Towards Translanguaging with Students at Public School: multimodal and transcultural aspects in meaning making

Rumo à translinguagem com alunos da Escola Pública: aspectos multimodais e transculturais na construção de sentido

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to report on an experiment that approximates with translingual and multimodal practices in workshops about migration involving secondary public school students and to rethink its implications in relation to the teaching of English in contemporary transcultural landscape from a critical perspective. It is situated in a community project on critical education through languages, which involves a set of workshops from a partnership between a public university and a public secondary school. As a collaborative work, it includes language professors, undergraduate students and a teacher and her students from a public secondary school where the project took place. It reports on the students' context, from which meaning making emerges and it is analyzed in the light of the theoretical conceptions here selected. It is founded on qualitative and interpretive methodology and it relies on contingent processes and procedures of the workshops in question. It assumes critical literacy as a social practice, translingual practices as part of the everyday experience resembling assemblage (instead of fixed and linear movements in meaning making) and multimodality as inherent to interaction in knowledge construction. The notion of workshop is equivalent to secondary school students' meaning making. The result suggests that resources and practices resembling translingual and multimodal ones might enhance students' engagement, creativity, critique and ethics modifying language teaching-learning and the use of technology.

Keywords: insights for creative learning; teacher education; translingual-multimodal practices in public school.

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Resumo: O objetivo deste artigo é relatar uma experiência que se aproxima das práticas translíngues e multimodais em workshops sobre imigração envolvendo alunos do ensino fundamental público e repensar suas implicações para o ensino de inglês na paisagem transcultural contemporânea da perspectiva crítica. Situa-se num projeto de extensão sobre educação crítica por linguagens. Este trabalho envolve um conjunto de oficinas como fruto de uma parceria entre uma universidade pública e uma escola de ensino fundamental pública. O trabalho é colaborativo e conta com docentes e alunos de Letras, uma professora e seus alunos do ensino fundamental público da escola em que o projeto ocorreu. O presente trabalho relata o contexto dos alunos a partir do qual a construção de sentidos emergiu e que é analisada com base nas concepções teóricas selecionadas. Fundamenta-se numa metodologia qualitativa e interpretativa e conta com processos e procedimentos contingentes das oficinas em questão. Entende-se letramento crítico como prática social, práticas translíngues como experiências diárias que lembram uma *assemblage* (ao invés de movimentos lineares e fixos de construção de sentido) e multimodalidade como inerente à interação e à construção de conhecimento. A noção de oficina equivale à construção de sentido dos alunos do ensino fundamental. O resultado sugere que recursos e práticas que lembram as translíngues e multimodais podem ampliar o engajamento, a criatividade, a crítica e ética dos alunos transformando o ensino-aprendizagem de línguas e o uso de tecnologia.

palavras-chave: formação de professor; percepções para aprendizagem criativa; práticas translíngues-multimodais na escola pública.

Introduction

In the dynamic configuration of migration across the globe, reimagining possibilities to integrate university and basic school (elementary and secondary schools) seems to be congruous with the growing demands of present knowledge and digital society. However, not all changes characterize a revitalized form of citizenship within uneven relations of power (Janks, 2010; Janks *et al.*, 2014).

Following this observation, what is at stake now, is the belief in students' capacity to draw flexibly on their linguistic, transcultural, human and non-human repertoires (Pennycook, 2018) to position themselves and renegotiate meanings in relation to particular transcultural context within distributed agency without erasing difference/diversity. Hence, educating students creatively enhances possibilities for their co-redesigning of the educational programs that are relevant for their locality.

Theorists, such as Canagarajah (2013a, 2013b), Garcia and Wei (2014), Pennycook (2010), among others, have long been drawing attention to local engagement within pluralized social

dimensions to reshape language policy, curriculum design and teacher education through the constant understanding of how language practice means to diverse situations.

Language practice brings in its social origin translingual assemblage (Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b) and multimodal ensemble (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 2014) interconnecting verbal language, images, sounds, animations and spatiality in contingent ways as potential resources for meaning making and it opens up possibilities for relevant epistemological paradigm shift within literacies (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012).

This paradigm tends to embrace a pluriversal way of enactment/agency, which recognizes the potential capacity of teachers, students and authorities to interfere in their own sociohistorical conditions. From this prism, transcultural and linguistic education is crucial to enable students to "interact critically with the word and the world", resonating the Freirean educational perspective (Freire, 2005).

Recognizing that different ways of using language have different implications in citizenship and, thus, in society, can enhance comprehension of the relationship among community members, institutions and peoples, a fundamental perception for todays' local-global assemblage (Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b) and multimodal ensemble (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 2014). In other words, such ways refer to pluriscapes embedded with complex identities and unexpected ways of renegotiating meanings within unequal distribution of power. This paradigm shift transcends unfruitful dichotomies between the epistemologies from the West and East, as there is no 'pure', essentialized identity, for hybridity is perceived within the origins of our identities not as a starting visible point with linear and predictable movements, in accordance with Bhabha (1994), Pennycook and Otsuji (2015), among others.

With this introduction, we summarize the objective of this work: to report on an experiment[2], an initiative of a public federal university, with four workshops carried out in a public secondary school (with students from year 6 to 9, aged between 11 and 14) to discuss samples of the school students' meaning making related to migration and the implications of the outcome in language education. The organization of the structure of this paper is three-folded: we contextualize the workshops, then, we present and discuss some activities implemented in the school according to some basic assumptions revolving around translingual and multimodal practices, and after that, we reflect on their consequences for literacy teaching.

Contextualizing the project: set of workshops

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[2] The community project in question was comprised of one workshop per month from March to November/2017. In this paper, four of them are selected.

This paper is the result of a community project which was held at a secondary school. It was not submitted to the research ethics committee. Nevertheless, we requested the students' parent's permission to use images, recordings, sounds of voices, biographical data, and materials produced only for academic purposes.

In this community project, the team comprised of four professors from the English department (CF, PF1, PF2, PF3 onwards), being CF the coordinator and author of this paper, six undergraduate students of English, one professor from the Portuguese department (PF4) and two undergraduate students of Portuguese of a federal university, three professors of the English department (PS1, PS2, PS3) and five undergraduate students of English from a state university, a teacher[3] of English of the public secondary school and a Master degree teacher[4] of Spanish from a regional Secretary of Education (PMS). They all had been working on critical teacher education from the translingual perspective here focused on.

The concept of workshop referred to meaning making, that is, the multiple ways the secondary school students ascribed significations to texts in relation to migration. The common ground within our epistemological guidelines reflected the pedagogical activities applied to language from the perspective of critical education (Freire, 2005) and critical literacy (Janks, 2010; Janks *et al.*, 2014).

In perceiving the agreement among the professors and the school teacher in relation to the need to foster critical education within translingual and multimodal aspects in the practices, we set out to organize the program from March to November at the end of 2016 to be carried out in 2017. The partnership linked the federal university and the public secondary school. The state university was invited to join in by CF. The department of research at the federal university and the public secondary school had approved the project at the end of 2016. Other aspects such as the diversity of the themes, the nature of the activities, evaluation and accreditation/certification were discussed during and throughout the process in on-line/off-line meetings.

The idea was to free professors, the school teacher and the undergraduate students from top-down decisions regarding themes, resources, materials, procedures and patterns of interactions. We shared our workshop plans via emails so that everyone could suggest ideas[5]. The schedule of the secondary school permitted our using the tech-laboratory in a week and an ordinary classroom in another week in a rotating system. Each workshop lasted one hour, from 3:00 to 4:00 pm at the school counter-shift, weekly.

As there was no funding for this project, the participants were volunteers and some professors came by their own cars from the other city (one hour and a half from the town where the secondary

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[3] The school teacher had been an audit student in a discipline I taught at the Master program at the federal university in the year before this project was launched. She got acquainted with the theories adopted in this paper.
[4] She had done her Master under the supervision of this paper writer´s and was also familiar with these theories.
[5] It is not the focus here to go through more detailed linearity of the pre-production, circulation and follow-up of the activities as more space would be necessary.

school is located) with their undergraduate students. Most of the undergraduate students worked with different professors in the tutorial to plan the workshops, under the belief that this rotational method would enrich their collaborations. However, having to commute from one city to another limited their participations. As a result, the number of workshop run by the professors and the undergraduate students varied. Out of thirty workshops, the coordinator (CF) ran twelve, PF1, seven, PF2 and PF3, four, PF4, one, PS1, PS2 and PS3, one and PMS, two.

CF attended all the thirty workshops except two of them, which coincided with his/her holidays. The fact that an initiative like this having professors enter a public school to implement a project with this nature sparkled the school principal, professors and student's interests. As transcultural situations become more complex in the face of globalization with increased mobility, such as the participants' commuting, it is possible to say that the methodology deployed to explore this experiment evolved and became equally sophisticated.

We opted to work with secondary school students from different years and ages. This was done under the premise that it would approximate challenges to real/virtual contemporary life, resembling interactions and attitude towards the Internet. Twenty vacancies were offered, but only fourteen students finished the project. The CF phoned the student's parents/responsible member to listen to their feedback, to inform them about some news and to get to know about the absentees weekly. The explanations provided by the absentees' parents/responsible member were: moving to another city, choice of tap dancing, living far away from school, having to look after younger sister, feeling shy in front of the other peers and moving to another school.

Each team worked on specific themes at its will but also influenced by the students' suggestions during the processes. The themes that emerged were: migration, hip hop, adverts, video clips, games, toys, entertainment, (super)heroes, indigenous communities, sign language, twitter, embarrassing situations, bullying, songs, family, gender, religion and 'thinking outside the box'. Some of these topics were suggested by the secondary school students and also the choice of patterns of interactions (individual work, pair work, group work) bringing in their knowledge of the world, identity and desires. This orientation approximated pedagogical explorations, which tended to decolonize methodologies (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). It legitimized those students' suggestions and nurtured horizontal ways to approach the environment.

This methodology prioritized qualitative and interpretive aspects, which means that all the participants' views and actions were taken into consideration. Attention was drawn to situated interactions evoking the juxtaposition of multiple semiotic, multisensory resources and features from different languages (visual, spatial, gestural, auditive, body etc.), which were at play in the students' meaning making processes. Data was generated through various means as accounted during this writing process. Understanding the intersubjective nature of this methodological choice proved fundamental to perceive students' position, creativity and attempts to reconstruct their common sense while ascribing meanings to different themes.

Furthermore, we sought to adopt an ethnographic attitude by putting ourselves in the school students' shoes to apprehend what themes and ways of interacting could be more transculturally sensitive and meaningful for them and by diversifying data generation. At the end of each workshop, students were asked to talk about a possible change in understanding a particular topic due to the experience on that day. On board, teachers used to write the subjects the students proposed as alternatives for discussions in subsequent workshops. Hip hop was voted as the theme that seemed more congruent to their interests and needs. Also, patterns of interactions were negotiated: the students had the option to interact with closer friends, considering they came from different years at secondary school. At other times, they were encouraged to have conversations with different partners. Building on diversity was part of the dynamic continuum of meaning making.

Over the course of the project, we continuously gathered a variety of data including students' written questionnaires, filmed/recorded workshop interactions, two interviews with each participant, and photographs of all digital productions, such as memes, sentences with multimodal elements.

Data was also generated from off-line/on-line meetings with the participation of at least one professor/tutor and his/her undergraduate students (sometimes with the school teacher) to discuss conceptions, plans, activities, resources and implementations followed by a post-reflexive session after each workshop.

We intended to reconnect the resources and procedures to stimulate meanings within local-global contexts that vibrantly fed one another. Additionally, it could enhance our rethinking of who loses and who benefits from the way we conceive of the many issues connected to language education in public schools and universities, namely: participation within differences, critique, creativity, multimodal competence, use of the non-human actors (Pennycook, 2018) understood as texts (Janks, *et al*., 2014), such as: computers, desks to form a circle, table, screen for multimodal productions, pens, pencil, paper, board, floor for dancing, etc., all of them affecting the learning environment.

In this paper, we concentrate on migration from the perspective of the secondary school students. It is justified due to the need for educators to understand the changes in urban and rural scenarios brought about by the intense fluxes of capitals, the constant dislocations of people and interactions via the Internet (or not) affecting language education. Cavalcanti and Maher (2017, p. 6) argue that some adult migrants and refugees' have reported "some educational programs have positioned them as second-class linguistic citizens or as students with little prior knowledge." We also intended to expand on our comprehension of how educational theories-practices can/should be updated to meet the new demands for conviviality within complex assemblage (Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b) and multimodal ensemble (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 2014). In the words of García and Wei (2014, p. 64): "Translanguaging not only promotes a deeper understanding of content, but also develops the weaker language in relationship with the one that is more dominant", transforming static monolingual and bilingual lenses, usually present in schools, into translingual educational ones

to cultivate open and alternative pedagogies and epistemologies, an stimulus for students in year six mixed with others in higher levels as in the case here. To appreciate how we can go beyond long-standing linear models of language learning-teaching, the next section presents and discusses the practices in the four workshops following the theoretical framework of this project.

Towards a translingual and multimodal pedagogy

With a view to foreground the secondary school students' meaning making in relation to migration, an analysis of the activities in four workshops is presented. The overall workshop plan was elaborated by the author of this paper and implemented together with his/her undergraduate students. The topic 'migration' was chosen due to the fact that many of the secondary school students descended from migrants from other States and/or indigenous local communities and to the configuration of their State, which has been changing with the arrival of the Haitians and Syrians, mainly. Addressing social, historical and political aspects was, then, a driving force in this decision. Moreover, some students are already in contact with immigrants' children as their peers in the same classroom and other public spaces and, therefore, preparation for productive ways of collaborative renegotiating of meanings and teaching-learning from otherness might be useful.

The aim of this particular work plan for four workshops in the public secondary school was to activate the students' critical translingual and multimodal repertoires through their exposure to memes and video clips related to recent migration in the USA and in Brazil. In the beginning of each workshop, students were exposed to some classroom language in English to negotiate meanings during the learning processes. In all the four workshops, posters were placed on the walls with sentences for greetings, introduction, thanking, asking for clarification, interrupting, apologizing, requesting pronunciation of words, repetition, spelling, instructions, leaving the room for water/toilet, ending the workshop, giving feedback. Some explanations were provided so that students could experiment with otherness, that is, to exercise creative ways of making sense of ideas through encountering the other's language. Students came to terms with some struggles over language, knowledge and intersubjectivity using their own voices. The notion of "voice, therefore, is not one that implies any language use, the empty babble of the communicative language class, but rather must be tied to a vision of creation and transformation of possibilities" (Simon *in* Pennycook, 1994). Students' linguistic inventiveness, meshing two words from two languages produced "Teacherzinha" creatively. Translanguaging is not the same as code-meshing, as the students strategically used their repertoires and some contingent translingual rhetorical prompts emerged transcending conventional norms: "Tô fine" ("I'm fine"). "Teacherzinha, posso drink water?" (A mixture of teacher and the Portuguese suffix –zinha indicating short forms in some nouns. It goes beyond the encounter of two languages paving the way to multidimensional and coexisting aspects: originality, contingency, identity, affection, intimacy, persuasion, strategy, and innovation from a

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whole complex and fluid repertoire). ("Sweet teacher, May I drink (have a drink of) water?"). Recognizing students' going beyond mere linguistic aspects is to acknowledge a transformative pedagogy instead of a transmission one and, this constitutes the inclusive nature of translanguaging education policies. "It legitimizes all the language features of individual speakers that are important both for communication and for identity." (García and Klyen, 2016, p. 187).

The selection of the theoretical perspective here seems to move in this direction to avoid new forms of classroom colonization (student asserting himself/herself while producing novelties as those already exemplified, fostering space of resistance of conventional linguistic forms) or globalization. As Canagarajah puts: "We have to be open to the possibility that translanguaging will be actively practiced in literacy in the future" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 8) and "making opportunities for critical analysis will help students develop their translanguaging proficiency further" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 9). Thus, translanguaging has to be stimulated to enable communication with the appreciation of students' semiotic resources and creativity and ecological repertoires. It is "a way of living that builds on peoples linguistic, cultural non-human strengths to co-learn meaningfully through legitimizing contingent, hybrid, diverse and dynamic language theory-practice." (García and Kleyn, 2016, p. 1-33).

Learning from memes

To ignite the students' potential for semiotic attribution of multimodal/ecological meanings, students were shown a PowerPoint slide with a meme (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007) with President Donald Trump building a wall with pieces of Lego, "Build your own Trump wall[6]", declaring the ideological position of Lego, that is, its strong opposition to the migrants living and arriving in the USA in favor of Trump. Here, translanguaging, as a set of practices, implied having students read the advert in English and discuss it in Portuguese, drawing on their semiotic repertoires while validating their intersubjectivities and reconstructing their identities.

The advert brought to the fore complex multimodal elements that were familiar to the students, such as: the box clearly identifying the image of a puzzle, the '3.000 pieces', the word 'Lego' and its logotype, the image of the wall being constructed with colored pieces, Trump's smiling face while he lifts a red piece ready to be put on the wall. All these visual components, choice of colors, texture and the use of their spatiality made the students quickly say out loud: 'Construa' for the meaning of *build*, as a verb, in 'Build your own Trump wall.' But, none of them could grasp the word 'own' and requested its translation into Portuguese. This lexical item was not essential for them to capture the context. They helped each other without placing English in a superior position in relation to

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[6] As this was the first contact with the students the theme *migration* was chosen by the teachers and, then, students' suggestions of other topics were taken into account.

Portuguese as their engagement in and enthusiasm for the theme through a multimodal resource suggested they went beyond the mere linguistic aspects from the advert.

What gains salience in critical education is the nature of the key questionings to try to promote critical literacy (Janks, 2010; Janks *et al.*, 2014). The discussion revolved around many questions, and here we concentrate on three of them:

How will children and their parents probably think about the immigrants? (The toy says: Age +5.)

Pay attention to Trump's face. What feelings can you observe? Why?

What children would disagree with Trump? Why? (e.g.: Indigenous, immigrants' children.)

The nature of the last questioning is fundamental for critical education involving new media or not. The presence or not of the new media is this project is far from assuming determinism towards one resource, epistemology, methodology over the other. Following Leander, "It is increasingly less tenable to hold onto a vision of culture, identity and literacy practice in which the 'off-line' and the 'on-line' are held radically apart in the ways that they are practiced and signified" (Leander, 2003, p. 392). Hence, failure to recognize the locus of enunciation of critique compromises the linguistic, political, cultural, social problematizations of the problematizations. In other words, ongoing deconstructions of legitimized perspectives within uneven relations of power should be at stake.

Data from the recordings of this moment of interaction revealed a common set of ideas in the answers for the first question stressing that children should respect the immigrants, their culture, customs and language. As regards the third question, students did not come up with indigenous children as we expected. What prevailed in their interpretations and world knowledge were the Mexican children only, probably due to the influence of the media at that time, broadcasting the conflicts in the frontier between Mexico and the USA prior to and after the American presidential elections, in 2016. When asked whether they could put themselves in the immigrants' shoes, they ascribed meanings related only to mercy and compassion, which indicates that more work based on critical perspectives can/should be done throughout schooling. The extract below illustrates a student's argument.

> Example[7] 1: "Ele está meio que rindo. Eu acho que ele faz isso porque queria tipo, comprar votos das pessoas, porque lá tem muito preconceito, ele prometeu, como aqui que tem políticos que prometem e depois que ganham, não cumprem e enganam as pessoas que votaram neles. Isso já aconteceu aqui com o ex-prefeito."
>
> [He is kind of smiling. I think he does this because, he wanted to buy votes from people, because there is a great deal of prejudice there, he promised, like here, there are politicians who promise and after winning the elections, do not keep their promises and deceive the people who had voted for them. This has already happened here with the ex-mayor.]

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[7] We translated the original students' sayings into English using square brackets.

This seems to be a significant move to transpose a particular international situation to the Brazilian context in times of elections. It is undeniable that this was the way such a student made sense of the politicians reinforced by local evidence. Understanding the social space for visual literacy is crucial. Smiling alone is not enough to catch its cynical form. Smiling cynically is a strong vector together with Trumps' eye contact with the viewers to provoke the readers, a missing perception in the student's interpretation and evaluation of the advert. This perception led us to reflect upon the need to expose students to more activities with which they could experience polysemy by the interplay among hidden strategies, multiple modes of meanings and subtleness.

The second meme showed an indigenous man's face interrogating the readers about the question of rights: "So you're against immigration? Splendid! When do you leave?"

The students recognized not only the traditional costume but also the angry face of the indigenous representative of his community. One of the students translated the word 'leave' after consulting the Google Translator, demonstrating his ability to use the Internet to solve his immediate problem and to share his finding with the others. This gesture characterizes a small, but significant example of collaborative and meaningful learning. Unlike the lexical item 'own' in the previous exercise, 'leave', in this case, was a key word for the students to grasp meaning in context.

When asked to refer back to the meme and to say who was speaking to whom, a student (as we do not have tools to read silent students' minds yet) was able to identify the indigenous member's subtle (direct?) message being conveyed to the target readers:

> Example 2: "Ele está falando para a gente que não é índio sair do Brazil porque eles já estavam aqui antes dos portugueses chegarem." [He is telling us to leave Brazil because they were already here before the Portuguese arrived.]

It is possible to interpret that this approach indicates the student's existing knowledge of the Brazilian history and sensitivity towards social justice to expand comprehension of the role of language and society, a relevant shift in the epistemological translingual paradigm. Through the student's positioning, it is possible to infer that after the European colonizers, anyone coming to live in Brazil will be necessarily an immigrant in relation to the indigenous people, being the one who should leave Brazil. Thus, European, Asian, African etc. descendants are 'on the same boat' and cannot claim more rights than the natives, despite the internal differences in the same group. This could be an example of critical interpretive capacity that emerged through the reading of the meme in English, attributing meanings to an image in Portuguese from the student's socio-historical context, available linguistic, semiotic, social and cultural repertoires to change stereotypical views on/against migration. Thus, a key tenet is that "a translanguaging approach to bilingualism extends the repertoire of semiotic practices of individuals and transforms them into dynamic mobile resources that can adapt to global and local sociolinguistic situations" (García and Wei, 2012, p. 18).

As a different possibility for students' authorship mediated by computer, they were invited to respond to Trump's position in relation to migration by creating memes online. They were instructed to download a meme-generator, a program that allowed the students to import images from some archives and start producing their memes. Although there were some limitations in the range of images, students had the option to narrate how they imagined the pictures and other visual elements together with the values attributed to them to compose their memes.

The students wrote their ideas in Portuguese and in order to have them translated into English, as a response to Trump, they accessed the Google translator. Other websites to seek for further information were accessed, while we assisted them in linguistic and technological aspects needed to accomplish the task. Students' familiarity with websites helped them glean meaning even when English was not comprehensible to them. There was room for the practice of spatial literacy by their choosing where to place strategically the elements on the screen and resorting to different colors, texture, font sizes for the letters and even sharing their final product on the Facebook page created by their school.

This task also facilitated dialogues among the students to share ideas to manipulate translingual and multimodal aspects to achieve their own creative ends with dialogues, selected images and the production of sentences/captions, establishing interdependence among creativity, critique and ethical relations towards migration. Students were free to exercise their perception strategy by choosing where to accommodate the transcultural translations (not mere linguistic ones) interconnecting images, spacious resources and verbal text on the digital screen. Following Kress, van Leeuwen's notion that "in multimodal discourses the reading paths are more dynamic and complex" (1998, p. 205), we were not necessarily guided by pre-established reading routes for contingency and other cohesive and logical meanings were into play in the student's work.

What emerged from this experiment was the exploration of affordances of complex composing and a body of memes. The responses criticized Trump's actions. Context-bound arguments were elaborated to: reject prejudice, to treat immigrants humanly and to maintain the immigrants living together through a religious appeal. Exposure to difference/diversity made students validate their multiple voices, the linguistic, transcultural and hybrid identities they embodied, as suggested below:

> Example 3: Trump é contra imigração. Eu sou a favor. [Trump is against immigration. I am in favor of it.]
> Example 4: Diga não ao preconceito, Diga não ao Trump. [Say no to prejudice. Say no to Trump.]
> Example 5: Immigrants are human. [Immigrants are human.]
> Example 6: VOCÊ VOTOU ERRADO NO TRUMP. [YOU VOTED WRONGLY TO TRUMP.] (Sentence placed against a bluish and brownish colored brick wall.
> Example 7: Morar todos juntos é agradar a Deus. [All living together is God's wish.]
> Example 8: BYE, TRUMP!

From these examples we can see the students' appropriation of dominant discourses used back against a powerful president. This perception and capacity signals a translingual attitude. Translingualism, a societal resource for learning, is not the addition of one language to another. It lends itself to students' empowerment, interconnecting their knowledge with global contexts. A particular meme (example 8) showed a man, giving his back to the readers, with one of his leg on a pile of bricks and the other raised to reach the edge of the wall with the help of his arms, to jump to the other side and as if he were escaping from the USA and saying: "BYE" (on the upper left side) "TRUMP" (at the bottom of the pile of bricks). Reproducing the memes with all their multimodal effects using written language, here, is unfair, which means that images are not mere additives to texts. Conventional language misses important ideological details, but awareness of such losses can be a good start for translingual and multimodal practices.

The lesson learnt with such students is that the multimodal character of learning and multiliteracies (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012) signal what it means to be an active learner for today's social demands. One of the students uploaded his meme on the school Facebook page, a social practice that could/should render legitimation on the part of the authorities.

Learning from a video clip in English

In this phase, students were supposed to watch a video clip, "Haitians adopt Brazilian soccer team as their own", and write or use a multimodal resource to express what it was about. This material lent itself to a connection to students' realities and authentic experience. They were to infer meanings from multimodality, lexical items and context. Before having the students watch the video clip for the second time, some meanings of key words and phrases in English were discussed to help them understand them, such as: working permit, skills as a teacher, builder, age, rent, job, terminal 3, go slow, new home, be calm.

Some of the illustrations of how the students understood what was happening in the video clip are presented subsequently. They were supposed to either write, perform, draw to explain how they understood the general context and explain what cues had led them to interpret the video clip in particular ways.

> Example 9 (Cauã): A história do vídeo se passa com um imigrante negro que veio para o Brazil e está se adaptando ao Brasil. Ele estava ajudando a construir um prédio e é um professor e ele é um fotógrafo por que ele está tirando foto de um aeroporto. Achamos que ele estava falando do país Brasil porque mencionou a palavra Brazilian.
> [This is a story of a black migrant who came to Brazil and he is adapting to Brazil. He is helping to construct a building and he is a teacher and he is a photographer because he is taking a picture of an airport. We think he was talking about Brazil because he mentioned the word Brazilian.]

Example 10 (Mika): Um homem trabalhava com obras, no Brasil, vai para o aeroporto, após pegar o visto no passaporte para viajar a sua terra natal. Sabemos que era um haitiano pelo nome do vídeo. Ele era alto, moreno, com cabelo preto e usava uma touca azul. Ele pegou o visto na Embaixada. Ele tirou fotos do aeroporto. É uma reportagem e o jornalista está narrando. (Desenhos dos mapas do Brasil e do Haiti, de um passaporte e de uma pá carregadeira).

[A man worked with constructions in Brazil, goes to the airport after getting visa to travel to his hometown. We know he was Haitian by the title of the video. He was tall, black, with black hair and was wearing a blue cap. He took the visa from the embassy. He took pictures from the airport. This is news and the reporter is narrating. (Drawings of the Brazilian and the Haitian maps, a passport and a skid steer loader).

We can infer that written language is canonical for Cauã possibly because multimodal practices are not encouraged in his traditional schooling. Associating the theme in question to other life experiences using background knowledge and critique was not present either. This indicates the need for us to revise teacher education and citizenship if intertextuality/hypertextuality plays an important role to promote alternative discourses about difference/diversity, world views and critical literacies connecting classes to situations outside the school premises (Janks, 2010; Janks *et al*., 2014).

In addition, as a way to expand the students' interpretation of the same material, we asked them to discuss this fragment:

Example 11 (Gibbs, the CCTV reporter): Do you think that the Haitians are better workers than the Brazilians?
Haitian teacher: Oh yes, 75% I can say. Yes, some too. They are good workers like the Haitians, but not many.
Ronaldo (teacher's friend): The union workers say, when they see us working very fast, they say we have got to go slow because they don't want to finish the project easily.

Also, the students were shown a report by a Brazilian professional in this field stating that "there is a growing demand in construction building for this kind of labor work and the Haitians are good to attend to this sort of work". Students were supposed to discuss these points in small groups and elect a spokesperson to report on their findings. The following illustrations reveal their critical positionings:

Example 12 (Geiza's group): Nós achamos que eles estão muito errados porque não são todas as pessoas que são preguiçosas e eles deveriam respeitar os brasileiros. No entanto, eles também têm razão até porque alguns brasileiros são preguiçosos.
[We think they are very wrong because not everybody is lazy and they should respect the Brazilians. But, they are right because some Brazilians are lazy.]

Geiza's group criticized the Haitian teacher's opinion indicating he essentialized the Brazilian workers. This is strongly marked by the uses of 'very wrong', 'not everybody' and 'they should respect'. Such choices of words stress the generalization of the Brazilian workers' images created by the Haitian teacher. But, this group misunderstood the teacher's position since they did not grasp the

percentage (25%) referred to in "less willing" Haitians workers than the Brazilian ones. In addition, lack of attention on the part of the group missed 'They are good workers like the Haitians, but not many', distorting even more the teacher's views.

At the same time, this group's distortion generates an ambiguity (wrong, right) and reveals some Brazilian workers are lazy. Apparently, their sense of numeracy did not enable them to discriminate against 'not many' and 'some Brazilians'. Also, they did not perceive the generalization in the teacher's friend's position at the end of the conversation. Another group prompted this view:

> Example 13 (Raquel's group): Concordamos que os haitianos têm mais disposição para trabalhar, mas todos devem ser tratados igualmente, independentemente de raça ou nacionalidade. Achamos que cada um deve trabalhar no seu ritmo, pois o importante é cumprir o prazo estipulado.
> [We agree that the Haitians are more willing to work, but everybody should be treated equally regardless of their race or nationality. We think each one should work according to his/her pace, what matters is to meet the established deadline.]

Through the initial phrase, this group universalized the Haitians' identities, situations and attitude towards work. They introduced a crucial element which is related to respect and inclusion to benefit the migrants. Questions of race and nationality were raised from the prism of equality and respect.

It is observed that students' meaning making is part of their sociocultural histories, of the values their schooling has imprinted on them throughout the years. Much before the exposure to these video clips, such principles had already inhabited their lenses, in accordance with the norms of their communities. Probably, school, family, clubs, churches, online networking, and other institutions that surround them constructed "a regime of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133) that universalized certain discourses. Gradually, educators can try to change their views through constant exercises to promote questionings of such norms, to dislocate essentialized world views and bring in other realities (Janks, 2010; Janks *et al*., 2014). Another example is presented below:

> Example 14 (Roger's group): Os haitianos têm mais disposição para trabalhar em comparação com os brasileiros. Eles são muito melhores no Brasil. Há brasileiros com bastante disposição, mas são poucos. O Brasil tem que melhorar muito ainda no assunto do trabalho em comparação com os haitianos.
> [The Haitians are more willing to work in comparison with the Brazilians. They are much better in Brazil. There are Brazilians with much greater willingness, but a few. Brazil has to improve a lot when it comes to work in comparison to the Haitians.]

Roger's group's dissatisfaction was evident. They took a critical stance drawing attention to the Brazilians workers to improve their performance at work. We can infer it was a bird's eye view missing some specific contexts. The fact that the themes related to differences among the group of workers and the activities aimed at developing students' critical literacy does not necessarily mean a

change in their resistance and pre-established ideas. Such a perspective is part of complex sociohistorical processes belonging to the colonial legacy and, thus, cannot change overnight.

None of these groups perceived the polarized view in Gibb's question to the Haitians. Such division might have influenced the groups' discussions and conclusions. Furthermore, they did not transpose the Haitians' situations to their own contexts in which internal fluxes of migrants are historically visible. Common sense in their voices prevailed (Chun, 2017) probably due to the lack of pedagogical practices to problematize legitimized discourses.

Pushing through another video clip

As previously observed, the influence of the enlightenment on the students' positioning was evident and in order to continue with the teaching-learning process, they were asked to watch another video clip, this time, about a Congolese lawyer, Pichou Luambo[8], accounting for his difficulty in relation to Portuguese, to the Brazilian people's attitude and their ways of being. The objective was to invite students to assume Pichou Luambo's perspective to understand otherness and discuss the questions presented in the subsequent lines and to recognize the discursive genre on his T-shirt: a slogan which said: "Refugiado, eu me importo". [Refugee, I care for.] The word refugee was written in capital letters and placed in a vertical position and the rest of the words in horizontal lines, resembling the image of a crossword puzzle. They were asked to think of questions such as: Imagine you were a refugee in another country and did not speak its official language. Now, how do you think you would be treated? Would you make friends and get a job? How could people help you? How do you understand Lambo's T-shirt? Do you know this kind of text on his T-shirt? Why do you think he is wearing it? What slogan would you have on your T-shirt to help Pichou Luambo?

They prompted silent voices with sad and static faces and bodies. Silence could be interpreted as awareness of how precarious language can be in such circumstances: a difficult situation for difficult answers or a silent minute dedicated to otherness, which moves back to themselves in similar undermined conditions. That noted, instead of proceeding by listening to the students' meaningful silence, we decided to provide them with varied opportunities for translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013) embedded with multimodal ensemble (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 2014, p. 4) and asked them to produce slogans in response to one of the aforementioned questions at their choice. They all preferred to reply to the last one. Learning can be collaborative and dialogical in the sense that they were 'talking to' Pichou Luambo and the idea is to ally this process to creative

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[8] This is an interview on a TV channel. Pichou Luambo has been in Brazil for five years and speaks Portuguese quite fluently. He left his family due to the war in Congo. Language and prejudice are two factors that prevent him from working as a lawyer. He has been struggling to make Brazilians aware of the Congolese culture to try to minimize prejudice.

design, which are characteristics of an open and ecological educational enterprise. Integrating video, slogan through safe space with innovative strategies and questionings can foster the co-construction of relevant small actions and transculturally sensitive. In this way, students are likely to make sense of their lives connecting classroom, local, regional, national and international landscapes.

This time, paper, colored pencils and pens were distributed to the students. If technology limited students' selection of images (as in the case of the memes production), in this exercise, they had more autonomy to redesign their slogans. More attention to different modes (drawings) and to the use of hashtag was given by the students while creating the slogans for their imaginary T-shirts. The first set of slogans dedicated support to the refugees. Each student brought personal and social values, religious appeal and symbolic capital acquired from families and schooling.

> Example 15: We're all the same.
> Example 16: # Refugees together in this cause! (Multimodality- hashtag)
> Example 17: God loves us in every way all the colors and shapes # Refugees!

We acknowledge that more exercises to deconstruct the generalizations and harmonious world views such as the ones the students presented would be ideal. However, a translingual fluency in understanding the world is defined as openness to different meanings such as the ones perceived by such students according to their existing sociocultural lens. It rejects the view that only students are in need of translingual development. Instead of eradicating such meanings and claiming expertise, a translingual attitude respects the student's pace and presents meanings addressing ongoing efforts and critical education. The following reflection might be useful:

> As educators, changing people is our work – work that should not be done without a profound respect for the otherness of our students. Desiring what one is not should not entail giving up what one is. (Janks, 2010, p. 153)

In addition, "one of the main tenets of translingualism is to leverage the students entire language repertoire" (García and Kleyn, 2016, p. 16). In the second category of slogans, students banned prejudice and redesigned their positioning producing creative work to represent love, putting black and white people together in their visual representations. Hybrid identities, dynamic shifts in meaning making, the wealth of linguistic, cultural and semiotic repertories and the multiple abilities students bring to the workshops, all these components open space for access, power division, redesign for creativity and a sense of achievement for having their desires and voices included. Heterogeneity is the norm in translingual practice and it does not mean becoming the other as the illustrations below show:

> Example 18: I am against racism. Be yourself too!!! (Drawing of two hands: one black and the other white. Between the two hands, a heart with the word Love! inside it.)

Example 19: Nobody is born with prejudice (drawings of a black person and a white one shaking hands, side by side).

In the same way that students expressed respect to the otherness of the refugees, educators should appreciate the fact that they can learn with their students and enjoy cultivating difference/diversity in relationships. The lesson learned is seeing particular intersubjectivity within plurality. "Adopting a translingual approach enables us to recognize agency even in the production of the most seemingly clichéd, resolutely conventional writing." (Lu and Horner, 2013, p. 31). So, this direction could be identified here:

Example 20: We must never harm those who have their difficulty.
Example 21: To reduce prejudice, put yourself in the shoes of those who suffer from prejudice! Instead of criticizing we should help those who need it.
Example 22: We must act to help the refugees, put themselves in their place! Instead of criticizing try to help.

The transcultural thematic commonalities that these excerpts share are: recognition of prejudice against the refugees in Brazil, a perception of equality in people and a recommendation to fight against prejudice through one's putting himself/herself in the refugees' shoes and help instead of criticizing them. A translingual attitude assumes that to thrive as active citizens, students can understand that the dominant views such as discrimination against the refugees is contingent and negotiable. The use of hashtags indicates the students' strategic critical multimodal and digital ability to aid more dynamic interactions among people who have similar interests. Perhaps such hashtags can be transformed into hyperlinks indexed by search engines for similar content such as Google.

Hence, critical literacy (Janks, 2010; Janks *et al.*, 2014) practices are important components to the redesign of education. From this epistemological turn, whose principle is comprehension of the transcultural context from which one constructs meanings and renegotiates them within difference, it seems plausible to disrupt orthodox English language teaching-learning or any other language to infuse programs with students' critical views, agency and identity reconstructions for "A translanguaging education policy is not just for bilingual education or English-medium education, but it must work across the education contexts in which students are taught." (García and Kleyn, 2016, p. 194).

Vibrant stretching

Under the assumption that more sophisticated form of semiotic relationship could expand on the students' interpretive capacity and experience within difference/diversity, another activity was designed and implemented to conclude this set of workshops. It has a number of affinities with the

idea of assemblage (Canagarajah, 2013) and ensemblage (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 2014, p. 4) that we tried to develop in this project. As Pennycook (2018, p. 135) reminds us: "Children, refugees, objects and environment may also be political actors, and collective political movements towards the commons can unite these ideas without returning to pastoral tropes or humanist ideals."

Thus, as a metaphor to experience collective political movements with otherness, students were presented with a dance class by an immigrant via a video clip, which disseminated the immigrants' bands in a festival held at the Museum of Image and Sound in São Paulo (MIS). They had to watch it and learn some steps to imitate the dancers with the slogans they had produced and that had been cut and attached on their clothes with sellotape. At the end of this phase, those who were more enthusiastic were instructed to simulate teaching some steps of a Brazilian rhythm to them, changing the orchestration and architecture of language teaching.

This is where a more collaborative translingual and multimodal practice comes in for assemblage permeates their contingent work, stretching the workshop planning with students' co-design in exercising their capacity to redefine spatiality. Students' live performativity, use of objects surrounding/on them (moving desks, table, sellotape, scissors, slogans on their clothes, notion of floor, making a circle, staying behind the other peer, avoiding or not being filmed/photographed, turning their backs to the sunshine through the windows, dancing under an air conditioning unit, feeling hot, feeling shy, feeling good), local authorship, creativity, critique, ethical attitude were all called into play and made them 'innovate' migration form hybrid scales, dialogue multimodally with it and redesign their comprehension of it. Shy students could just clap their hands while the other peers (in)acted.

One mode in multimodality does not need to be perceived or felt in isolation as image goes beyond the idea of illustrating a particular text and a text has its limitations to thoroughly translate an image. Multimodality is not the sum of each mode or the practice of each mode, one at a time in hierarchical fashion. Each mode is intertwined with each other. In this way, synesthesia blends multilayered embodied interactions governed by sense-making processes. An epistemological and semiotic compromise (Kress, 2003) coupled with dynamic different characteristics with different routes is where students and the new media seem to be heading for. It is a means for new understandings to interlink body language, music, visuality, movements, spatiality foregrounding assemblage (Canagarajah, 2013) ingrained with multimodal ensemble (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress, 2014, p. 4).

A challenging learning space was created for the students to redesign their own paths, steps, rhythm, gestures, spatiality converging to a complex ensemble/assemblage arising out of their interest and engagement that started to blur the boundaries between audience and actors. Having a safe learning space does not mean lack of risks. On the contrary, ubiquitous learning presupposes an arena of voices in tension and this is a fluid interstice in which values, principles, meanings, identities, positions are permanently revitalized in communal relations. It opened up space for the

student's entire semiotic meaning making system implicated in their daily lives and for engagement in criticality in the sense of exerting their power to incorporate such language practices in the program of the workshop and disrupt traditional lodging of practices.

Power relations changed in that environment, an important reminder for reshaping teacher education through translanguaging not only in English, linking university and regular public schools. An active redesign team within otherness was formed generating a translingual and transcultural and multimodal performance/text that conventional writing or orality cannot adequately account for the semiotic diversity deployed.

This initiative and strategy impacted students' perception towards language teaching-learning. When interviewed, at the end of these workshops, significant signs of transformations were highlighted: "This course helped me learn what I did not know", "I read some words in English and learnt about new subjects and criticized them", "a new look about different things", "I see the world from another way", "I learnt to understand people's opinions and respect them", "This is a way to make people stand up against prejudice."

Final words

The workshops aimed at building alternatives to approach language education differently. In developing a translingual and multimodal project, emphasis was given to local linguistic and transcultural landscape in which this set of workshops occurred. It favored student's meaning making towards a variety of themes within their sociohistorical circumstances. Students, parents and the school principal (based on their feedback during the project) expressed the relevance of this project and wanted more.

The conclusion that pushing forward a productive translingual and multimodal orientation with the presence or not of digital media may not suffice if it is not in tune with permanent revisions of institutional policies. Also, leveraging students' home and school cultures and translanguaging with plenty of support, helping them produce transcultural meanings within multiple strategies, activities, resources, repertoires in the learning-teaching processes might signal educational theory and practice as inseparable and liquid.

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