speaker who can interact with diversity, mediate between languages and cultures, and use language for effective and meaningful communication.

Byram's ICC model, one of the most influential within language teaching, goes, however, beyond what is presented in the *CEFR*. It provides a more ample understanding of what it means to be an intercultural speaker by identifying five *savoirs*, namely attitudes of curiosity and openness towards other cultures (*savoir être*), knowledge of social groups and their cultural practices (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating cultural meanings (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction that enable learners to engage with new cultural contexts (*savoir apprendre/faire*) and critical cultural awareness

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(*savoir e'engager*), which encourages reflection on values, beliefs, and power relations both within and across cultures. As Byram (2012) further notes,

> The intercultural speaker needs intercultural communicative competence, i.e. both intercultural competence and linguistic/communicative competence, in any talk of mediation where two distinct linguacultures are present, and this is something different from and not comparable with the competence of the native speaker. (Byram, 2012, p. 89)

While groundbreaking for its time, Byram's model also has its limitations, as Baker (2022) highlights. For example, the initial formulation of ICC has been criticized as being neo-essentialist in establishing links between culture, language, and country, and although Byram (2021) has recently clarified that ICC's focus is not only on national scale culture and language correlations, the line between "my" culture and the "foreign" culture is still perpetuated. Additionally, ICC cannot comprise all that is perceived in actual examples of intercultural communication.

To better explain this fluid, dynamic, and emergent nature of intercultural communication, especially when it comes to ELF interactions, Baker (2011, 2015) developed the notion of ICA by building on Byram's work, broadening its application to include plurilithic and de-territorialized English use in ELF contexts. He defines ICA as "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context-specific manner in communication" (Baker, 2015, p. 163). Emphasis is placed on the processes of intercultural communication rather than on understanding other cultures and languages in specific, hence detaching culture from an essentialist viewpoint targeted at countries or nationalities and avoiding the "my vs. other" culture distinction.

While an advance, ICC and ICA focus on awareness raising rather than on action. If the aim is to bridge cultural barriers, such as the ones verified in the English language classroom I visited, ICE centers its attention on action and change through direct engagement and action with others and other communities (Baker, 2022). Intercultural citizenship can therefore be easily developed in the context of the language classroom, as it addresses intercultural communication as well as "other" cultures (Byram et al., 2017; Porto et al., 2018). Moreover, ICE's dedication to local, national and global social justice

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allows students to actively participate in, value and respect diversity among these communities. In this sense, notions of activity, change and experience are central. By working with others, learners may engage in intercultural citizenship experiences as well as social/political activity, subsequently changing the learner and their relationship with others and diverse social groups. In doing so, ELT may enhance learners' ICC and encourage them to practice mediating their many linguacultural identities via the use of a common language – English – to actively participate in society (Grazzi, 2020).

Besides language, other 21st-century skills are also called upon, such as consciousness-raising (e.g., observing, describing, analyzing, discovering), comparative interpretation (e.g., comparing/contrasting, connecting, de-centering, perspective-taking, interpreting), and critical thinking (e.g., critical reflexivity and critical action via community engagement) (Porto, 2018b, p.494). Moreover, using the language with a genuine need, for instance, through project work on socially relevant themes (e.g., ecology, peace and conflict, diversity, human rights, sustainability, poverty) allows learners to develop not only these skills, but also a sense of community (by working with others from different backgrounds) where they may improve their language awareness and reflection, vocabulary development, meaning negotiation, experimentation with new language and use language in real scenarios (Porto, 2018a).

To accomplish such an approach in the ELT context, not only do students need the time and space to reflect upon the correlations between language learning and use, intercultural communication and their understanding of intercultural citizenship, but language teachers also need the opportunity to contemplate their own use of English and the potential development of an intercultural citizen identity, which may be a more pertinent alternative to the ideal native English speaker as a teacher (Baker, 2022). This implies delving into more critical approaches to language and intercultural citizenship education in teacher education programs, an issue that remains underexplored in many pre-service teacher education courses.

2 PREPARING TEACHERS FOR DIVERSITY IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

2.1 BUILDING REFLECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGIES

As schools become increasingly multicultural and multilingual, there is an urgent call to reconfigure pre-service teacher education courses to develop future ELT educators'

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awareness of the current status of English as well as new competencies required for English learners. This is particularly relevant at a time when culture and the intercultural component continue to be often dealt with in the classroom in a stereotyped and essentialist manner, centered on comparisons between national cultures, focusing on, for example, festivals, food and touristic images (Baker, 2015). This essentialist approach is particularly observed in textbooks, which in many settings are the core of language teaching and where the cultural approach is undertaken in a superficial and stereotyped manner. Siqueira (2016) refers to this approach in ELT textbooks as the "plastic world", where he also highlights the native-speaker centeredness of these materials, "elements such as cultural references, for instance, have always resorted to the practice of mirroring the daily life of native speakers, spreading and incorporating their beliefs, different types of behavior, values, and ways of life" (Siqueira, 2016, p. 248). Given this approach, Cogo et al. (2023) have called for the need to critically review teaching materials used in classroom practices.

In this sense, pre-service teacher education should assume a more comprehensive approach, by moving beyond just technical training to promote a greater reflective stance. In doing so, prospective teachers can critically engage with language ideologies, question assumptions they may have about English, and acquire more inclusive practices to validate their learners' different experiences. These are some of the key factors to explore as many in-service teachers lack knowledge of how to manage multi-cultural/lingual settings, in addition to the overall lack of support in policy documents, curricula, syllabi, textbooks, and materials to teach citizenship and human rights issues. Moreover, there is also the difficulty in engaging in relevant practices within schools and communities (Porto et al., 2018).

Bearing in mind this reality, teacher education programs that take on a reflective stance should encourage future teachers to develop competences like analyzing, comparing and contrasting, critical thinking, de-centering, discovering, describing, interpreting, observing, relating, perspective-taking, reflexivity, and critical cultural awareness. Additionally, it would also be pertinent to critically reflect upon issues, such as:

- Whose English are we teaching?

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- What cultural and ideologícal assumptions are embedded in our teaching materials and practices?
- How can English also be used as a tool for building intercultural understanding and citizenship?

This reflective practice aligns directly with an ELF-aware teacher education framework (e.g., Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2025), which emphasizes teacher agency, local appropriateness, and transformative learning, as previously discussed in the first section. Articulating an ELF-aware approach with tasks and discussions related to real-world issues, such as migration, social justice or climate change, helps foster pedagogical responsiveness and empathy. From an (inter)cultural perspective, this shift in focus from product (e.g., knowledge of specific linguistic forms and cultural practices) to processes of communication is central for students to successfully adapt their linguistic and other communicative resources to each interaction (Porto, 2018a). This may be approached by connecting meaningful global themes with local classroom realities through a variety of different manners, like project work, digital storytelling, intercultural dialogues, or community-based learning experiences, among others. The results are positive not only for the learners, who develop language skills and are engaged as active citizens, but also for the teachers, as it supports the formation of their own professional identity as an intercultural mediator and agent of change.

2.2 INSIGHTS AND EXAMPLES FROM A PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN PORTUGAL

This section takes into consideration the specific context of ELT pre-service teacher education programs at NOVA University of Lisbon in Portugal, where there is a course solely centered on ELT (monolingual course) and two other bilingual courses where English is paired with either Portuguese (L1) or with another foreign language (French, German or Spanish). These are two-year courses targeted at ELT at upper basic (grades 7 to 9) and secondary (grades 10 to 12) levels. Students in the first year have classes at the university and in the second year, they are at schools observing and teaching and have few classes at the university.

The number of foreign students enrolled in the Portuguese school system in recent years has increased significantly. In the 2022/2023 school year, there were a total of 145,700 students enrolled in basic and secondary education in mainland Portugal (in both

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the public and private sectors), comprising over 11% of the student population (DGEEC, 2024), a drastic increase in the last ten years (Oliveira, 2013). As a result, the teacher education programs at NOVA have tried to follow these trends and offer courses that are in keeping with the challenges future teachers may face, as well as equip them with the necessary tools to ensure more inclusive, successful and productive classrooms. Within the specific field of English, two courses have focused on developing more inclusive notions of interculturality: TEFL Methodology II and Language and Intercultural Citizenship Education.

In the former course, it is an obligatory seminar for all prospective English language teachers and comprises the following objectives, among others: developing linguistic and cultural competences from an intercultural perspective; developing the production and use of materials and the design of tasks aiming at a reflective and critical analysis; developing further the formative, social and citizenship aims inherent to foreign language education; developing a critical understanding of foreign language education and intercultural communication; and participating in links with partners abroad, including visits, exchanges or ICT links. The course combines theoretical and practical sessions, including presentation, demonstration, practical activities, group discussion and reflection on the topics studied. It aims at creating a safe space for critical theoretical reflection to help students prepare a final small project or learning tasks within intercultural citizenship.

With regard to Language and Intercultural Citizenship Education, it is mandatory within the monolingual course and is offered as an elective for the bilingual courses, meaning that not all teacher trainees are required to attend. It addresses more specific issues of ICE than those explored in the TEFL Methodology II course, providing a more centered focus on the intercultural dimensions of language teaching. In this case, it includes objectives, such as: developing awareness, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity within the learning of English; identifying and critically considering issues, challenges and implications for intercultural communication within ELT; understanding the social, cultural, and linguistic factors involved in the process of intercultural communication; considering the skills, competences and knowledge to be promoted to foster ICE as integrated with FL subjects; promoting intercultural dialog between different systems of beliefs, values and attitudes; and reflecting on intercultural

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learning as a transformative process of the self (personally, professionally, academically). The course combines theoretical input and discussion with an analysis of practical incidents and different types of texts (e.g., written and visual), and includes strategies like text discussion, oral presentation and discussion, role-playing, self- and meta-reflection, debating and group interaction.

In both cases, trainees have the opportunity to delve into critical and relevant issues of how interculturality may be explored in the English language classroom, providing them with fundamental notions on how to work with these issues in real-life scenarios in schools. Two examples will be provided on how interculturality and ICE may be implemented. The first case is an example created by a student for the TEFL Methodology II class, but which may be applied in any English classroom, and the second example is of an actual project a teacher trainee implemented in their school, based on what we had discussed in the first year of the master's program.

In the first example, the teacher trainee chose to explore the concept of tattoos and what they may represent in different societies through project work. For this, they chose a BBC article from 2018 on Maori face tattoos ("Maori face tattoo: It is OK for a white woman to have one?") as a starting point, where students would have to identify and map out different perspectives regarding the use of the "moko" (a chin tattoo used by Maori women). In addition to working directly with the article, students would also critically reflect on and discuss the meaning of tattoos in their own cultures. Afterward, they would have a moment of intercultural exchange, where online discussions would be promoted with people from other geographical regions/countries to explore the meanings of tattoos in other contexts. Based on these two moments, a comparative discussion would follow for students to compare their findings and reflect on the existing cultural differences regarding tattoos. As language is not confined to the classroom walls, the trainee also proposed that students carry out local interviews with individuals who have tattoos, exploring the personal reasons behind them and how they are viewed by society, which would allow them to critically assess and compare the insights from the interviews along with the initial cultural meanings previously discussed. Since tattoos may sometimes be seen as taboo or misinterpreted, as a final output focusing on public outreach, the teacher trainee suggested students create a leaflet/poster and host a public talk on "The World of Tattoos" in collaboration with local institutions (e.g., library), where they could host

interactive sessions, engaging the community (especially older generations) in discussions about tattoos, fostering intergenerational dialogue and understanding.

The second example provides a real instance of a teacher trainee placed in a school in the center of Lisbon, where morning classes are targeted at the local students and the afternoon classes are directed at migrant/refugee students; a scenario in which neither of the groups cross paths either at school or within the community at large. Perplexed by this situation and based on what had been widely discussed at university, the trainee proposed a project that would promote an intercultural encounter between the morning students (that the trainee was working with throughout the school year) and refugee students, aiming at breaking down any existing stereotypes, promoting intercultural communication, promoting translanguaging practices and having students relate to others' experiences.

Before the actual intercultural encounter, the morning students were informed they would be communicating with and meeting refugees from various countries and were asked to identify and write down their assumptions and stereotypes regarding issues like multiculturalism, refugees and immigration. Additionally, they also had to write a poem about what they believed the refugee experience is like. Previous to the actual encounter, the teacher trainee also divided all the students into mixed WhatsApp groups so they could start communicating and getting to know each other. On the day of the encounter, the teacher trainee designed several tasks, some of which are presented here. For instance, as a warmer, they did a "step forward if…" line game in which students had to step forward to the line if they personally related to the feeling/situation mentioned in the statements, such as, if they lived in Lisbon, if you liked rap music, if they liked the school, if they ever felt excluded or discriminated, or if they ever felt difficulty fitting into a new environment.

The aim was for them to share their experiences and start recognizing that they probably did not have as many differences as they might think. In another moment, "From WhatsApp to the classroom", students were invited to get into their virtual groups and reflect on their prior WhatsApp exchanges, how they felt texting someone they had not met beforehand, as well as questions/aspects they would have liked to ask or share but did not. They were then subsequently asked to consider and share what they found most important from their discussion (e.g., opinions, feelings, and considerations about their

virtual exchange). In another task, "Poems and experiences", the morning class shared what they learned in class (if they had not done so virtually) as well as their poems about the refugee experience. The refugee students were then asked to share their own experiences, to see to what extent they matched the others' views, and both groups had the opportunity to ask questions and share different viewpoints. To finish, in the following lesson with the morning students (after the in loco meeting), the teacher trainee requested they reflect upon the experience, by having them contemplate how they felt meeting the afternoon students in person, what they had discussed (e.g., did they revisit any stories or information shared virtually), whether their views had changed regarding their initial stereotypes and assumptions, and what had they gained from this experience.

The two examples here provided demonstrate how, with the correct guidance, teacher trainees can create and implement insightful, thought-provoking projects that actively involve students in the language classroom. In the first case, the tattoo project engaged students in critical reflection, intercultural dialogue, and community action. By exploring tattoos as cultural symbols through text, intercultural exchanges and local interviews, students analyzed different viewpoints, reflected on cultural meanings within and beyond their communities, and raised awareness of how personal and societal views on tattoos vary from culture to culture. The idea of having students actively involved within their communities is closely aligned with the principles of ICE, combining language learning with critical cultural awareness as well as civic engagement.

In the second case, the teacher trainee facilitated an encounter between the local and refugee students whose paths would probably not cross, if not for this project. Through reflective, interactive, and experiential tasks, the morning students not only confronted their assumptions about refugees and engaged in meaningful intercultural dialogue, but they also critically reflected upon their experiences. The initial interaction via WhatsApp was essential to help build rapport before the face-to-face encounter, while the post-encounter reflections allowed students to assess how their beliefs had changed, hence promoting empathy, intercultural understanding, and a sense of belonging. Overall, both projects exemplify how language education can support inclusive practices and democratic engagement through critical, experiential, and socially relevant learning.

CONCLUSION

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As has been discussed throughout this article, combining ELF with ICE provides a useful pedagogical framework for English language teacher education, where linguistic competence, critical cultural awareness, empathy, and civic engagement are vital skills to be developed with learners in today's globalized world. Teacher education programs, therefore, play a fundamental role in preparing pre-service teachers to become intercultural mediators and agents of change by equipping them with tools to critically reflect upon language ideologies, engage in intercultural dialogue, and design inclusive, socially relevant classroom practices. The two examples presented reveal how future English teachers can create stimulating and innovative projects that challenge stereotypes, all kinds of prejudice, promote mutual understanding, and extend language learning into real-world intercultural encounters when provided with appropriate guidance. These projects go beyond the traditional classroom, contributing to learners' greater motivation and engagement, as well as the opportunity to communicate with others they would probably not cross paths with on a day-to-day basis. ELT, as a result, goes beyond simply a linguistic effort to build more inclusive and democratic societies, bringing together students in the classroom and also with the wider community.

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