

Ethical dilemmas in language classrooms: questioning otherwise


Dilemas éticos em salas de aula de línguas: questionando otherwise

Dilemas éticos en las clases de idiomas: cuestionando de una forma otra

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ABSTRACT: Language teacher educators realize that novice language teachers graduate with unanswered questions, whose possible responses might appear as they experience the profession daily, as other questions will also be elaborated and others never fully answered; in this sense, Arthur, the character to whom the authors talk, is a personification of every language teacher. By recognising that the classroom setting is not a matter of black-and-white solvable dilemmas, but a grayscale palette, the authors draw on decolonial perspectives (MIGNOLO, 2007, 2009, 2018; PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018; ROSA-DA-SILVA, 2021; WALSH, 2017, 2018, 2021) and on the Levinasian ethics (LARGE, 2015; LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020; TODD, 2003, 2015) to analyze three language teachers' responses to two classroom-based ethical dilemmas, which is a shortened version of a larger study (EGIDO, 2020b). As the analysis is carried out, questions are posed to Arthur and the reader. Although turning our classrooms into safe spaces where students can share the struggles they are going through is not a simple task, it is a necessary one.

KEYWORDS: Language education; decoloniality; levinasian ethics.

RESUMO: Formadores(as) de professores(as) de línguas percebem que os (as) recém graduados(as) chegam ao final da licenciatura com questionamentos cujas possíveis respostas podem surgir à medida que eles e elas vivenciam a profissão no dia-a-dia, ao mesmo tempo em que outros questionamentos serão elaborados, e tantos outros nunca serão completamente respondidos. Nesse sentido, Arthur, o personagem com quem o autor e a autora dialogam, é a personificação de todos(as) professores(as) de línguas. Ao reconhecer que o contexto de sala de aula não apresenta dilemas solúveis em tons de branco e preto, e sim numa paleta em escalas de cinza, o autor e a autora lançam mão das perspectivas decoloniais (MIGNOLO, 2007, 2009, 2018; PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018; ROSA-DA-SILVA, 2021; WALSH, 2017, 2018, 2021), e da ética levinasiana

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(LARGE, 2015; LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020; TODD, 2003, 2015) para analisarem três respostas de professores(as) de línguas a dois dilemas éticos baseados nas experiências de sala de aula, que é uma versão resumida de uma pesquisa mais ampla (EGIDO, 2020b). À medida que a análise é conduzida, algumas questões são propostas para Arthur e para os(as) leitores(as). Embora não seja uma tarefa fácil, é necessário que tornemos nossas salas de aula em espaços seguros onde estudantes possam compartilhar as lutas que enfrentam.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação linguística; decolonialidade; ética levinasiana.

RESUMEN: Los formadores de profesores de idiomas se dan cuenta de que los recién graduados al final de su graduación con preguntas cuyas posibles respuestas pueden surgir a medida que ellos y ellos experimentan la profesión en la vida cotidiana, mientras que otras preguntas serán elaboradas, y muchas otras nunca serán respondidas por completo. En este sentido, Arthur, el personaje con el que el autor y la autora dialogan es la encarnación de todos los profesores de idiomas. Reconociendo que el contexto del aula no presenta dilemas solubles en tonos de blanco y negro, sino más bien en una paleta en escalas de grises, el autor y la autora hacen uso de las perspectivas decoloniales (MIGNOLO, 2007, 2009, 2018; PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018; ROSA-DA-SILVA, 2021; WALSH, 2017; 2018; 2021), y ética levinasiana (LARGE, 2015; LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020; TODD, 2003, 2015), para analizar las respuestas de tres profesores de idiomas a dos dilemas éticos basados en experiencias en el aula, que es una versión abreviada de una encuesta más amplia (EGIDO, 2020b). A medida que se realiza el análisis, se proponen algunas preguntas a Arthur y a los lectores. Si bien no es una tarea fácil, necesitamos hacer de nuestras clases espacios seguros donde los estudiantes puedan compartir las luchas que enfrentan.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación lingüística; decolonialidad; ética levinasiana.

*At the end of the day,
we do more in the classroom than we realize.*
Alex Alves Egido

Opening remarks

Alex and I have been friends, colleagues, researchers in a common relation of mutual involvement (KRENAK, 2020) since 2018. With him, I learned all about research methodology. A while ago, we both destroyed most of our beliefs and certainties by an insurgent sense of ethics of love, respect, and justice - that was shared between us. All this re-construction of our thoughts about this matter - ethics - was built through wonderful, painful, and emotional relations with a few professors and researchers in the field of Critical Applied Linguistics, and here we name some of them (ROSA-DA-SILVA, 2021; SILVA, 2021; FURIO, forthcoming) as well as we entangle our points of view, respecting their lens and joining them for this article that intends to involve ourselves in ethical dilemmas from a teaching standpoint. When we were involved in the covid-19 pandemic, both of us shared a common sense of ethics to rethink our own ethics, not only as researchers and professors

but also as human beings, deeply touched by sensible and emotional feelings towards our roles in this world, as a collective.

We assent of Silva (2021, p. 10) that when subjects are in relation to the Other, they “learn, teach, reframe, form and deconstruct wor(l)ds in a movement of response to the socio-historical contexts of which they are part.” We bring to this sphere Viveiros de Castro (2018), who reminds us we may even find a synonym for an idea, but its representation for some peoples might make sense in a totally different way. In other words, speaking the oppressors' language does not mean that they will hear or understand, or at least be open to understand the Other (FREIRE, 1970). We think about power relations in typical involvements in professional, academic, and methodological procedures permeated in education in a sense that professors doing research with other researchers, or teachers, students, must denude oneself in order to attend to (TODD, 2003) another human, even if we speak the same language.

As Brazilian language teachers, we often take on different roles in the classrooms we dare to enter. The still-fragile social, economic, and political scenarios often require us to act towards social justice, moving outside the classrooms. As some dictatorial voices even now hover over our heads, it is necessary to constantly observe ethical dilemmas that suddenly appear in front of us. Many of the dilemmas portrayed here relate to a fear of either talking or silencing of dissonant voices.

This idea of being either silent or silenced happens in a country in which teachers are among the one third of the countries around the globe that have not elaborated a written teachers' code of ethics (INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, 2021). Nevertheless, we argue that Brazilian language teachers employ ethical principles as they make decisions regarding ethical dilemmas they face in their classrooms. Regarding this study, an electronic questionnaire with ten ethical dilemmas, concerning research and teaching practices, was answered by 21 in-service teachers who teach Spanish, English, Portuguese, and Russian, in Brazil. In this paper, we analyze two of the aforementioned ethical dilemmas related to classroom-based practices.

The concept of ethical dilemmas is the scope in which teachers' responses are situated. It “refer[s] to situations in which there is a stark choice between different options, each of which seems to have equally compelling ethical advantages and disadvantages” (GUILLEMIN; GILLAM, 2004, p. 264-265). This kind of phenomenon cannot be clearly solved by adopting a set of either rules or guidelines ascribed by an external inspection body

(BAUMAN, 1993). The classroom setting, as we see it, is not a matter of black-and-white solvable dilemmas. It is, indeed, a grayscale palette.

The participants' responses to the two ethical dilemmas are interpreted in light of philosophical (BAUMAN, 1993; LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020), language education (TODD, 2003), and decolonial reflections (PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018; MASTRELLA-DE-ANDRADE; PESSOA, 2019). Our motivation for this research was our constant interactions with Brazilian language teachers who often find themselves facing ethical dilemmas in their classrooms and need to respond to them. Classroom ethical dilemmas and how to respond to them is also an issue that concerns novice language teachers as they graduate with many questions without answers. In order to better represent our intended audience, i.e., novice language teachers, we decided to create a persona: Arthur.

Here, Arthur is a personification of many novice Brazilian language teachers who do not feel good enough, not prepared enough, and not proficient enough to face the everlasting unexpected ethical dilemmas that they will certainly encounter in their classrooms. Traces of Arthur exist in each one of us, whether we recognize and externalize them or not. He is the product of our lived experiences as teachers' educators in different Brazilian universities. Arthur incorporates lots of expectations, feelings, and uncertainties that we have encountered in Others and ourselves.

Arthur could be anyone of Mastrella-de Andrade's teachers in pre-service experiences at the Practicum (MASTRELLA-DE-ANDRADE; PESSOA, 2019), who feels 'unprepared', based on the undergraduate course he has attended, to position himself as a language teacher - mostly because he is not fully aware that such a course is both an "impossible", but "necessary" endeavor (LOPES; BORGES, 2015, p. 499). In this sense, we see teacher education as a never-ending process. We depart from it to reflect upon ethical dilemmas in language classrooms; the uncertainty of the profession allows us to question the "homogeneous, know-it-all epistemology on language teaching and learning" (MASTRELLA-DE-ANDRADE; PESSOA, 2019, p. 9). In Arthur's case, he has just graduated and realized that the conclusion of this formal education process does not solve all the dilemmas he has faced during his practicum and other unanswered classroom-based questions he is currently dealing with. We write this paper bearing Arthur in mind.

As we conclude these opening remarks, we warn 'traditional academic readers' that we have decided to change the terms of this conversation, and not only the content (MIGNOLO, 2007). As a consequence, do not expect to find a distant, 'neutral', and objective

language printed on these pages; what you can expect is a close, emotive, and subjective one (JORDÃO, 2015). Our motivation for this writing stems from everything that Arthur personifies to us. In order to explain to him the importance of attending to (TODD, 2003) local lived experiences, we discuss some decolonial thoughts and their relation to an ethics of alterity (LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020) in education (TODD, 2003, 2015); mostly precisely, language education (EGIDO, forthcoming; SILVA, 2021). Then, we briefly comment on a couple of methodological choices. Afterwards, we look into a few Brazilian language teachers' responses to two ethical dilemmas; as we discuss them, reflective questions will be posed to Arthur. Next, we turn to the conversation with him to depart from here and hear from him another day.

Our lens to read the world

Our goal here is not to provide a comprehensive review either on the decolonial (ROSA-DA-SILVA, 2021; SILVA, 2021) or on the ethics perspectives (EGIDO, forthcoming; LARGE, 2015; LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020), but rather to highlight some reflections concerning them in order to comprehend the ethical dilemmas presented and the participants' responses to them. Even though we are aware of what distinguishes such perspectives from each other (e.g., authors' origins and lived experiences impacting the theories proposed, for instance), we bring them together, as they converge in terms of (i) not recognizing the normative tendency as the answer to a social issue (i.e., ethical dilemmas), (ii) not essentializing the complexity of human relations, and (iii) placing emphasis on the lived experiences and the struggles people go through.

By recognizing that it is impossible to discuss classroom-based ethical dilemmas without being aware of the attempt to homogenize the way to respond to them, which is a colonial trait, we decided to incorporate a decolonial stance in this study. Let us start by reflecting on what it would take to build another world:

[...] If 'another world is possible', it cannot be built with the conceptual tools inherited from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It cannot be built with the master's tools, as Audre Lorde reminded us a number of years back, "for the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change." (MIGNOLO; WALSH, 2018, p. 7).

Drawing on Mignolo and Walsh (2018)'s understanding, we believe that if we truly

desire to construct another understanding of ethics in language education, one that is not guided by European exclusionary and consequentialist views, it is of the utmost importance to set other conceptual tools in order to bring about genuine change. In regard to responses to ethical dilemmas, a possible approach is by recognizing that there are no handbooks, sets of instructions, or guidelines that can sufficiently address all ethical dilemmas that arise in classroom-based practices. Arguing for this document creation implies taking for granted that it can objectively solve the grayscale palette ethical dilemmas that language teachers face.

Also, assuming that a code of ethics would sufficiently address the ethical dilemmas that may come out in language classrooms is an effect of forces concerning the coloniality of being, knowledge (WALSH, 2018; ROSA-DA-SILVA, 2021), and power (QUIJANO, 2000, 2005; MUNDURUKU, 2017). Before briefly discussing such concepts, we indicate that, due to the extension of this paper, it is not possible to take power, being, and knowledge as analytical categories to interpret the teachers' responses. When we become aware of the coloniality we are part of in our lives, we begin noting how other knowledge productions and other cosmologies have been denied and erased, as Walsh (2017) and Rosa-da-Silva (2021) warn us. Each situation in a class is unique, most of us know that for a fact. How could the uniqueness inside each one of us be pre-imagined before hands? So many variables may affect one's entire day, or the life of silencing imposed upon us and our bodies and minds. This would be well naturalized in a Code of Ethics, or any other norms that is proposed based on the understanding of people as equally and culturally based, imposing rules and norms based on the white, European, male pattern of what it has been considered "normal", "the way God wants", or "it was just meant to be", superiority on how we should behave, be, interact, and exist.

It is not by accident that some privileged groups just happen to hold the institutional power to ascribe Others' being. The fact that what, how, and when we are supposed to teach inside our classrooms is designed outside of these spaces is known by every single teacher. Luckily, even from within institutions (here, the educational one), we find creative ways to question and, sometimes, transform top-down (language) policies. Our intent with this reflection is to shed some light on the coloniality of power, which, in general terms, is conceptualized by Quijano (2000, p. 203) as "[...] the idea of race [which] was a way of granting legitimacy to the relations of domination imposed by the conquest. [...] Historically, this meant a new way of legitimizing the already old ideas and practices of superiority /

inferiority relations between dominated and dominators.”³

It is by questioning the “[...] deep influence of taken-for-granted epistemological, ontological, methodological, and ethical assumptions embedded within academic discipline [...]” that we decide to turn the discussion around the positivistic and excluding European based ethics perspectives and focus on other reading to the world (ZEMBYLAS, 2020, p. 2). To get it straight: in our viewpoint, having a code of ethics designed for Brazilian language teachers is not the answer. This new set of conceptual tools, in our understanding, is the recognition of both the “colonial wounds” (VERONELLI, 2016) that hurt and shape our daily lives and the responsibilities that each one of us bears for the Other’s well-being (LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020).

Inspired by Mignolo and Walsh’s quote (2018), we then take into consideration the concept of ethics of alterity (LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020) and its interpretations to both education (TODD, 2003, 2015) and language education (EGIDO, forthcoming; SILVA, 2021) fields. Such a perspective is cohesive to the ethical approach indicated by Veronelli (2016, p. 406):

an ethical disposition toward those who had been silenced and ignored in/by the history of modernity’s colonial enterprises. By radicalizing the Levinasian notion of “other,” in Dussel’s vision of transmodernity the “other” is sought out as the location of an epistemic irreducible difference, who, in order to be listened to, needs to be recognized in her exteriority.

The ethics of alterity (LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020) opens room, in the language education field, to recognize the Other that presents themselves in front of us, whom we can never fully grasp because they are a completely different human being. Needless to say, they carry on their body the “colonial wounds” (VERONELLI, 2016), and on their language performance, the chains of what they can and cannot do, because “[...] they [the oppressors] shape it [language] to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize” (HOOKS, 1994, p. 16 apud PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018, p. 93). Consequently, aware of the impact of this approach of ethics, we decide to include the Other, not bringing them to the center, where the oppressors have historically located themselves. Including the Other, for us, means moving ourselves to where they are, that is, the margins, and from there, we move with them

³ In the original: “la idea de raza [que] fue un modo de otorgar legitimidad a las relaciones de dominación impuestas por la conquista. [...] Históricamente, eso significó una nueva manera de legitimar las ya antiguas ideas y prácticas de relaciones de superioridad/ inferioridad entre dominados y dominantes”.

somewhere else. As we started this section, it is not about using the master's tool all the time, but creating something else, being someone else, living somewhere else. By imagining a world that does not exist yet, we focus on ethics within human relations that do not seem to be the most prominent one so far.

Considering the ethics of alterity means to embrace a "[...] non-violent relation to Others" (LARGE, 2015, p. 19), which is not a simple task as we are also a product of lively colonial and asymmetrical human relations, and such relations are taken to our language classrooms, because "the classroom is a microcosm of the larger social and cultural world, reflecting, reproducing and changing the world" (PENNYCOOK, 2004, p. 479). These initial reflections aim to briefly present the lenses we employ when discussing the empirical data in the "Local lived experiences responding to classroom-based ethical dilemmas" section.

Methodological choices

The analyzed data were generated using an electronic questionnaire with ten ethical dilemmas concerning researching and teaching practices⁴. Some ethical dilemmas were changed from the original version of the questionnaire⁵, designed, tested, and first employed by Sterling, Winke, and Gass (2016), in order to better reflect the Brazilian education context. After reading each ethical dilemma, the participants needed to indicate: how (un)ethical they considered the situation; how often they had found themselves in a similar situation; how often they would say Others had experienced that; and, then, comment on what they would do if that situation were to happen with them.

We invited language teachers to participate in this study by employing the snowball method (NILSSON, 2014). As a result, a total of 21 in-service language teachers accepted the invitation to join this project and answered the electronic questionnaire. They come from various educational and cultural backgrounds, working contexts, and professional experiences, teaching Spanish (3), English (16), Portuguese⁶ (7), and Russian (1). Most of them (12) live in the South of Brazil and sixteen of them either hold a Master's degree or have taken a specialization course. Most of them (12) have been teaching for less than ten years. Concerning their working contexts, they are mostly centered on public universities

⁴ Due to the limited number of pages of this publication, it was not possible to make the electronic questionnaire available to the reader.

⁵ The changes were considered in order to present participants with similar researching and teaching ethical dilemmas that they may face in the Brazilian context.

⁶ Either as a first or as a second language.

(8), as some of them work in language institutes (5) or are currently unemployed (5).⁷ We have decided to present three participants' chosen pseudonyms, the language taught, and context in the following section when bringing up their responses to the ethical dilemmas.

Due to the diversity of the participants' contexts, we considered it would be more appropriate to briefly comment on some general characteristics of language teaching in Brazil, instead of attempting to describe the 21 contexts in-depth, which, we believe, would not even partially properly represent them. In Brazil, there is a very diverse language education context, made up of public and private teaching possibilities, ranging from elite bilingualism overvaluing English as an additional language in one extreme side to public schools that run in neighborhoods with students with all sorts of vulnerability (economical, social, race, gender, religious, and geographical to mention a few) on the other extreme side. Another specific variable is the school level that novice teachers might join: preschooling, young learners (6-11), teenagers and adults, from high school to undergraduate classes at the university level. Although there has been an increased complexity involved in language teaching (VERTOVEC, 2007; MEGALE; LIBERALI, 2016), the public policies for language teacher education have not been sufficiently updated regarding these complex scenarios (EGIDO, 2020b; BROSSI; FURIO; TONELLI, 2020; BROSSI; TONELLI, 2021). The way we see it, not only policies must be locally enacted, but ethics in language education should as well be inspired in and by local involvement, re-signified through local relations so teachers' decision-making would respond to situated problems. The Brazilian education system has long been known for not having public policies that aim at meeting expectations for the people who rely on the public education system (SHIROMA; MORAES; EVANGELISTA, 2000). Regarding the socio-economic and political scenario in the time-space when the research took place, the country has been fired up with a far-right-wing movement with the campaign and election of Jair Bolsonaro, whose Education ministers have been trying to destroy scientists, researchers, and public universities (MINISTRO..., 2021; RIBEIRO..., 2021), especially when it comes to the Humanities courses such as the Language Teacher Education courses, where we act as teacher educators.

Concerning the research ethical care, we submitted to and received the approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (EGIDO, 2020a) from the Universidade Estadual de

⁷ The languages the participants teach exceed the number 21 because some of them teach more than one in different working contexts.

Londrina; all the participants signed the informed consent term and had their identities preserved; and we constantly had them in mind while carefully discussing their responses to the ethical dilemmas. We understand that being ethical, as researchers, is as important as being researchers who investigate ethics in language education (EGIDO, 2019).

Local lived experiences responding to classroom-based ethical dilemmas

As language teacher educators, we realize that novice language teachers graduate with unanswered questions, whose possible responses might appear as they experience the profession daily while other inquiries are elaborated. Instead of aiming at a one-sided response, we have decided to illustrate the ethical grayscale palette mentioned above by presenting the participants' narratives to two ethical dilemmas. Their responses will indicate the diverse range of (sometimes hairsplitting) interpretations we can find to one particular ethical dilemma. Firstly, we present Carlota's situation and then the participants' responses.

Carlota is an activist and English teacher. During her teacher education and her recent professional career, she has often addressed social issues with her groups in a private school, whose classes are designed for oral production development. Her students have always been open to this perspective and very engaged in the discussions she has proposed so far. One day, as she introduced a new social issue, one student reacted: 'teacher, I am tired of talking about these issues. I want to study more grammar.'

Out of 21 possible responses, we have selected three that converge in terms of attending (TODD, 2003) to the student's comment but, at the same time, are slightly divergent when it comes to responding to it. Peter, who teaches English both in a public school and in a university in the Midwest of Brazil, proposes this response:

Carlota, if your students were "have always been open to this perspective and very engaged in the discussions", as you said, then this student's comment reflects solely her personal viewpoint (or maybe she was just having a tough day), and not necessarily the group's opinion about the discussions. Calmly, explain to the student that the grammar she indicated that she wants to study is, indeed, in all the oral production that you have been working with them in the classes. Show a couple of examples (excerpts from oral production). Explain to the students that there is a grammar for orality, which is different from the one employed for written production. Also, present yourself as someone open, so the student feels comfortable asking grammar questions she might have.

Peter calls our attention to the student's viewpoint, which constitutes the group. As he points out the follow-up actions he would adopt if he were in Carlota's shoes, one element interesting for us to discuss is the difference he sees between written and spoken grammar. It indicates that he does not comprehend the concept of language as rigid, steady, and detached from social use. On the contrary, language only has meaning once in use, and, in order to comment on the grammar, it is first necessary to look at the specific social practice (PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018). Lastly, we share Peter's understanding of a teacher's openness to students' constant feedback.

From Anna's viewpoint, who is an English teacher in the South of the country and is not currently teaching, it is implicit that she would not see the student's comment solely as individual feedback, as she indicates she would talk to the whole class. However, she is aligned with Peter's response about being open to students' feedback and being willing to improve the classes based on it. Differently from Peter, Anna does not see grammar as detached from orality; she argues that 'it is completely possible to focus on oral production during the classes, whereas addressing other areas of knowledge my students would be interested in' - by 'areas of knowledge', we understand as the grammar the student wanted to study more. To quote Anna's response at length:

I would try to understand her comment and would talk to the group, aiming at (i) getting to know everyone's viewpoint on the matter, (ii) listening to what they would like to study and how they would like to do it. As a consequence, I could make more interesting classes for my students to attend. In my viewpoint, it is completely possible to focus on oral production during the classes, while addressing other areas of knowledge my students would be interested in.

The third response we selected to present here comes from Sylvie, who is an English teacher in a private language institute in the South of Brazil. Her response is similar to Peter's, concerning the detachment between grammar and language use.

The student probably has not understood the purpose of the classes yet. If I were Carlota, I would like to know the reasons why the student wants to study more grammar. As it is an issue only for her, I would indicate some extra material to address her needs. Also, solely mastering grammar does not make a student proficient or able to face the daily issues in a foreign language.

Before synthesizing the participants' responses, we see it as of the utmost importance to comment on the relevance of focusing on social issues in language classes in Brazil, as the character Carlota did on the ethical dilemma aforementioned. Brazil is a country built on stolen ground (MIGNOLO; WALSH, 2018), whose current colonial social, economic, educational, and political fields are a consequence of that. Bearing that in mind, "the magnitude of violently lived realities of homelessness, poverty, sexism, racial injustice, and genocide is [...] the very reason why ethics not only demands immediate attention but why education needs to concern itself with ethics" (TODD, 2003, p. 1). Although turning our classrooms into safe spaces where students can share the struggles they are going through is not a simple task, it is a necessary one.

None of the three participants questioned addressing social issues in language classes, but one student did. They imagined possibilities to attend (TODD, 2003) to the student's comment and narrated a bit about their understanding of the relation between language use and grammar. Before moving to the second ethical dilemma, we turn to you, Arthur: What would you do if you were in Carlota's shoes? Take your time, think about it.

Ok. Now, we move to the second ethical dilemma, which is as follows:

Fernando works in a language institute that is proud to advertise on social media that its teaching is based on the American native speaker standard. Nevertheless, during his teacher education, Fernando learned about the concept of *Lingua Franca* and participated in discussions that problematized the native-like ideology. Consequently, during his classes, he often brings material with diverse accents from many countries. One day, the language institute's pedagogical coordinator told Fernando that she would watch his next class. However, Fernando was currently working with his students on a project related to English linguistic diversity.

The first response to this ethical dilemma comes from Valquiria, who lives in the Southeast of Brazil and teaches English and Portuguese in private schools. She invites us to think and act otherwise by disseminating another pedagogical perspective. We understand that she only does so because she first recognizes that the way speakers perform in a certain language is mirrored by who they are and who they want to be. So, when someone tells us we cannot employ our own accent when speaking another language, what this person is saying is: there is no room here for your identity; in order to belong, you have to adapt; to be heard, you must adopt our rules to your lived experiences. For us, this latter approach is

an overwhelming example of colonial language teaching (PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018). Let us carefully read Valquiria's response.

The myth of the native speaker only harms the teacher's performance and students' learning. It is necessary to disseminate language studies to eliminate this kind of thinking. The teacher from the ethical dilemma is right when unsettling the school's limits; unfortunately, most private language schools share the myth of the native speaker. In his shoes, I would like to continue working on the project normally. However, if the pedagogical coordinator were very close-minded (which could put my job at risk), I would continue the project in another moment and teach a class more aligned with the school's language philosophy.

For many Brazilian language teachers working in private contexts, as mentioned by Valquiria, sometimes the appropriate response is more a matter-of-kind teaching procedure that safeguards your job than the one that guarantees students' enhanced language critical awareness. By looking closely to this line of thought, we do not intend to assert that it is a case of either or; in our perspective, it is possible, in most of the cases, to both keep your job and work within the *grietas*⁸ (WALSH, 2021) or the *brechas*⁹ (DUBOC, 2012) to promote a language education that is sensitive to students' cultural and social backgrounds. In sum, it is essential to mention that, ultimately, "we [actually] try to bring hybridity under control by teaching standard English [...]" (PESSOA; BORELLI; SILVESTRE, 2018, p. 84)

Along with Valquiria's response, we have selected two different ones, from language teachers in the South of Brazil. Each one of them explores a singular aspect aforementioned by Valquiria. On the one hand, Ana, an English and Portuguese teacher in public schools, argues that "I would keep developing the same kind of work and would theoretically support its importance to the pedagogical coordinator." When Ana argues she would theoretically support her classroom teaching to the pedagogical coordinator, we realize she knows the concept of *Lingua Franca*. She feels comfortable debating ideas related to it. In our viewpoint, the ethics of alterity (LÉVINAS, 2010, 2020; TODD, 2003) could also be a

⁸Grietas stand for cracks. Walsh (2021) adopts the term to refer to "bets, postures, attitudes, actions, such as pedagogy and methodology ... this element allows [me] to be, to think, to feel, to exist, to re-exist, nurseries of times". In the original: "apuestas, posturas, actitudes, acciones, como pedagogía e metodología... este elemento permite ser, estar, pensar, sentir, existir, re-existir, viver nesses tempos".

⁹Brechas stand for gaps. In Duboc (2012, p. 94)'s work, it can be "interpreted as emerging opportunities in pedagogical practice, moments in which the teacher offers students what Jordão (2010) calls 'encounters with difference', whose aim is to enable the transformation of the subjects involved in those social practices in the face of the confrontation of knowledge." In the original: "entendida aqui como as oportunidades emergentes na prática pedagógica, momentos em que o docente oferece aos alunos aquilo que Jordão (2010) chama de 'encontros com a diferença' com vistas a possibilitar a transformação dos sujeitos envolvidos naquelas práticas sociais diante da confrontação de saberes."

powerful argument for working on a project related to English linguistic diversity; it is so because "learning from is a profoundly ethical event because the very encounter with difference, with the Other, is a passive one, one in which the learner is openly receptive to the Other" (TODD, 2003, p. 11). This idea of learning from, instead of about and on, opens the room for growth, understanding, transformation, which is only possible, in our understanding, when in contact with the Other.

On the other hand, Ariel, who is an English teacher and is not teaching at the moment, shares that "I would continue working normally... and would wait for the consequences of my choices. In general, in private language institutes, when the client is happy (=paying), the pedagogical coordination does not tend to bother you". Ariel's use of the term client instead of student reveals her criticism of the neoliberal perspective that forces itself into the education scenario. Here, one more time, we invite you, Arthur, to take your time and reflect on how you would respond to this ethical dilemma.

In sum, participants reveal traces of the coloniality of both being (MALDONADO-TORRES, 2007; REZENDE, 2018) and power (QUIJANO, 2000, 2005; GROSGOUEL, 2010) in their responses, as they become aware of the constraints they face daily when it comes to selecting what, how and when to teach. At the end of the day, in a private language setting, what is the final goal: students (and teachers) becoming critical citizens or financial growth for the institution? It is not a case of either or because there may be numerous goals, depending on the stakeholder, but our question remains: what is the final goal? We let you think about it, Arthur.

Closing remarks

Arthur, we hope that at this time, you have realized we do not hold definite or long-term fixed answers to your questions. Your concerns motivated us to start this conversation by emphasizing that "teaching is open to possibilities, contingent, and context-dependent" (MASTRELLA-DE-ANDRADE; PESSOA, 2019, p. 11), which, consequently, in our viewpoint, can never be fully grasped by any document; a Code of Ethics to Brazilian language teachers would be no different. It could perhaps initially assist you in responding to a few ethical dilemmas you will certainly encounter in your classroom. However, this document itself would not be able to attend (TODD, 2003) to your students' desires, struggles, and hopes - it is your own ethical, professional responsibility.

Arthur: Thank you for sharing those two ethical dilemmas. They fostered my thinking

and made me wonder about my experience. Something happened the other day, and I feel ashamed for not taking the subject to the whole class, opening a debate going otherwise, or giving them a few reasons that would justify my job as an English teacher in a class of 7th grade in a public school, seriously. I did not know how to do it. So I came home feeling frustrated for not dealing with it the way I expected: as I watched all those 34 pairs of eyes staring at me, waiting for 'The answer', and I looked around facing all the struggles those kids go through to come to school in many cases solely because they rely on it for their hearty two meals a day, I did not remember those arguments. During one of my English classes, a student asked me: why do I need to learn English if I am never going to travel abroad? Although I had planned arguments for this scene, once the claim was thrown among 34 restless kids, I murmured something that did not convince any of us at all, but I have been planning a class to go back to that issue I silenced myself about.

As we hear you, Arthur, saying that you regret with shame for not bringing up other reasons for studying English, we assure you: it is okay, Arthur! We are humans, incomplete, we do not always have answers. Above all, if we dare to say we have answers, you can be sure that they are temporary, fluid, changeable, as we, all of us, and each of us, in a class with 20-40 other humans, have had our moments of regret for not knowing how to react. When you decide to go on with the content without questioning the other students why it is considered necessary to study English in that specific context, your decision for that situation, when we look at your position as a novice, may be seen as an ethical one. Was your (non) answer a fear of talking or silencing dissonant voices? It does not matter. As we see it, the most important movement was your concern afterwards to whether you could have given them "an answer", or how you are taking the issue back to them in a way that may be meaningful to them, as you are stating now to us. Is it possible to point to an ethical solution in a code to guide your actions in your unique context? The uniqueness of that single moment in your class, of your teacher's mind where everything was happening at the same time, emotionally involved with the vulnerable situation of your students, your ethical dilemma was real. Your decision truly included the Other, in this case, the Others. In other words, you have silenced temporarily and moved yourself to where they are, that is, the margins, and from there, you are planning on how you 'move with them' somewhere else. So, maybe what we learn from all this uneasiness is to see the whole picture in your class, with attention to everyone's feelings, including yours. As you may see, Arthur, "at the end of the day, we do more in a classroom than we realize".

As we all have nearly finished our cups of coffee and start getting ready to return to our classrooms, we would like to leave you with Matusov (2011, p. 41)'s message, Arthur:

[...] Teachers, like their students, are irreplaceable and unsubstitutable - like writers. There cannot be another Dostoevsky or Tolstoy or Salinger. Teachers are unique as well. They teach through their life, their ontology, their responsibility, their feelings, their deeply thought ideas, their values, their complex network of social relations, their limitations and transgressions, their physical bodies, their being here-and-now in the world.

Regarding the answers you have been looking for, you might have realized at this point that you and those around you are the answer. Also, your questions are not indicative of being a novice teacher but of being a teacher; we share your doubts, struggles, and hopes. See you soon, Arthur.

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