Clínica Literária: literaturas globais e a formação de professores de língua inglesa no Brasil

LITERARY CLINIC: GLOBAL LITERATURES AND ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

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Resumo: Mediante a metáfora polivalente da "clínica," este artigo objetiva relatar os resultados da primeira fase de um projeto de formação de professores de língua inglesa no Programa Institucional de Iniciação a Docência (PIBID/CAPES) numa universidade federal do Brasil. No mundo globalizado, a licenciatura em língua inglesa precisa melhor incorporar uma perspectiva crítica e intercultural no componente reflexivo do currículo de formação de professores. Uma abordagem possível é o estudo de literaturas globais em língua inglesa desde as perspectivas de estudos culturais e pós-coloniais. Em consonância com as observações recentes de Festino (2011) e Lourenço (2011) sobre a importância de literaturas em língua inglesa para educação no Brasil, proponho um viés ao estudo de literatura global ligado à Educação Básica, para a cultivação de reflexividade docente, e melhor compreensão do papel de língua inglesa dentro do Brasil e como as narrativas interativas e multimodais podem contribuir com o ensino-aprendizagem de inglês na escola básica. Enfoco em três gêneros de literatura, de origens diversas: Kendal Hippolyte (poesia – St. Lucia), Chinua Achebe (romance – Nigéria) e Jhumpa Lahiri (conto – EUA e Índia). Também serão discutidas algumas transposições desses estudos para a sala de aula de inglês de Ensino Fundamental II.
Palavras-chave: Formação de professores. Ensino de literatura. Inglês global.

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Abstract: Departing from the polyvalent metaphor of the "clinic," this article discusses the results of the first phase of an English teacher education project, part of the Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program (PIBID/CAPES) at a federal university in Brazil. Given the effects of globalization on language teaching and learning, the English teacher certification program needs to incorporate critical and intercultural perspectives in the reflexive dimension of the teacher education curriculum. One possible approach is the study of global English, or Anglophone, literatures utilizing a cultural studies and post-colonial theoretical framework. In accordance with recent observations by Festino (2011) and Lourenço (2011) about the importance of literatures in English for education in Brazil, I propose a multimodal and critical approach to the study of Anglophone literatures connected to teaching in basic education that also stimulates teacher reflection. This approach also seeks to illuminate the role of English in Brazil and clarify the notion of content in English classes, as it relates to narrative. My analysis involves a triptych of literary genres from different countries: Kendal Hippolyte (poetry – St. Lucia), Chinua Achebe (novel – Nigeria), and Jhumpa Lahiri (short story – United States and India). Some strategies for transposing literary studies to the middle school English classroom in Brazil are also outlined.

Key words: English teacher education. Teaching literature. Global Englishes.

Introduction

In this article, I will discuss the ways in which the study of global English, or Anglophone, literatures in Brazilian teacher education programs can contribute to the development of global competence of pre-service English teachers and enhance the basic education English curriculum through outreach projects. The Teaching Initiation Scholarship (*Programa Institucional de Bolsistas de Iniciação à Docência* – PIBID) project in English, "Global English Literatures in Basic Education," at the federal university where I work in the English teacher education program, studies and teaches global English literatures from a critical literacy and multiliteracies perspective (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000; LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2003; MENEZES DE SOUZA; MONTE MÓR, 2006). I argue that the study and purposeful adaptation of global English literatures provides compelling, cosmopolitan contexts for English teacher development as well as for the inclusive study of

English in basic education. When future teachers consider how they can teach English with literature, construed broadly and supported with multimodal resources, they are better able to connect subjective experiences and language use, as well as the local and the global experience of English.

Recent events in Brazil, such as the linguistic "blackout" associated with the Brazilian government's Science Mobility Program (*Ciências sem Fronteiras*), have made clear that the massive scale of English language teaching in Brazil, particularly in public education, has not yet translated into measurable proficiency on a local or world scale (CHAGAS, 2013). English teaching in public basic education is a microcosm of the larger scenario, but also a special case given its status as a site of socio-linguistic and economic diversity. In the public secondary schools of the region of Brazil where I conduct my research in English teacher education, a grammar-translation teaching methodology still predominates, usually attributed to large class sizes and poor classroom acoustics, the absence of language labs and equipment, not to mention difficulties with regards to both teacher oral proficiency and student indiscipline. This persists even after the inclusion of Foreign Languages in the National Textbook Plan in 2011 (*Plano Nacional de Livro Didático* – PNLD). On the whole, this system still does not reach learning objectives outlined by these textbooks or by the official documents guiding language teaching and measured by state, national, and international tests, even though there are notable exceptions of public English classrooms that are innovative and achieve results (BRASIL, 1998; DIAS, 2005; MENEZES DE SOUZA; MONTE MÓR, 2006).

This diagnosis has serious consequences, both for public school students and for the profession of English teaching. It is well-documented that Brazilian teacher education programs are in crisis: the number of university students seeking teaching certification has been declining steadily, in terms of percentages, throughout the past decade (*Censo da Educação Superior*/INEP/MEC), resulting in many unfilled openings in university certification programs, lower morale among current students, and the acceptance of less-prepared students into the teacher certification programs. This scenario in part reflects the general career options and working conditions for basic education teachers, particularly in the public system. The EFL teacher education program at the federal university where I co-coordinate the teaching practicum approaches this problem, primarily, from the qualitative angle: we seek to re-imagine the role of teachers in schools and society and create new possibilities for

professional practice and self-value, despite lagging public policy and popular opinion. Certainly those who elect to follow the career of an English teacher in public Brazilian basic education and hope to have a positive impact on English language learning must be prepared to see beyond the current scenario and set high goals for their students and themselves (FARR, 2010). Student teachers in our PIBID project report that they "want to be different" than the English teachers who, as they see it, were unable to transmit the attractive aspects of language study which these students discovered by other means – discoveries which then inspired them to follow this career path.

As part of the process of re-imagining English teaching, then, this project developed what I have retrospectively termed a literary clinic, both at the university and in the schools. Literary studies tied to teaching practices can serve as an intervention, even for beginning-level students, in the creation of a critical context for teaching and learning languages, even if the curriculum remains more focused on traditional skills and the achievement of measurable proficiency. Such a project may seem problematic because of the way reading in English- the one skill insisted upon by the National Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages (*Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais-Língua Estrangeira* – PCNs-LE) and the National High School Exam (*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio* –ENEM) – often results in word-for-word translation, silence, and fragmented instrumentality. Yet reading, as a traditionally taught skill, also can serve as a point of continuity that leads – with a literary jumpstart- to productive rupture, transitioning into a renewed view of culture, narrative, and reading in the integrated-skill curriculum. As such, in my work with pre-service teachers, I seek to disrupt this pattern of silence in reading by infusing it with multimodality and insisting on literature's potential to make (*poiesis*), to tap into and expose subjectivities, and radicalize the imagination – all within language – the language that we have seen is not fully itself, not fully alive, in most current English teaching practices. The oft-repeated mantra of English students in Brazil, "é aquela coisa de sempre, você sabe, o verbo *to be, to be, to be*" (it's the same thing as always, you know, the verb to be, to be, to be) reveals a longing, through circumlocution, towards meaning making. English teachers and teacher educators need to find ways to actualize this potential for the sake of our students and their future as citizens in a globalized world. Global English literatures, typically reserved for the most advanced students, are nevertheless linguistically inclusive and provide relevant, critical contexts adaptable to all levels of language study.

In this article I first provide theoretical context about the relationship between narrative, global English literatures, teacher education, and language teaching practices in Brazilian public schools. I then feature descriptions and brief analyses of three texts that can be used in teacher education programs, followed by concise suggestions of how these same texts and topics can be adapted for the middle school level, with examples from our PIBID project.

1 What Should English Teachers in Brazil Know?

Before going into more depth on the role of Anglophone literatures in English teacher education in Brazil, I will discuss some broader concerns of teacher education for global competence. According to West (2012), global competence includes knowledge of other world regions, cultures, and international issues; skills in communicating in languages other than English while working in global or cross- cultural environments; the ability to use information from different sources around the world; and modeling the values and perspectives of respect and concern for other cultures, peoples, and global realities (p. 2).

Globally competent teachers are better prepared to teach heterogeneous groups of students and promote inclusive attitudes in the classroom, educating students, in addition, for global citizenship in our fast-changing, highly interconnected world. Yet how is global competence achieved in teacher candidates? How can the student teacher "know" if she is effectively integrating this competence into her teaching? If academic content areas can be complex and inscrutable, and difficult to articulate (GEE 2008, p. 200), so is the experience of teaching, as Richards and Lockhart (1996) point out: teachers are often unaware of what is happening as they teach (p. 3). In the words of the author?

> Here we reach a central paradox of all deep learning. It won't work to try and tell newcomers everything. We don't know how to put it all into words, because a domain of knowledge is first and foremost made up of ways of doing, being, and seeing, ways complex enough that they outrun our abilities to put them all into explicit formulations (GEE, 2008, p. 201).

For teacher education, the way we transmit this domain, this "doing, being, and seeing", is always already a product of local culture, practices, and pressures, in dialog with research and theory. Kumaravadivelu's (2012) proposal for language teacher education on a global scale considers this knowledge, broadly construed, along the axes of "global perspectives" (postnational, postmodern, postcolonial, post-transmission, postmethod) and "operating principles" (particularity, practicality and possibility). In this framework, teacher education programs would seek to develop practicing teachers who value their local contexts and own classroom practices, while seeing themselves as producers, strategists, researchers, and "transformative intellectuals" in a fast-changing, global society. The pre-service teacher learns to see what happens in the classroom and "learns to interrogate their teaching Self using critical auto-ethnography as an investigative tool, and to draw a *self-portrait* connecting the personal, the professional, the pedagogical, and the political" (my emphasis, locations 216-218).

There are many ways of the drawing such a self-portrait and effecting its subsequent interrogation. In the case of Brazil's complex relationship with the English language (MOITA LOPES, 1996; PENNYCOOK, 1994; RAJAGOPALAN, 2007), student teacher reflection may be more effective if nuanced through a global or intercultural understanding of the content area. The first dimension of reflection can be tied to personal biography ("critical auto-ethnography"), to take into account the extreme local diversity present within Brazil and the various coexisting concepts of both language and education (DINIZ et al., 2011). But a second movement of reflection may be encouraged, for student teachers to "recognize the contribution of local modes of appropriation to the formation of the global world" (CLUSTER, 2014). Our PIBID project departs from the idea that English is no longer strictly associated with hegemonic nations nor can the model of the native speaker be wielded as a means to unify and standardize English language learning (CANAGARAJAH, 2007; RAJAGOPALAN, 2008; FESTINO, 2011). On the contrary, non-native speakers now outnumber native speakers and English as an international language or Lingua Franca, as the language of the internet and globalization, can belong to anyone who chooses to learn it and use it beyond national borders. Understanding the broader context and movement of "glocalization" (SHARIFIAN, 2013), may motivate students to feel more connected to the material studied.

In an effort to decentralize the study of English literatures (and related cultural production, such as film and music), the project focuses on mostly post-colonial or multilingual contexts of English use, such as Nigeria, India, Australia, and the Caribbean, as well as from the African American community in the United States. These regions tend to represent perspectives more similar to those of Brazilian students, as part of a post-colonial and BRICS nation, which remains an emerging economy on a global scale. While English proficiency provides numerous opportunities for international participation, for younger teenagers, it also provides a way of understanding self and the process of becoming an adult. Global and intercultural studies open the possibility for marginalized peoples to gain voice and audience. As I discuss in the next section, the study of selected Anglophone literature may have the effect of empowering English student teachers in Brazil as they face the prospect of working in high-needs schools. When deployed within teacher education frameworks such as Kumaravadivelu's, the infusion of global literatures and multiliteracies into teacher preparation programs may contribute towards the creation of more robust teaching practices and the renewal of students' vision of their future profession.

2 The Literary Clinic

Our PIBID project began in October of 2012 with ten student teachers in two local state schools with low Indices of Development (IDEB). We focused on two principal objectives: to better prepare pre-service teachers for their careers (particularly, by creating a positive outlook on this career) and to improve the quality of English teaching in local public schools. The study of global English literatures contributes to both through its work with narrative at different levels: the greater narrative of teaching, the narrative of reflections on teaching, and the teaching and learning of narratives. As Freire (2009, p. 163) explains in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, critical education revolves around narratives and their constant renovation:

> A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally *narrative* character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified

This lifelessness and petrifaction – two characteristics of many EFL public school classrooms today, which teach English as if it were a dead, classic language – are symptoms of what Freire termed "narration sickness." The source of this sickness, in part, is the "static, compartmentalized, and predictable" approach both to language teaching and teacher education programs, scripts proscribing professional behavior and parameters which are often at odds with actual demands and teaching conditions encountered after graduation. Freire signals words as the vectors of this illness: "Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity" (p. 163). Gee (2008) refers to a similar phenomenon which he terms "content fetish," where an "academic area is composed of a set of facts or body of information and the way learning should work is through teaching and testing such facts and information" (p. 200). In the grammar-translation classroom the bodies of learners are, like the words themselves, transformed into hollow receptacles, emptied by the teacher's gaze down along the neat rows of desks, and into which content –the present simple, countable nouns, there is/there are, and so on– is "deposited" (FREIRE, 2009, p. 163).

But why am I calling the PIBID project's proposal a literary "clinic"? I do not seek to pathologize language or teacher education, nor offer a cure, but instead I recognize what many already consider an academic area in need of intensive, ongoing treatment, as well as some kind of significant intervention. It is fruitful to follow the vehicle of the medical metaphor to some degree when considering the impact of language on the bodies and wellbeing of pre-service teachers and their students, although this exceeds the scope of this article. Briefly, I will mention that in Foucault's *Birth of the Clinic*,[1] he discusses the way in which the "medical gaze" has a dehumanizing effect, separating body from person or identity. Entering the field of knowledge, the body also enters the field of power and becomes subject to it. The equivalent episteme of a 'medical gaze' for the language classroom, then, might be the 'grammarian's gaze' that claims to "know" the content of language but cannot account for identity, change, and chaos on a global level with heterogeneous

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[1] While *clinique* is translated into English as clinic, some scholars note that the more accurate term would be "teaching hospital," offering additional resonance for this analogy.

local interactions. Language is itself can be seen as a kind of body of systematicity produced by a physical body that, however, cannot be delimited or thought absolutely – much like language itself (BUTLER 2011, p. xi). The false "fetish" of language rules has been revealed as inaccurate by chaos and complexity theories of language acquisition (LARSEN-FREEMAN, CAMERON, 2008). The teaching outcomes tied to this view of language risk the "objectification" of the speaking subjects, that is, the students and future citizens. Foucault's work in the *Birth of the Clinic* was an important antecedent, as well, of his concept of the episteme, which may be defined as the epistemological potential for knowledge in a given time and place. The teacher who employs a copy/paste method of language teaching and learning, "looking" at (*dar vista*) the students' notebooks, may be contributing to the anatomy of a language which can only remain alien and perhaps alienating. The common phrase spoken by school students in our region, "Para que vou aprender inglês se nem falo português direito?" ("Why should I learn English when I can't even speak Portuguese correctly?") suggests the dehumanizing effects of rigid, rule-based language instruction in a social space that could instead be championed for its diversity and real representation of local communities and their speech practices. Language education is, in many cases, not the "drawing forth" suggested by the etymology of the Latin *educare*, but a cutting off at the roots of what makes us most human.

Another important aspect of the "clinic" refers to a new trend in teacher education, termed "clinical" or characterized as a "teacher residency," meant to draw parallels to the medical education mode and improve teaching quality. This model, indeed, has some aspects in common with the Brazilian government Teaching Initiation Scholarship program, PIBID, which in our university's program requires a minimum of ten hours spent in the schools per week, in addition to a minimum of six hours of other activities. The intensiveness and intensity of this team-building, collaborative teacher education experience (MATEUS, 2013) make the term "clinic" particularly apt.

Narratives – such as the self-portrait suggested by Kumaravadivelu – concern me in my discussion of literature for two main reasons: first, the employment of narrative helps to improve teacher preparation outcomes (MATTOS, 2009) and second, narratives are a means to improve foreign language acquisition (PAIVA, 2010). While not all literature is in narrative form, of course, the ability to fashion narratives *about* literature, tied to other cultural

forms such as music, video, film, and art, makes it possible to use literary texts as a means to teach language even to beginners. The fundamental nature of narrative for stimulating learning and personal or professional growth cannot be overemphasized when we consider the effect on creating context for language and citizenship study. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) in their work on qualitative research propose a view of human experience in which humans "individually and socially, lead storied lives" (p. 2). These stories and the human capacity for narrating discrete events, feelings, and experiences into a unified form, can also be represented through literary forms and devices, leading to additional kinds of effects. Literary narrative, furthermore, exposes subjectivities and interior experiences, providing a window into the other and alternative narratives for structuring and imagining one's own life, or career.

These important effects have been tested recently by social psychologists (COMER KIDD, CASTANO, 2013) who studied the effects of reading literary fiction on Theory of Mind, defined as "the human capacity to comprehend that other people hold beliefs and desires and that these may differ from one's own beliefs and desires," a key facet of global competence. The authors performed five separate experiments which led them to the conclusion that literary fiction, described as narratives that focus on in-depth portrayals of subjects' inner feelings and thoughts, and make "systematic use of phonological, grammatical, and semantic stylistic devices" (p. 1), can be linked to improving theory of mind processes, especially those that are involved in the understanding or simulation of the affective characteristics of the subjects (COMER KIDD, CASTANO, 2013). Considering that the Curriculum Guidelines for High Schools (*Orientações Curriculares para o Ensino Médio* – OCEM) aims to develop learner awareness of social power inequalities and the need to transform these, especially in Brazil, Mattos's (2009, p. 2-3) words, in reference to Bruner (1990, 2002) are especially relevant: "narratives constitute and transform us into who we are, that is, it is through telling and listening to stories, including our own, that we are continually formed and transformed." Literary fiction, in particular, is polyphonic and "writerly," disrupting readers' expectations and beliefs and exposing them to multiple perspectives (COMER KIDD; CASTANO, 2013).

Global literatures in English, when appropriately selected and presented, can be a mirror for "acts of critical reflection" (FESTINO, 2011 p. 52), the gazing into the self in order to comprehend the gaze of the other. It is a foundation of dialogue. At the same time global literatures can offer a

motivating frame for language learning, and learning about self and subjectivity, an essential topic for any teenaged student. While often unfamiliar with literature in English or concerned that students will not have the necessary linguistic level, teachers can, through continued education and partnership with universities, embrace the contexts offered by world literatures in English to create relevance and engagement for language learning. We have found that the lower linguistic level of students in *Ensino Fundamental II* does not impede the success of language classes created in multimodal dialog with literary works, ranging from graphic novels to plays and poetry. Lourenço (2011) suggests this broader interpretation of literature would be most productive in public schools, which our experiences have confirmed. As Lourenço describes the multimodal production of literary texts is a frontier little explored for its potential impact on the classroom as well as on teacher education programs. Drawing on Zappone (2008), Lourenço defines fiction broadly as including "adaptações, traduções, HQs, mangás, *mashups*, *fanfics*, filmes" (p. 98). Brazilian teaching of English must shift from exclusive to inclusive; students must feel part of the language, as if it belongs to them and they, to it, in order to create the possibility for meaning and learning. Understanding the acquisition of language as a complex process, and language as a Complex Adaptive System (CAS), it becomes necessary to look for ways to engage students through literature (in particular, narrative) and seek out "the edge of chaos," a space characterized by risk, research and experimentation, and where the learning of a second language is optimized (PAIVA, 2010). When we think of English as a CAS, it becomes even more complex given the international role of language, definitively shifted from an authoritarian site of production. This concept of English as a global language or "World Englishes" transfers power from the center to the periphery and disperses the authority of the native speaker (RAJAGOPALAN, 2007), in this case, through the literature produced not only in the countries of the traditional canon of literature in English (U.S. and U.K.), but also in other post colonial and post modern countries.

In the following pages, I highlight the position of three literary texts – or clinical sites, since they all involve the body and illness- as in their impact on teacher education programs at the university and classroom teaching in the public schools. I also discuss activities adapted for public middle school students (primarily sixth-graders) by PIBID student teachers.

3 "Seduced on a Tuesday": Aborting the cycle of poverty in Kendal Hippolyte

Kendel Hippolyte (b. 1952) is an award-winning St. Lucian poet and playwright who spent a significant amount of time in Jamaica during the 1970s. His work moves through a range of Englishes, from standard to Caribbean, and dialogs with the native Kweyol language of St. Lucia. In our project, we studied three of his poems: "Caribbean Round", which I analyze in this section; "Visions of us", published in 1992; and "Sale- a Millenium Rap" published in his book *Night Vision* (2005). I selected these poems because of their accessible language, post-colonial perspectives, and critical interrogation of identity and power. Of these, "A Caribbean Round" (HIPPOLYTE, 1992, p. 48) made the most impact on student teachers, in part because they felt it was feasible to take the poem to their students in the public schools. As the title suggests, the poem is circular in structure, beginning and ending with the subject's name, "Josephine Jacobie", tracing the events of her life as a compact, week-long series of seemingly inevitable mishaps and mistreatment. The poem is brief, and I reproduce it in its entirety here:

> Josephine Jacobie
> born on a Monday
> seduced on a Tuesday
> feller left on Wednesday
> they put her out Thursday
> she get a job Friday
> the money done Saturday
> she cry all Sunday
> the baby born Monday –
> What you think she call the baby?
> Josephine Jacobie

The poem continues through the week in the same cadence, making use of oral slang (fellow becomes "feller") and non-standard verb inflection and/or omission of auxiliary verbs ("she cry all Sunday"). The series of life events, following the birth of her child, is summed up by a question: "What you think she call the baby?," answered simply in the next line – "Josephine Jacobie" – thus completing the round and exemplifying the repetitive sequence of suffering.

Hippolyte's ties to music, in particular rap and jazz, are notable in this local, oral lyric voice, a post-colonial dirge of this common cycle of poverty which transverses national and cultural lines, without sacrificing its local roots visible in the dialectic markings of the lyric voice and the name of the subject and the title. While grounded in Caribbean experience and language, the poem's theme of gendered, socioeconomic subalternity incites dialogue with numerous other postcolonial sites of lyric production, including Brazil. At the same time, it is significant that Josephine Jacobie does not speak for herself, as lyric subject; rather she becomes the vehicle of the poet's voice and message, an appropriation of her experience in the world of language. The poem allows student teachers to ask questions such as, in this poem: who gets to speak? What does it mean to speak through a particular language? To whom does English belong? What is "standard" English? The poem presents itself, at one basic level, as a more critical way for students to become familiar with the vocabulary of days of the week in English. However, it more importantly reveals the cultural contexts where language is made to mean, and our lives made to fit pre-established orders and patterns indicative of hidden power gradients, thus providing a more nuanced vision of the global cultures that are present within the English language.

4 "Forced Down our Throats": Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

More widely known than Hippolyte, Chinua Achebe (b. 1930 – d. 2013) published poetry, fiction, essays, and non-fiction largely based on colonial and postcolonial Nigeria and the debate surrounding "African" literature. The student teachers in our PIBID project read, over a period of several weeks, the classic novel *Things Fall Apart* (ACHEBE, 1994), which draws on the oral tradition of the Igbo people as it follows the life of the protagonist Kwonko during the beginning of British colonial occupation of what would become Nigeria. This novel, originally published in 1958, was selected for its post-colonial theme, detailed exploration of language and culture, and accessible linguistic and literary features. While its length may be a challenge for intermediate readers, comprehension was not difficult and discussions were readily generated in both English and Portuguese. One important objective of these discussions was to discover how a novel like Achebe's could directly or indirectly impact EFL curricula in the public schools, even at the *Ensino Fundamental II* level.

Achebe's essay "The African Writer and the English Language" (1975) is a complementary text which elucidates his compelling and complex use of language and culture in *Things Fall Apart*. About his choice to write an "African novel" in English, Achebe notes the following (1975, p. 58):

> And there are scores of languages I would want to learn if it were possible. Where am I to find the time to learn the half dozen or so Nigerian languages, each of which can sustain a literature? I am afraid it cannot be done. These languages will just have to develop as tributaries to feed the one central language enjoying nationwide currency. Today, for good or ill, that language is English. Tomorrow it may be something else, although I very much doubt it.

Achebe affirms that all world languages, including Portuguese (he specifically discusses the Brazilian context) are both oppressive and liberating, and English, as a language with "universal currency" opens up multiple possibilities for writers as a native and second-language, even as he describes English as a "world language which history has forced down our throats" (ACHEBE, 1975, p.59). The lack of agency and the forced generation of creative voice ("throats") indicate the web of conflicts enmeshing English-language writers in the globalized, post-colonial period.

As reported recently, some Brazilian novelists are choosing to write in English to find a wider audience. Bruna Brito, from São Paulo, learned English on her own in order to publish a book, "Lost Boys" under the pseudonym "Lillian Carmine," uploaded to Wattpad, dubbed the "YouTube" of written texts (COZER, 2013). The novel was later discovered by a publisher from Random House, contracted, and published. Achebe's (1975, p. 61) observations on how writers who are non-native speakers may make creative use of English and local cultures are very germane to the Brazilian context:

> … my answer to the question *Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively* in *creative writing?* is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask. *Can he ever learn to use it like a native speaker?* I should say, I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so.

In fact, Achebe asserts that "the price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use," another side of its role as "currency". By infusing language with cultural character and engaging in international debates, Achebe achieves a level of English that goes beyond imitation to create something new.

5 Maladies of Globalization: Teacher as interpreter in Jhumpha Lahiri

Jhumpha Lahiri (b. 1967) is an author of Bengali descent whose debut collection of stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* (2000), explores the Indian-American experience, both of first-generation Americans, expatriates, and immigrants, who move between cultures and often contradictory sets of values. Lahiri's own transnational heritage informs her writing: born in London, she moved to the United States at age 2, where she was raised with awareness of her Bengali heritage, often visiting relatives in West Bengal state in India. The student teachers in our project read the story by the same name as the collection, "Interpreter of Maladies." Several had read other stories in this collection in their required English Literature course at the university. This story follows a first-generation Indian-American couple and their children sightseeing on vacation in India, and the relationship which they develop with the taxi driver, who moonlights as a language interpreter for a doctor.

While featuring accessible "plain" language and plot points, Lahiri's use of literary devices is more complex and, considering the story's title is the title of the collection, it also offers the possibility of extended analysis. Student teachers involved in the project focused on the character of Mrs. Das, her relationship with the taxi driver and tour-guide, Mr. Kapasi, as well as his other occupation as a language interpreter for the sick at a doctor's office. Language and culture, as affected by the processes of immigration and globalization, become their own characters in this short story, as Mr. Kapasi wonders at Mrs. Das' identity and interior life, muses over his own studies of languages and wish to be a "diplomat", and receives Mrs. Das' shocking confession as they sit together in the taxi while the rest of her family goes to see the Temple.

The figure of the "Interpreter of Maladies" goes beyond mere descriptor for an occupation, as the unusual terminology indicates, and serves as a metaphor for the interaction between reader and text both at the level of the collection and the individual story. For what I have called here the "literary

clinic," aimed at moving our EFL classrooms away from narration sickness, the idea of the Interpreter of Maladies is apt for exposing the hidden pain and guilt of displaced agency and implicit oppression within the learning of a foreign language.

One may also identify possible parallels with the language teaching career, of interest for reflective discussions with pre-service teachers. When Mr. Kapasi explains his role as an interpreter in a doctor's office, Mrs. Das agrees that his work is "a big responsibility." He is surprised by this alluring Indian-American woman's interest and romantic view of his profession:

> To him it was a thankless occupation. He found nothing noble in interpreting people's maladies, assiduously translating the symptoms of so many swollen bones, countless cramps of bellies and bowels, spots on people's palms that changed color, shape, or size. (LAHIRI, p. 51).

Such a description resonates could be interpreted as an aggressive analogy to teaching and working with languages: the difficulty of diagnosing individual learning needs and addressing a range of unpredictable difficult. As the narrator continues, Mr. Kapasi saw his job, like many students in English teaching, as "a sign of his failings" (p. 51). He had had more upwardly mobile and powerful visions of a future career, like many of our student teachers, who might have preferred a more esteemed profession than teaching. I include an extended excerpt from Lahiri's story to give a more complete view of Mr. Kapasi's own trajectory that would, in this moment, be "rescued" by the apparent romantic interest of a foreigner – who, however, was not *exactly* foreign – but rather the fusion of the global and the local:

> In his youth he'd been a devoted scholar of foreign languages, the owner of an impressive collection of dictionaries. He had dreamed of being an interpreter for diplomats and dignitaries, resolving conflicts between people and nations, settling disputes of which he alone could understand both sides […] at one point in his life he was confident that he could converse, if given the opportunity, in English, French, Russian, Portuguese, and Italian, not to mention Hindi, Bengali, Orissi, and Gujarati. Now only a handful of European phrases remained in his memory, scattered words for things like saucers and chairs. English

was the only non-Indian language he spoke fluently anymore. Mr. Kapasi knew it was not a remarkable talent. Sometimes he feared that his children knew better English than he did, just from watching television. (LAHIRI, p. 51-52).

The cosmopolitan as a testing ground of self can be a disappointment – what is difficult to grasp for one generation (of teachers) may be comprehended with native ease by the next (their students), yet, in this case, through popular, non-academic means: the television replaces the dictionary. The contact between global and local, however, especially through the sensual and private literary imagination, reinvigorates professional practices that began out of necessity and grew even duller with time. While Mr. Kapasi is eventually shocked by Mrs. Das's confession that one of her sons was fathered by someone other than her husband, the contrast of imagination and reality leaves him unable to cope with her emotional and figurative pain as she asks him to "suggest some kind of remedy" (LAHIRI, p. 65) for her suffering. She is, at once, "common and trivial" and totally foreign to Mr. Kapasi. At the end of the story, she accidentally lets the little paper with his address – where she had intended to send him photos – fall out of her purse and blow away, unnoticed by anyone except Mr. Kapasi, ensuring they would never meet again.

Lahiri's story can be taught to student teachers to encourage reflection on their own language careers and role in the global and local circulations of language and identity. To what degree are they also "interpreters of maladies," whether as readers of this short-story collection, or as students and teachers of a foreign language that is also considered a global language, or as digital and physical citizens, stretched along speed-of-light networks and subject to the inertia of institutions and bureaucracy in the construction of more effective teaching and learning of English? To what degree are they looking to make a confession to a stranger? These reflections, drawing on post-colonial and cosmopolitan studies, contribute to elasticity of imagination and flexibility of thought needed to confront the complexities of our post-modern world and to contextualize participation in the construction of knowledge and futures, as teachers.

6 Taking the Literary Clinic into *Ensino Fundamental II* Classrooms

Here we may reconnect to the context of Brazilian public schools. [2] While the PIBID project will publish lesson plans and specific teaching materials produced in 2013, I would like to outline here the general strategies used to successfully implement workshops based on global English literatures with middle school students.

Given critical literacy and literature's intended impact in this project, activities and lessons involving literature are most effective when explicitly connected to students' experiences and previous knowledge base. Literature must not be made to be static, a rubric of facts and summaries to be memorized and tested. If the students do not perceive a personal connection to the text, or feel an urgency towards reading and understanding, there will be little impetus to make contact with another culture or point of view. Instilling ownership through interactive, multimodal pre-reading and post-reading activities has, in our experience, catalyzed intrinsic motivation in otherwise "difficult" classes that were not otherwise considered candidates for literary studies - in any language.

Our project developed over two semesters, preceded by approximately two months of qualitative research in the form of observation and questionnaires to assess the best kinds of activities to develop. School-based workshops progressed in complexity throughout the school year. The first literature workshops connected films and literary works, but did not involve any reading on the part of the students. For film showings, students were brought to the university, because of space and equipment limitations at the local schools. This added an additional factor of interest for students, who enjoying moving outside of traditional spaces of learning. In parallel, PIBID students developed "fun" cultural workshops based around holidays which generated student involvement in English activities. The next workshops

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centered around music, allowing for short critical literacy activities about lyrics, with discussions and writing phrases, for example, in response to the question, "How can we change the world?". An activity focused on Michael Jackson's song "Cry" about the environment, and another on Bob Marley's songs and biography. Both of these generated considerable interest and linguistic production in English among students. Tutoring services were made available with additional activities and language practice.

In the second semester, PIBID students conducted a short poem workshop, including Hippolyte's "Caribbean Round." First, this poem and several others were the subject of a two-class session workshop (one hour and forty minutes). The approximately 35 sixth-grade students were divided into small groups of six or seven, each led by a PIBID student teacher and supervised by the classroom teacher. Each of these groups worked on a separate short poem, and illustrated their understanding of the poem, writing phrases taken from the poems under their drawings. At the end of the workshop, the groups read and presented their poems, including their illustration and interpretation. The level of understanding of the poetry, and the ability to represent this through drawing and presentation, surprised all involved. By dividing the class into small groups and giving individual attention, school students were able to effectively engage with literary works, even in their first year of language study, and problems with discipline were avoided. Schools and classroom teachers can draw on resources such as PIBID students – an increasing presence throughout the country – and supervised teaching practicum student teachers to help implement enrichment projects that change classroom dynamics and challenge routine content.

Similar workshops were developed with art and the creation of comics and dioramas based on excerpts from well-known stories, such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In several workshops, students transposed the story into illustrated comic strips, writing their own dialog in English. We found it was necessary to provide models and clear parameters for student productivity, whether oral or written, in a highly supportive and interactive classroom environment. A possible lesson for "Interpreter of Maladies" (LAHIRI, 2000) would discuss the ideas of immigration, expatriation, and national identity – *what does it mean to you to be Brazilian, or American, or Indian? What about someone who is born in one place and moves to another – or to several – other places, crossing cultural, national, and linguistic borders? Who are they?* Variations on common classroom "who am I?" games could serve to get students involved. Such a

discussion might begin in Portuguese and then introduce vocabulary and phrases in English with the support of dictionaries, building on the typical introductory chapters of textbooks which cover nationality and identity through communicative practice. One effective technique for task-based reading comprehension, used for a different short story, first makes clear the overall objective of the class (ie, creating a comic based on the story). Because of time limitations, an overall plot summary of the story is established in the whole group through oral discussion and video, followed by the reading, in small groups, of important excerpts in English. These excerpts could be read and interpreted in small groups, each with its own scholarship student as a teacher, covering a range of topics for Lahiri's story (2000), such as, "Who are Mr. and Mrs. Das?"; "Mr. Kapasi loves Mrs. Das"; "Mr. Kapasi's Dream"; "Mrs. Das's Secret"; and "The Monkeys." Subsequently, individual groups could explain what happens in their excerpt to the entire class in English by presenting their comic strip– or act it out through role play or other communicative activities tied to the curriculum. The filming of movie trailers or other related videos, produced with cell phones, could serve as a culminating project for such a workshop series.

Conclusion

The creation of a "literary clinic" to challenge student teachers to a renewed vision of teaching and learning English in Brazil has been effective in our local context. The collaboration between PIBID and local state middle schools has given students the chance to learn about Global Englishes, Brazil's position in a fast-changing world, and what they, as citizens of a globalized society, can do to impact and transform the social narratives of which they find themselves a part. While public school culture, in many regions of Brazil, does not yet favor the teaching and study of literature (LOURENÇO, 2011), even beginning English as a foreign language students can be stimulated to further language study by immersing them in complex but accessible narratives, mediated by ample contextualization and multimodal activities. Students become engaged in learning new perspectives through literature, as do pre-service teachers. Importantly, topics in global English Literatures make for exciting possibilities for teaching, emphasizing the role of English as part of the development of critical thinking skills, essential for global citizenship and the growth of the English teaching profession in Brazil.

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