

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: INTERACTION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

LÍNGUA E CULTURA: INTERAÇÃO NAS SALAS DE AULA DE LÍNGUA INGLESA

Maria Elaine Mendes^{1*}

Rosemeire Parada Granada Milhomens da Costa^{2*}

ABSTRACT: The importance of English in communication and the globalized world as well as the demands of the job market, which is under the influence of modernization, leads people, in general, to become interested in learning it. It is understood that in schools it is necessary consider these expectations and the benefits in order to learn more about how to include cultural aspects in the English classrooms. Therefore, it is understood that teaching English is more than teaching rules and grammatical structures, it is also present the other side of the language, which means show the students the importance and the meaning of being bilingual but also bicultural. This work consists of a bibliographical research that intends to arise discussions around the topics pointed above expecting that the teachers (in or pre-service) can think about their pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS: Teaching/Learning Process, English classes, Cultural aspects

RESUMO: A importância da língua inglesa na comunicação e no mundo globalizado, bem como as exigências do mercado de trabalho, que está sob a influência da modernização, leva as pessoas, em geral, a se tornarem interessados em aprendê-la. Entende-se que nas escolas é necessário considerar essas expectativas e esses benefícios, a fim de aprender mais sobre como incluir os aspectos culturais nas salas de aula de Língua Inglesa. Portanto, entende-se que o ensino de Língua Inglesa é mais do que regras e estruturas gramaticais, ensinar é também apresentar o outro lado da língua, o que significa mostrar aos estudantes a importância e o significado de ser bilíngue, mas também bicultural. Este trabalho consiste em uma pesquisa bibliográfica que pretende levantar discussões em torno dos temas apontados acima, esperando que os professores (em serviço ou em pré-serviço) possam refletir sobre suas práticas pedagógicas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Processo de Ensino e Aprendizagem; Aulas de Língua Inglesa; Aspectos Culturais

¹ Mestre em Língua e Literatura pela Universidade Federal do Tocantins – UFT, tem experiência na área de Letras, com ênfase em Língua Inglesa e respectivas Literaturas. Atualmente trabalha e pesquisa no Centro Universitário Unirg na área de ensino/aprendizagem de Língua Inglesa. E-mail: elainemendesq@hotmail.com

² Mestre em Língua e Literatura pela Universidade Federal do Tocantins – UFT. Atualmente leciona e pesquisa no Centro Universitário Unirg na área de formação de professores de LE e questões acerca do tema. Tem experiência na área de Letras, com ênfase em Língua Inglesa. E-mail: meiregranada@hotmail.com

Introduction

English is an international language and learning it became indispensable in a globalized and post-modern world since it is the second most spoken language and the most used commercially in the world. It is important to mention that English became the gateway to other cultures through the expansion of the Internet. Therefore, comprehending English as a means of communication and interaction amongst people worldwide highlights its great value.

According to the National Curriculum Parameters regarding the educational objectives for teaching foreign languages:

³Learning a foreign language contributes to the educational process as a whole, going far beyond just the acquisition of linguistic abilities. It brings with it a new perception of the nature of language, enhances the understanding of how it works and promotes more awareness of people's mother tongues. At the same time, by promoting appreciation of customs and values of other cultures, the process of learning a foreign language contributes to develop a better perception of one's own (BRASIL, 1999: 37).

Almeida Filho (2013: 15) says that, ⁴“Learning a foreign language is like growing up in a matrix of interactive relationships in the target language, which gradually become less foreign for the learners.”

According to Paiva (2005: 15) the English language has become an essential foreign language for all Brazil.

⁵It is an epidemic that has contaminated 750 million people worldwide. This borderless language is used in half of the 10.000 newspapers, in 80% of the scientific journals and as jargon for various professionals within the economics and publicity areas (PAIVA, 2005).

As noted, English is present in the daily lives of Brazilian people. Considering its importance in the current context, it is necessary to analyze how effective the

³Aprender uma língua estrangeira contribui para o processo educacional como um todo, indo muito além da simples aquisição de habilidades linguísticas. Ele traz consigo uma nova percepção da natureza da linguagem, aumenta a compreensão de como ele funciona e promove uma maior consciência das línguas maternas das pessoas. Ao mesmo tempo, promovendo a valorização dos costumes e valores de outras culturas, o processo de aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira contribui para desenvolver uma melhor percepção de si mesmo (BRASIL, 1999, p. 37).

⁴Aprender uma língua estrangeira é como crescer em uma matriz de relações interativas na língua-alvo, que gradualmente se tornam menos estrangeira para os alunos.

⁵É uma epidemia que contaminou 750 milhões de pessoas em todo o mundo. Essa língua sem fronteiras é usada em metade dos 10.000 jornais, em 80% das revistas científicas e como jargão para vários profissionais dentro das áreas de economia e publicidade (PAIVA, 2005).

learning/teaching process of English is at schools. It has recently been said by researchers and educators that English teaching has not been achieving satisfactory results in Brazilian public schools. According to Schmitz (2009: 14) the hours reserved in the curriculum for teaching English are not always favorable in public schools, preventing the teacher from teaching all the disciplines. As a result, the National Curriculum Parameters (BRAZIL, 1999) recommend that the focus should be placed on reading.

⁶In principle, the students should develop the four abilities for foreign language teaching to be considered effective. After all, a student has to be able to speak, read and write in another language as well as understand it when it is spoken in order to communicate with people who speak other languages. However some factors complicate the progress of the student in developing the four disciplines in Brazilian public elementary and high schools (OLIVEIRA, 2009: 28)

The objectives of foreign language lessons, in this case English, and the use of the four abilities are not achieved for many reasons. Oliveira (2009: 28) highlights that the large number of students per group, which in some cases can reach 70 (seventy) students, makes the teachers' job difficult as well as increases the likelihood of different levels of proficiency in the same group. He also adds that the weekly time allocated for foreign language teaching, which is normally one hundred minutes, is not sufficient to give positive results and that there are insufficient physical resources to achieve an effective lesson.

The importance of learning a foreign language besides their own language, in the contemporary world, becomes evident as it allows individuals to be in contact with different cultures and ways of life as well as giving a different view and interpretation of the world.

As well as being an entry tool to the job market, English gives an advantage to qualified individuals that master more than one language. It also enables them to reach a more economically stable position. This is what the market has already been doing, as those who are more prepared, get better positions. Therefore, being fluent in a particular language is a great differential.

Nowadays learning a second language, specifically English, has become a key to obtain a good job. It is not enough learning this language at a basic level, to the contrary, it is

⁶Em princípio, os estudantes devem desenvolver as quatro habilidades para o ensino de língua estrangeira ser considerado eficaz. Afinal, um aluno tem de ser capaz de falar, ler e escrever em outro idioma, bem como entender quando se fala, a fim de comunicar-se com pessoas que falam outras línguas. No entanto, alguns fatores complicam o progresso do aluno no desenvolvimento das quatro disciplinas no ensino público médio e fundamental nas escolas brasileiras.

necessary to master it, speak it fluently, have a good diction, be coherent and precise. Respect the qualification of the person who wants a job and give recognition to them as a good professional.

In times of globalization, the market became a subject: it dictates social rules, establishes risks as it standardizes behavior, regulates the stock market, opens and closes businesses, imposes educational standards and even takes on human qualities: it gets angry, calms down, becomes happy, trusts and mistrusts (JORDÃO, 2004: 1).

With all the technological advancements and scientific evolution, human beings started having a different perception of the world and a wider perspective to achieve their professional goals. The demands of the job market however, show that a lot of dedication is needed in order for people to have access to this increasingly competitive world. The reason for this is because even if someone's qualifications match the required standard, there is a limit to the number of vacancies, which means that just the best qualified and most competent will succeed.

The expansion of English and technology go hand-in-hand. Computing can be used as a shining example. As the amount of information surpassed human beings' storing capacity, computers came into action. With the globalization of communication, language is being substituted (FORATTINI, 1997). With this evolution, we need to be aware that globalization is not static; to the contrary, it is constantly changing and adapting to, in a way, better qualify and benefit everyone who needs it. It is noted that this parallel made by Forattini (1997), is because of the speed with which English has been changing and becoming extremely important as well as entry tool to the job market.

In this way, learning a language is learning how to make oneself understood in it, which implies entering into relationships with other people, searching for relevant and deep personal experiences that allow new perceptions and stir subsequent actions (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2005:15).

English is not only a science of conversing and communication; on the contrary, it goes beyond the imaginable and has already transcended human limits because of the expansion of its use in the network of worldwide communication.

Even after highlighting that English language is extremely important for Brazilians, as it is present at all times in our daily and school lives, it is still necessary to search for strategies in order to have quality communicative levels of English. Although students are in

contact with English from 6th grade until finishing high school, accounting for 7 years of study, their studies are often ineffective.

The English language is not simply a set of grammatical rules and a collection of words to be memorized in the way that many teachers see and teach it. Language is a tool through which people interact with the world and acquire the necessary knowledge to survive not only physically but emotionally.

This emotional and intercultural understanding also creates the acceptance of different ways to express oneself and behave. Moita Lopes (2002) draws attention to the fact that a foreign language teacher needs to be careful not to portray stereotyped concepts of the culture that is being transmitted. He also adds that it is impossible to become bilingual without becoming bicultural.

Therefore, this bibliographic study intends to present a general view of the cultural aspects implications and contributions within the process of teaching and learning English in public schools. In order to accomplish with this study the text is organized into four sections.

In section 1, it will be presented a brief review on the need of teaching English in public schools. In section 2, it will be defended some of the advantages of teaching English as opposed to other foreign languages and its role as an international language. Finally, in section 3, it will be addressed discussions about cultural aspects and implications within the English classes and also how these aspects can be worked together in order to integrate their skills, followed by the closing remarks.

2 Why is English taught in public schools?

It is undeniable that only a few students from public school will have the opportunity to use English as an interactive tool in a trip abroad, for instance; or have the opportunity to communicate with English native speakers, or, be in a context where English is really needed for communication purposes. Thus, a question arises: why should English be taught to students who will not have the opportunity or need to use it?

However, as teachers, we must make students aware of the necessity to use English because of the various possibilities it can create. If we fail to do that, we will be taking away

another opportunity they could have, as well as be corroborating with preconceptions and stereotypes. Denying knowledge means denying opportunity, which goes against the intrinsic role of the school. For Oliveira (2005), ⁷“[...] teaching foreign languages to underprivileged children can contribute to make them better off. If, on the other hand, they are denied this knowledge, it is the same as telling them that they should remain underprivileged, and that they do not deserve a different fate [...]” (OLIVEIRA, 2005: 44).

Schools must not be a place that segregate students, but represent opportunities and possibilities. Students must recognize that through education they have the possibility to ascend socially. Despite the difficulties and students' distrust, schooling and language learning must represent the opportunity they need to change and grow. As mentioned previously, access to knowledge and information has more barriers nowadays, even though the world is open for all.

In this view, ⁸“educators are contributing to bring together cultures and, consequently, to build a more human world where everyone can have access to knowledge” (OLIVEIRA, 2005: 46). Students from public schools must recognize the role that English plays in their own lives. Even if, at first, it does not represent an actual opportunity to interact, it must represent a tool that allows individuals to develop intellectually and ascend professionally, as this potential is already recognized.

The process of identifying a language goes beyond the recognition of a linguistic code as well as knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures. This language must be recognized in use and understood in real situations. In order to develop the communicative skill, the culture must also be approached in English language teaching. This means that students should have contact with the target language culture in order to be able to recognize the language in different contexts. Language can distinguish different social groups and it can be an identifying factor of various cultures.

Thus, cultural exchange also takes place through linguistic interaction since the cultural elements of each people are in-built in their respective language. A language

⁷“[...] ensinar língua estrangeira para crianças carentes pode contribuir para torná-las melhores. Se, por outro lado, a eles é negado esse conhecimento, é o mesmo que dizer-lhes que eles devem permanecer desfavorecidos, e que eles não merecem um destino diferente”.

⁸Educadores estão contribuindo para aproximar culturas e, conseqüentemente, para construir um mundo mais humano, onde todos possam ter acesso ao conhecimento.

identifies each culture, being the first inherent to the latter. Therefore, culture must not be separated from language as they are both identifying tools for each people. Language is determined by social entities and the culture it involves.

Since a language is the identity of a people, expressing their values, culture, opinion, prejudice, characteristics, it must be taken seriously because this identifying aspect must not derail the process of language teaching; to the contrary, it must be critically analyzed and used as a tool to support learners' success during the teaching-learning process.

English cultural aspects must be part of the methodology adopted by foreign language teachers as opposed to being reduced in importance. Teachers need to enable interaction with the culture of the target language. For that to happen, it is indispensable to link English to the culture of English speaking countries during the teaching process. For Oliveira (2005: 51) if educators choose to only teach the language, their practice might not be satisfactory. Current studies have shown evidence that languages cannot be separated from their cultures, and that language depends on the situational and cultural context in which it is produced and from which it is influenced.

The awareness that language and culture should be taught simultaneously can facilitate the acquisition of linguistic proficiency. By learning the culture of the target language, students might feel more motivated to learn the language, and find it easier to understand. As well as this, cultural interaction would also be provided. Hence, cultural aspects should be considered as motivational factors when a foreign language is being learned.

Oliveira (2005: 48) also defends that ⁹“any international language will influence the economy and culture. Depriving a country from English is the same as taking away its access to penicillin [...]”.

English must not be considered unnecessary in public schools' curriculum under the justification that it is not useful simply because learners do not have the opportunity to use it.

Bruner (1977: 17, *apud* MOITA LOPES, 1996: 131) says that ¹⁰“learning is not supposed to just lead us somewhere; it must help us to advance without too many

⁹“qualquer língua internacional vai influenciar a economia e a cultura. Privar um país de Inglês é o mesmo que tirar o seu acesso à penicilina [...]”.

¹⁰“aprender não é apenas nos levar a algum lugar; o aprendizado deve ajudar-nos a avançar sem muitas dificuldades”.

difficulties”. Thus, linguistic skills in English must be considered as a tool, a ‘bridge’ that will create various opportunities to learners as opposed to only a tool for interaction.

3 Foreign language in the school curriculum: An English language monopoly?

Holden and Rogers (2001: 96) defend that one of the advantages of teaching English as opposed to other foreign languages is its role as an international language. This role is justified by its comprehensive reach as it is the communication tool of people who speak different languages in various parts of the world. This aspect, combined with the great political ascension as well as economic and cultural power of countries where the target language is spoken can be the spark that initiates the competition for the privileged position of major international language. Almeida Filho (2007: 47) highlights that:

¹¹More than 370 million people around the world have the English language as a first language; and so many people use it as a second language, if not more. One in five world population speaks English with some degree of competence. This is an official language or quasi-official status with more than 70 countries, playing a significant role in many others. (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2011: 47)

This statement can justify English being the choice of Modern Foreign Language in the School Curriculum for Basic Education. Article 36 of the Brazilian Educational Bases and Guideline Laws [*LDB*] sets out that a foreign language must be included in the school curriculum, and it must be chosen by the school community.

Despite the prerogative established by *LDB*, it is noticeable that English is not respected by students, parents or the community in general as a curriculum subject.

¹²“Overall, the reflections about the contributions and limitations of foreign language in the

¹¹ Mais de 370 milhões de pessoas ao redor do mundo tem a Língua Inglesa como primeira língua; e tantas pessoas a utilizam como segunda língua, senão mais. Uma a cada cinco populações mundiais fala inglês com algum grau de competência. Trata-se de uma língua oficial ou com status de quase oficial com mais de 70 países, desempenhando um papel significante em muitos outros.

¹²“No geral, as reflexões sobre as contribuições e limitações da língua estrangeira no currículo escolar deve ser revista e da adoção de medidas de incentivo e de transformação devem ser apoiadas”.

school curriculum must be revisited and the adoption of incentives and transformation measures supported” (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2011: 37).

As well as being considered a curriculum subject, English must be recognized as an essential tool for the development of learners, and it must be respected like any other subject. It is also important that students recognize it on a daily basis in advertisements, songs, computers, films, shop windows, etc. Holden and Rogers (2001: 9) say that:

[...] An awareness of the importance of English in the world immediately outside the classroom can increase student motivation. English has a real use: open access to other areas. It is worth, therefore, study it very seriously. (HOLDEN AND ROGERS, 2001: 9)

Showing learners the practical aspects of English can help to show them the importance of being communicative and having linguistic skills, as the language is part of their reality. This approach will make the teaching-learning process meaningful to them, making it easier.

As defended by Almeida Filho (2007: 41) ¹³“as a curriculum component, foreign languages play an educational, cultural and communicational role in harmony with schools’ goals regarding students’ development”. The school environment must prepare students and highlight their abilities as opposed to limit them to the school curriculum, which is often concentrated on the development of grammatical skills.

It has been known, for a long time, that language teaching was based on grammar and the memorizing of rules in regular schools. It is also known that the methodology founded on these demands does not give significant support for students to develop linguistic abilities as it has little significance and leads to demotivation during English lessons.

Notwithstanding, other difficulties experienced in English teaching at public schools can be added to these factors, only reinforcing the perception of the meaninglessness of English as a curriculum subject. Such difficulties are: crowded classrooms, lack of good-

¹³Como um componente curricular, as línguas estrangeiras desempenham um papel educacional, cultural e comunicativo em harmonia com metas da escola no que diz respeito ao desenvolvimento dos alunos”.

quality material, few teaching hours and the absence of a dynamic environment in the teaching-learning process.

It is important to clarify that this study does not intend to defend the supremacy of English as it should not be the only language offered to students. With respect to foreign language in High Schools, the article 36 of the Brazilian Educational Bases and Guideline Laws (BRASIL, 1999) sets out that one modern foreign language, which shall be chosen by the school community, is to be included as a compulsory subject. A second foreign language shall be optionally offered within the institutions' convenience. However, it is widely known that public schools are yet to offer this second option. As for the interests of the community, Spanish would be one of the options, which could be more significant for students from southern states, where they have more contact with Spanish speakers and their culture. As stated by the Brazilian National Curriculum Parameters regarding Foreign Language Teaching (BRASIL, 2001: 27) ¹⁴“the students no longer need to adjust to the school, on the contrary, the school has to adjust to the needs of the community.”

The exclusivity of English language teaching was legally abolished by the Act no. 11.161, from August 5, 2005. Its first article establishes that “Spanish language teaching, must be offered by schools but is optional for students to study and will be gradually implemented in High School curriculums”. This scenario will happen progressively over five years.

4 English language teaching and cultural aspects: an integrated knowledge

It is essential to stress that English language teaching was based on its culture, but it did not have a format that could really integrate the culture of the language that was being taught with the learners' culture. A more communicative approach, originating from methodological changes, conducts English language teaching jointly with its culture to accomplish more critical and productive results. It is stressed that through English language teaching based on critical thinking, students have the opportunity and capacity to act and

¹⁴“os alunos não precisam mais se adaptar à escola, ao contrário, a escola tem de se adaptar às necessidades da comunidade”.

interact in their own reality. This shows to what extent their cultural qualities as citizens are recognized. As highlighted by Totis (1991: 29) ¹⁵“the communicative approach drew the attention of teachers to the importance of other aspects of the language that were unrelated to its core, helping them to analyze and teach a foreign language in an integrated way”.

Regardless of what language students learn from it, they also acquire knowledge about the culture of the language. Thus, in the process of learning a language, students receive access to the culture and deepen their knowledge about it, because this knowledge is not limited to the linguistic structures they are learning. According to Dalpian (1996: 51) ¹⁶“The language gives access to culture and, secondly, to learn a language you need a cultural diving, the acquisition of written and oral skills, ie the communicative competence is not assured only with the knowledge of language structures.”

It is important to stress that language teachers must analyze their performance in the classroom. The objective of teaching a foreign language is to stimulate students to be more receptive to the country where the language they are learning is spoken and to emphasize how this language can act as a facilitator for individuals to interact with one another. This means that a language brings worlds together through the transmission of knowledge and by establishing concepts, or even just because it is the dominant professional or developmental language at a specific moment in time.

Integrating cultural aspects to language teaching is relevant because it develops students' communicative skills and provides them, through the language, with the capacity to recognize the community it involves and perceive its inherent cultural components, such as behavior and particularities of the language (slangs, idiomatic expressions, habits, beliefs). Such components are implicit in the language and determined by each culture.

The Brazilian National Curriculum Parameters [PCNs] say that:

¹⁵“A abordagem comunicativa chamou a atenção dos professores para a importância de outros aspectos da língua que não estavam relacionados com o seu núcleo, ajudando-os a analisar e ensinar uma língua estrangeira, de forma integrada”.

¹⁶“A língua dá acesso à cultura e, por outro lado, para aprender uma língua é preciso um mergulho cultural, a aquisição das habilidades orais e escritas, isto é, a competência comunicativa não fica assegurada apenas com o conhecimento das estruturas linguísticas.”

¹⁷[...] Any area of knowledge needs no other. Rather, they are perfectly interconnected and interrelated [...]. To conceive a Foreign Language learning in a coordinated manner [...] implies necessarily, grant importance to cultural issues. Learning is seen, then, as a source of expansion of cultural horizons. By knowing other (s) culture (s), other (s) form (s) to face reality, students begin to reflect, also, much more about their own culture and increase their capacity to analyze their social environment surrounding more depth, being able to establish connections, similarities and contrasts between their way of being, acting, thinking and feeling and also about other people, enriching their training (BRASIL, 2001: 152).

The contact with other cultures will make students aware of their own culture and appreciate it. This is why it is important and necessary to show cultural aspects during English lessons, leading to an intercultural communicative skill that can help students to comprehend a multilingual and globalized world, respecting different ethnic groups and values, breaking linguistic and cultural prejudice. For Motta-Roth (2003: 6) ¹⁸“Intercultural communicative skills discourage stereotypes, which expand the traditional communicative skills to include the notion that all types of interaction happen through various social identities”.

Therefore, teachers must provide students with a realistic contact with the culture of the target language and, to do that, they must present concrete and real situations to use it, relating it to its culture and revealing similarities and differences. Hence, taking a cultural approach during English language teaching is necessary and important.

It is believed that this teaching methodology will motivate students during the teaching-learning process of English as it presents them with the possibility to have a direct contact with the culture of English speaking countries. In this way, students can better comprehend their culture. This practice can also stimulate interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary within teaching as it relates historical, cultural, geographic and political aspects of the language to the content.

¹⁷[...] nenhuma área do conhecimento prescinde de outras. Ao contrário, elas estão perfeitamente interligadas e inter-relacionadas [...]. Conceber-se a aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras de uma forma articulada [...] implica necessariamente, outorgar importância às questões culturais. A aprendizagem passa a ser vista, então, como fonte de ampliação dos horizontes culturais. Ao conhecer outra(s) cultura(s), outra(s) forma(s) de encarar a realidade, os alunos passam a refletir, também, muito mais sobre sua própria cultura e ampliam sua capacidade de analisar o seu entorno social com maior profundidade, tendo melhores condições de estabelecer vínculos, semelhanças e contrastes entre a sua forma de ser, agir, pensar e sentir e a de outros povos, enriquecendo a sua formação.

¹⁸Habilidades comunicativas interculturais desencorajam os estereótipos, o que expande as habilidades tradicionais de comunicação para incluir a noção de que todos os tipos de interação acontecem por meio de várias identidades sociais.

5 Conscious English language teaching

Foreign language teaching needs to be transparent and students should not feel forced to absorb the culture of the language they are learning and be ruled by it; to the contrary, they need to be able to recognize behavioral characteristics in certain situations. It is important to highlight that no culture is superior or inferior in relation to another. When the country whose language the students intend to learn has a strong economy, they question the possibility of its culture being more important than their own. Most times, this happens because teachers are not adequately trained. What teachers must highlight is that English language teaching will not alienate students from their own culture. However, by mastering the foreign language, they can create real conditions to communicate through it.

¹⁹[...] Remind all English teachers as a second language that our real job is to make friends for our country and to show the kind of lifestyle that it represents [...]. The requirement of such a perfect pronunciation as the native and the incorporation of cultural habits, that means, the copy of the native speaker, can have no other reason than the cultural field. This perfect imitation of attitude is the first symptom of alienation to detect, since it is a total identification With the other, with the consequent abandonment of their own cultural identity. (MOITA Lopes, 1996:42).

It is relevant to say that there are many stereotypes regarding foreign language teaching, and teachers must eradicate them through professionalism and above all, their knowledge. One of the aspects to be highlighted is cultural invasion. Language learners become so unaware that they do not realize they are being dominated, either economically or culturally. This occurs because they do not receive necessary guidance. Hence, language teachers must responsibly establish, before and throughout the educational process, a full and objective reflection focused on outlining how to learn to avoid stimulating students' loss of

¹⁹[...] Lembra a todos os professores de inglês como segunda língua que nosso trabalho verdadeiro é fazer amigos para o nosso país ao ensinar aos alunos inglês e o tipo de estilo de vida que ele representa [...]. A exigência de uma pronúncia tão perfeita quanto à do nativo e a incorporação de hábitos culturais, ou seja, a cópia xérox do falante nativo, não pode ter outro motivo senão o de domínio cultural. Tal atitude de imitação perfeita é o primeiro sintoma de alienação a se detectar, já que se trata de uma identificação total com o outro, com o consequente abandono de sua própria identidade cultural.

cultural identity. It is necessary to show that neither language teaching itself nor its cultural aspects are questionable as they are extremely valuable in terms of filling students' learning with information and comprehensive knowledge about the world. What is highlighted is that both teachers and students of English must be aware of their roots and, certainly, their traditional customs. Hence, they must not reject their culture because they are learning another language. Freire (2003: 150) discusses some points regarding cultural invasion and highlights:

²⁰Invasion is a way to dominate economically and culturally the invaded. The more it accentuates the invasion, by alienating the being of culture and the being of invaded, the more they will want to look like those: walk like those, dress your way, speak to their way. And so we, teachers, if we don't reflect on what kind of students we want, we will contribute to the loss of our cultural identity (FREIRE, 2003: 150)

According to Almeida Filho (2005: 24) ²¹“the classroom is a place where teachers must have a sensible attitude and propose genuine activities as oppose to faking situations or imposing actors upon students”. Authentic materials offer innumerable learning possibilities in the classroom. Richards; Rogers (2006) mention some of them. For them, one of the arguments in favor of the use of authentic materials in English language teaching is that “they provide cultural information about the target language; provide contact with the real language; have a familiar co-relation with students' needs and can be a support for a more critical approach to teaching” (RICHARDS; ROGERS, 2006: 39).

As a result, students will be able to use the language and recognize it within the social environment they belong to and this goes beyond the school walls, giving support to students to develop as citizens.

6 Conclusion

²⁰Invasão é uma forma de dominar economicamente e culturalmente o invadido. Quanto mais se acentua a invasão, alienando o ser da cultura e o ser dos invadidos, mais estes quererão parecer com aqueles: andar como aqueles, vestirem à sua maneira, falar a seu modo. E dessa forma, nós professores, se não fizermos uma reflexão sobre que tipo de aluno queremos, vamos contribuir para a perda da nossa identidade cultural.

²¹“Sala de aula é um lugar onde os professores devem ter uma atitude sensível e propor atividades autênticas ao contrário de criar situações falsas e impor que os alunos sejam os atores”.

It is understood that learn a foreign language must contribute to educate learners individually and collectively, developing their intellectual capacity and stimulating them to learn a second language so that they can become critical citizens who respect the diversity of the World that they live in.

Evidently, there are several motives that stimulate an individual to learn a second language, whether they are economic, diplomatic, social, commercial, military etc. According to Moita Lopes (2002) ²²“the need to learn English arises partly because of social values and prestige as well as a wish to imitate British and American cultural models”.

Amongst contemporary foreign languages, English has a hegemonic role, in particular by providing access to modern science and technology, intercultural communication and the business world, making the language a socio-cultural differentiator. The importance of English and its influence over our culture and daily life is noticeable as we use a number of English words. According to Rosa (2003: 72), ²³“Knowing English in times of globalization of capital is an issue that has ‘historical evidence’: it matches the profile of ‘new workers’ who are required in the today’s scenario of globalization of capital, [...]”

A second language is a differential that can contribute in favor of a person who is in pursuit of a job. Mastering foreign languages means development, growth and a better ability to keep up with the fast changes that are happening in this new technological century. With international market growth, countries had to adopt English as the official language of the business world and knowing it became a synonym for survival and global consistency. Learning English opens doors to professional, cultural and personal development. Over the last few years, mastering English has been considered a basic condition for a candidate to be contracted.

English is therefore, paradoxically, the language of economic power and of social interests. Learning it becomes necessary in order to create scenarios for negotiation, exchange

²²“A necessidade de aprender Inglês surge, em parte por causa dos valores sociais e prestígio, bem como o desejo de imitar modelos culturais britânicos e americanos”.

²³“Saber inglês em tempos de globalização do capital é uma questão que tem “evidências históricas”: ele corresponde ao perfil de “novos trabalhadores os quais são necessários para o cenário atual de globalização do capital, [...]”

and integration. Thus, teachers will be enabling their pupils to build and develop a competency both in how to use a language and also how to understand other cultures.

Today, there is a need to satisfactorily and comprehensively spread cultural, social and even political information related to a country. This is done through foreign languages. With the so-called globalized education, language teaching returns after a period of being neglected, however, with it, serious concerns arise. It is known that foreign languages strengthen the ties between distant countries and increase connections between them. This is recognized in the Brazilian National Curriculum Parameters [*PCNs*] for High Schools:

²⁴Under the LDB, Modern Foreign Languages recover, somehow, the importance that had long been denied. Considered, often unjustifiably, as little relevant discipline, they now gain the discipline setting as important as any other of the curriculum from the point of view of the formation of the individual. Thus, by being integrated to the Languages, Area Codes and their technologies, Foreign Languages assume the condition of essential knowledge that allow students to approach various cultures and consequently provide their integration in a globalized world (BRASIL, 1999: 25).

Globalization is evident today, and, as a result, a number of rapid changes can be highlighted, to all extents. As a matter of fact such changes incite discussions across all fields and without a doubt influence the importance of language teaching. Therefore, the objective of teaching institutions is to establish the reach of this knowledge and, consequently, fulfill the needs that lead individuals to fully develop as human beings and also as professionals, both in the country where they live and in the country they intend to maintain a relationship with.

Referências bibliográficas

²⁴No âmbito da LDB, as línguas Estrangeiras Modernas recuperam, de alguma forma, a importância que durante muito tempo lhes foi negada. Considerada, muitas vezes de maneira injustificada, como disciplina pouco relevante, elas adquirem, agora, a configuração de disciplina tão importante como qualquer outra do currículo, do ponto de vista da formação do indivíduo. Assim, integradas à área de Linguagens, Códigos e suas tecnologias, as Línguas Estrangeiras assumem a condição de conhecimentos essenciais que permitem ao estudante aproximar-se de várias culturas e conseqüentemente propiciam sua integração em um mundo globalizado.

ALMEIDA FILHO, José Carlos Paes de. Dimensões comunicativas no Ensino de Línguas. Campinas, Pontes, 2002.

ALMEIDA FILHO, José Carlos Paes de. Linguística Aplicada: Ensino de línguas e Comunicação. 4. ed. Campinas, SP: Pontes, 2011.

BRASIL. Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais: ensino médio — Brasília: Ministério da Educação, 1999.

BRASIL. Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais: terceiro e quarto ciclos do ensino fundamental – língua estrangeira. Brasília: MEC/SEF, 2001.

BRUNER, J. The Process of Education. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1977. In: MOITA LOPES, L.P. da. Oficina de linguística aplicada: a natureza social e educacional dos processos de ensino/aprendizagem de línguas. Campinas: Mercado de Letras, (Coleção Letramento, Educação e Sociedade)1996.

DALPIAN, Laurindo. A Língua e o acesso à Cultura. Signos. Ano XVII, n. 27, p.49- 54. Lajeado: FATES/FECLAT, 1996.

FREIRE, Paulo. Pedagogia do Oprimido. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2005, 42.^a edição. 1.^a ed. 1970.

FORATTINI, Oswaldo Paulo. A língua franca da ciência, 1997. Disponível em

<http://www.scielo.org/scielo.php?pid=S003489101997000100002&script=sci_arttext&tln g=pt> Acesso em: 10/02/2015.

HOLDEN, Susan; ROGERS, Mickey. O ensino da língua inglesa. São Paulo: Special Book Services Livraria, 2001.

JORDÃO, C. M. A língua inglesa como commodity: Direito ou obrigação de todos? Conhecimento local e conhecimento universal, v.3, n. 1, p. 272-295, 2004.

MOITA LOPES, L.P. da. Oficina de linguística aplicada: a natureza social e educacional dos processos de ensino/aprendizagem de línguas. Campinas: Mercado de Letras, (Coleção Letramento, Educação e Sociedade)1996. 192 p.

MOITA LOPES, Luis Paulo da. Oficina de Linguística Aplicada: a natureza social e educacional dos processos de ensino/aprendizagem de línguas. Campinas: Mercado das Letras, 2002.

MOTTA-ROTH, D. (2003). ‘Nós’ e os ‘Outros’: competências comunicativas interculturais no ensino de língua estrangeira. Trabalho apresentado na Mesa Redonda “Multiculturalismo e ensino de línguas” no Forum de Línguas Estrangeiras, São Leopoldo, RS: UNISINOS, 08 e 09 de setembro.

OLIVEIRA, Luciano Amaral. Ensino de Língua Estrangeira para jovens e adultos na escola pública. In: LIMA, Diógenes Cândido de (org). Ensino Aprendizagem de língua inglesa: conversas com especialistas. São Paulo: Parábolas Editorial, 2009.

OLIVEIRA, Solange Ribeiro de. Ideologia e Ensino de Línguas e Literaturas Estrangeiras. In: PAIVA, Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e. Ensino de Língua Inglesa: reflexões e experiências. Campinas, SP: Pontes, 3^a. Edição – 2005. p.41-55.

PAIVA, Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e. (org.). Ensino de Língua Inglesa: reflexões e experiências. — Campinas, SP: Pontes; Minas Gerais: Departamento de Letras Anglo Germânicas — UFMG, 2005.

RICHARDS, Jack C. & RODGERS, Theodore S. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

ROSA, Marli Aparecida. A relação entre domínio da língua inglesa e empregabilidade no imaginário brasileiro em tempos de mundialização do capital (“globalização”). Dissertação de mestrado. IEL - UNICAMP, Campinas, 2003. Disponível em <<http://www.bibliotecadigital.unicamp.br/document/?code=vtls000295015>> Acesso em 25/02/2015.

SCHMITZ, John Robert. Ensino/aprendizagem das quatro habilidades linguísticas na escola pública: uma meta alcançável? In: LIMA, Diógenes Cândido de (org). Ensino Aprendizagem de língua inglesa: conversas com especialistas. São Paulo: Parábolas Editorial, 2009.

TOTIS, Verônica Pakrauskas. Língua Inglesa: Leitura. São Paulo. Cortez, 1991.