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The theoretical, methodological and interactional dimensions of an intercultural *praxis*: insights from a qualitative research

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O presente trabalho em nível de doutorado foi avaliado e aprovado por banca examinadora composta pelos seguintes membros:

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Certificamos que esta é a **versão original e final** do trabalho de conclusão que foi julgado adequado para obtenção do título de doutor em Inglês do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês.

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Orientadora

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To my dear students whose creative and critical potentials transformed me as a teacher and allowed me to construct this narrative.

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And nothing would make me happier than being able to make some of my readers recognize their experiences, their difficulties, their questions, their sufferings etc., in mine, and that they draw from this realistic identification, which is totally the opposite of an exalted projection, ways of doing and living a little better what they live and what they do. (BOURDIEU, 2004. p. 142, my translation.)

ABSTRACT

This study was developed as a qualitative research narrative through which I depict the construction of my own *praxis* while understanding and experiencing the meanings of an intercultural perspective to language education. In doing so, this work is an attempt to shed light on how interculturality can be further elaborated as a postmodern theoretical construct, as a pedagogical practice, and as a co-constructed competence materialized in real classroom interactions. In following such three-dimensional design, this research is anchored on a Marxist perspective of *praxis* as a theoretical-practical attitude that leads to social transformation. Data generated in this inquiry, therefore, corresponds to a theoretical study (*theoretical dimension*), a rationale for pedagogical and investigative developments (*methodological dimension*), and the transcripts of actual classroom experiences (*interactional dimension*). Classroom data was generated throughout the second semester of 2016, with twenty English language learners from the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina (IFSC), in Florianópolis. Data analysis consisted in a long process of reflection, subjective interpretation, and construction of meanings from the triangulation generated through the aforementioned strategies in interaction with the theoretical framework that supported this study (BLOMMAERT, 2010; GARCIA, 2007; KRAMSCH, 1993, 1998, 2006, 2008, 2014; KEARNEY, 2012; MATURANA & VARELA, 1998; PHIPPS & GONZALEZ, 2004; RYMES, 2010; VAN LIER, 2004; VINALL, 2016). Based on the analysis of the theoretical dimension my *praxis*, I could illustrate how the reflection on postmodern conceptual metaphors provided me with a theoretical basis for the development of pedagogical actions and allowed me to systematize heuristic resources for the analysis of what I refer to as "intercultural symbolic competence". Through the analysis of the methodological dimension of my *praxis,* I was able to show how an interculturally oriented pedagogical design was a strategy to lead learners to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, cultural frames and worldviews in symbolic ways. Finally, by looking at the interactional dimension of my *praxis,* I could present how learners' discursive practices, situated in the classroom context, pointed to the construction of their intercultural symbolic competence, and how such collaboratively constructed competence could be scrutinized in terms of relationality, transgression and potentiality.

Keywords: Intercultural Symbolic Competence. Praxis. Qualitative Research. Teaching and Learning.

RESUMO

Este estudo foi desenvolvido como uma narrativa de pesquisa qualitativa, através da qual retrato a construção da minha própria *práxis* ao compreender e vivenciar os significados de uma perspectiva intercultural para o ensino de línguas. Dessa forma, esta pesquisa é uma tentativa de esclarecer como a interculturalidade pode ser mais profundamente investigada como construto teórico pós-moderno, como prática pedagógica e como uma competência co-construída e materializada em interações reais de sala de aula. Ao seguir tal desenho tridimensional, esta pesquisa ancora-se numa perspectiva marxista de *práxis* como uma atitude teórico-prática que conduz à transformação social. Os dados gerados nesta investigação, portanto, correspondem a um estudo teórico (*dimensão teórica*), ao traçado de desenvolvimentos pedagógicos e investigativos (*dimensão metodológica*), e às transcrições de experiências reais de sala de aula (*dimensão interacional*). Os dados de sala de aula foram gerados ao longo do segundo semestre de 2016, com vinte alunos de inglês do Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina (IFSC), em Florianópolis. A análise dos dados consistiu em um longo processo de reflexão, interpretação subjetiva e construção de significados a partir da triangulação gerada pelas estratégias mencionadas em interação com o referencial teórico que fundamentou este estudo (BLOMMAERT, 2010; GARCIA, 2007; KRAMSCH, 1993, 1998, 2006, 2008, 2014; KEARNEY, 2007). 2012; MATURANA & VARELA, 1998; PHIPPS & GONZALEZ, 2004; RYMES, 2010; VAN LIER, 2004; VINALL, 2016). Com base na análise da dimensão teórica da minha *práxis*, pude ilustrar como a reflexão sobre metáforas conceituais pós-modernas me proporcionou uma base teórica para o desenvolvimento de ações pedagógicas e me permitiu sistematizar recursos heurísticos para a análise do que me refiro como "competência intercultural simbólica". Através da análise da dimensão metodológica da minha *práxis*, pude mostrar como um projeto pedagógico intercultural funcionou como uma estratégia didática para levar os aprendizes a simbolicamente explorar, problematizar e redesenhar narrativas, enquadramentos culturais e visões de mundo. Finalmente, ao olhar para a dimensão interacional da minha *práxis*, pude apresentar como as práticas discursivas dos aprendizes, situadas no contexto de sala de aula, apontaram para a construção de uma competência intercultural simbólica e como essa competência colaborativamente construída pôde ser compreendida em termos de relacionabilidade, transgressão e potencialidade.

Palavras-chave: Competência Intercultural Simbólica. *Práxis*. Pesquisa Qualitativa. Ensino e Aprendizagem.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IFSC Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina

REAL-LCI Research on English as an Additional Language – Language, Culture and Identity

RQ Research Question

ICC Intercultural Communicative Competence

ILT Intercultural Language Teaching

SC Symbolic Competence

PQ Profile Questionnaire

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this piece of research, I narrate the construction of my *praxis* as a teacher/researcher while exploring and experiencing the meanings of an intercultural perspective to language education in my own pedagogical practices. Throughout this study, I hope to illustrate how this investigation, which interweaves professional and personal stances, is a result of particular reflections, doubts, intentions, political positionings, and beliefs, which together, composed the rationale of my pedagogical actions.

When using the term *praxis,* I particularly refer to a Marxist interpretation of the concept as a way of understanding human existence based on the relationship between action and reflection. Taking that into account, Freire (1974) draws pedagogical implications in claiming that teaching actions must be recognized as a theoretical-practical attitude and advocates for a model of teacher education that is engaged in the possibility of social change. In this sense, the author defends that it is not enough just know and interpret the world, but it is necessary to transform it. According to him, the theoretical activity itself does not change the world, but it only contributes to the transformation of other existing theories.

I also agree with Pimenta and Lima (2012), who state that the teaching activity can never be detached from theoretical reflections, i.e., the dialectical relationship between theory and pedagogical practice is the constituent foundation of our *praxis,* and it is only through this encounter that we become able to act consciously and transform the reality of which we are part.

Having exposed this brief justification for the use of the term *praxis,* in the following pages of this introductory chapter, I describe the life experiences, which led me to the design of this study. In doing so, I, first, depict my aspirations as a novice researcher and illustrate how my academic trajectory has revolved around the interest in researching about interculturality in language education, ever since I initiated my graduate school experience as a master's student. Then, I discuss the relevance of this study based on the literature in the area and on my own experiences as an English teacher. And finally, I present the objectives and the research questions pursued in this study as well as an overview of the textual organization of this dissertation.

1.1 MY TRAJECTORY AS A TEACHER-RESEARCHER AND THE QUESTION OF INTERCULTURALITY

I still remember when I first read a text about interculturality and language teaching. At that time, I was trying to apply for the English graduate program (PPGI) at UFSC to do my masters. During those first readings, it became clear to me that, although the terms commonly used to refer to that theoretical construct were diverse, e.g., Intercultural Competence, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Interculturality, Intercultural Communication, to mention a few, all of them evoked the need to rethink language education from a critical and humanistic perspective, departing from a tradition of language teaching centered on the development of instrumental goals (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004).

Mesmerized by the philosophical underpinnings of what I could understand at that time as intercultural language education, I started to re-signify my role as an English teacher, as I saw in that paradigm the possibility of going beyond the teaching of a language for the sake of helping students become proficient communicators. From that point on, I have been reflecting on how my pedagogical practices can engage students in learning experiences that might lead them to explore, problematize and redraw the borders between themselves and the others (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013).

Full of good intentions, I soon had my feet on the ground when I noticed the complexity of dealing with theoretical constructs such as language, culture, and their relationship in language education. Drowned by many different approaches to language and culture, models of intercultural teaching, and struggling to really understand what the concept of interculturality encompassed, I decided to take a first step on my research trajectory and investigate how teachers from a local public school dealt with language and culture in their narrated and enacted pedagogical practices (viz., ROSA FILHO, 2014; ROSA FILHO; GIL, 2016).

Doing qualitative research of an ethnographic nature helped me understand, through the observation of different teaching practices, how challenging it is to go beyond essentialist perspectives about language and culture, but also, that experience led me to envision how enriching were those moments when teachers managed to construct spaces for the cultivation of learners' intercultural competence, and in such moments, I started to understand interculturality as a co-constructed

competence, allowed through the negotiation of meanings in class. Still, the nature of such collaboratively constructed dimension was not really clear to me, and the ways through which it was commonly conceptualized in literature, as a componential model, although helpful for a systematic development of pedagogical practices, would easily reinforce modernist and essentialist views towards language, culture, and, therefore, language education.

Now, this study represents a second step of this journey, but this time, leaving my previous condition as an observer, and challenging myself to bridge theory and practice by developing an investigation through which an intercultural perspective can be further elaborated in light of recent theorizations, and ultimately explored through my own pedagogical practices. In doing so, this piece of research represents my attempts to narrate the constitution of my own *praxis* as an intercultural pedagogue.

Such research initiative has challenged me to explore the meanings of intercultural teaching and learning in a broader paradigm of additional language education, addressed here as ecological perspectives, and to present how this theoretical debate can be taken as an epistemological foundation for the development of an intercultural pedagogy.

In addition to my individual aspirations as a researcher, the driving force that motivated the emergence of this study accounts for the interests of the research group, which I have joined since the beginning of my graduate life. Entitled Research on English as an Additional Language – Language, Culture and Identity (REAL-LCI)[1], this group has been carrying out research with the objective of reflecting upon general pedagogical concerns related to interculturality, and it has set objectives for empirical research since 2012, a year before I was integrated to it as an assistant researcher.

The body of research conducted by the group has been centrally focused on investigating teachers' and learners' representations of language and culture, or on analyzing the construction of language and culture related issues in classroom interactions and teachers' representations. At the time this study emerged, we were

[1] The research group REAL-LCI is based at the Federal University of Santa Catarina and it is coordinated by   professor Gloria Gil (Ph.D). Since 2010, when it was created, the group has been conducting qualitative research in the field of English as an Additional Language, with a special focus on teacher's identity, and language and culture related issues.

particularly interested in setting pedagogical implications of an intercultural language teaching and in proposing methodological guidance that would help teachers plan and construct intercultural moments in their classrooms. In this sense, by scrutinizing the theoretical, methodological and interactional dimensions of my own pedagogical *praxis*, I hope to collaborate with the objectives of the research group REAL-LCI.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The interest in investigating the relationship of language and culture in additional language education has composed a vast body of research in the area, particularly since the socio-cultural turn in Applied Linguistics, when we have seen a growing interest in a trend of intercultural language pedagogy exemplified in seminal writings, such as Kramsch (1993; 1998) and Byram (1997). However, despite the vast theoretical framework developed so far, the amount of empirical research investigating interculturality with real people in real classrooms is still low, mainly if we take into account what has been developed in the Brazilian context.

It was particularly due to the need of bridging theory and practice that the research group REAL-LCI has been conducting empirical research that might contribute towards the understanding of how interculturality can be experienced in classroom contexts. In this study, I hope to shed light on such understanding, not only by presenting *what* can be taught and learned, but most importantly by discussing *how* to teach and learn in an intercultural perspective. In doing so, my objective is to illustrate how teacher's mediation through classroom interaction can facilitate the co-construction of what I will be addressing to as intercultural symbolic competence.

In respect to this, Kearney (2015) argues that analyzing specific interactions and patterns of teaching and learning practices can begin to clarify, both practically and theoretically, how such complex competence looks like in real classrooms. According to her, the purpose of studying the teaching and learning activities from one classroom in detail is not only to illustrate how a certain theoretical construct can be understood in practice, but also to shed light on how pedagogical practice can push theory forward.

In addition to this discussion on the relevance of developing empirical research, in this study, I advocate that our pedagogical actions are always a result of

a dialectical relationship between theory and practice. This means that the way we understand language strongly influences how we conceptualize language learning. Here, I adopt a view of language that is directly related to Maturana and Varela's (1998) theory of *autopoesis*, which portrays language as human action and as a "way of being". In this vein, the authors claim that we cannot separate our biological and social history of actions from the ways in which we perceive the reality around us.

Following this perspective, I move away from an understanding of language as a set of skills that can be sold and commodified in the life-long market (KELLY; JONES, 2003) to agree with Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) when they claim that this view of language as a commodity is disempowering and destructive of the value of education. In doing so, I stand up for an alternative paradigm of language teaching and learning that caters for the co-construction of "full, risky, bodily, critical" (p. 90) intercultural beings who, through their learning experiences, become able to understand the varied and multiple reality of which we are part.

Adopting such critical perspective of language is also about understanding the political responsibility of my role as a teacher. At this moment in Brazil, we are going through a reactionary wave led by a conservative-based movement, which elected a president who enthusiastically supports the so-called Non-Partisan School legislation (*Escola sem Partido*), allegedly meant to combat "leftist indoctrination" by teachers. Proposals, such as *Escola sem Partido* project are actually strategies to withdraw politics from school spaces and establish barriers to the full development of critical human beings, disguised behind an illusionary neoliberal discourse that underlies the separability of power, politics and education.

Teaching language as *discourse* and understanding the schooling experience as a possibility for the development of learners' critical consciousness is, therefore, how I fight back as a teacher. In this sense, this research is an expression of my political resistance. Here, I resist to the ideological construction that schools are neutral and foster my students to become intercultural beings, because being intercultural is about transforming who we are, as we cultivate a critical consciousness that makes it possible for us to understand facts in their circumstantial correlations. This is, in my view, the only way of unveiling the dominant ideology which socializes us in mass culture, daily life, and indeed, in school.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the motivations that made me venture into the field of additional language education, the overall objective of the present study is to explore my trajectory as a teacher/researcher while transposing an ecological perspective of language education from theory to my own pedagogical practice. Through this research narrative, I hope to weave interpretations regarding a) the theoretical dimension of my *praxis*, addressing how an ecological epistemology can be used as the foundation for the understanding of intercultural language education and for the rationale of my pedagogical actions; b) the methodological dimension of my *praxis*, looking at how specific decisions on the level of design can point to the construction of intercultural moments in class; and c) the interactional dimension of my *praxis,* investigating how intercultural symbolic competence is materialized in discursive practices that emerge in classroom episodes. In order to reach these objectives, this study pursued the following research questions:

RQ1: How can some of the concepts and metaphors of the ecological perspective be used both as guidelines for pedagogical action and as heuristic resources for analysis? *(theoretical dimension)*

RQ2: How the pedagogical tasks designed help learners to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, frames and worldviews in symbolic ways? *(methodological dimension)*

RQ3: How teacher's and learners' discursive practices illustrate the construction of intercultural symbolic competence, in terms of relationality, transgression and potentiality? *(interactional dimension)*

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into five chapters. I have opened this dissertation providing a brief explanatory account on my motivations to research in the topic of intercultural language education and presenting the relevance of investigating it from the perspective of my own *praxis.* In addition to that, in this first chapter, I introduce the objectives and research questions that supported this study.

In Chapter II, I set a discussion that aims to present the theoretical foundation of my *praxis* as a teacher. I start by approaching postmodern conceptual metaphors that underlie current interpretations of language, communication, the language learner and language education, and in light of these concepts, I contextualize what I mean by intercultural language teaching and learning in an ecological epistemology. In this chapter, I also review seminal models of intercultural and symbolic competence, which inform language pedagogy and present some contributions from empirical research in the area. Finally, I provide a brief justification for the working concept of Intercultural Symbolic Competence, which reflects some key points of my reflections on how to define the nature of interculturality.

Chapter III, in which I present the methodological dimension of my *praxis,* is divided into two main parts. In the first one, I restate the research questions and objectives of the study, present the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings that foreground this research, and introduce the participants and the setting where the investigation was carried out. In the second part, I provide details about the pedagogical and the investigative phase of this study, describing the development of my pedagogical actions and presenting the steps taken for data generation and analysis.

In Chapter IV, I open the windows of my own classroom context to explore the interactional dimension of this study. In doing so, I hope to illustrate how intercultural moments can be co-constructed through the negotiation of meanings in the classroom and how the theoretical debate on language education, from an ecological perspective, can be experienced through my own pedagogical practice. First, I present the rationale used for the analysis of intercultural symbolic competence in classroom practices, which corresponds to the key aspects of *relationality, transgression* and *potentiality* (VINALL, 2016) and after that, I provide a detailed analysis of classroom data.

Finally, in Chapter V, I present a summary of the dissertation and, once more, address the research questions pursued, so as to briefly discuss the findings of this study. In doing so, I hope to illustrate how the theoretical, methodological and interactional dimensions of my path as a teacher/researcher were constitutive elements of my *praxis* while understanding fundamental concepts, planning pedagogical practices and making sense of what emerged in the classroom interactions. After that, I present my final remarks, which includes some limitations of

the study and suggestions for further research, and a brief reflective account on how this experience has transformed me as a researcher and as a teacher.

2 THE THEORETICAL DIMENSION OF MY PRAXIS

In this section, I provide a discussion that aims to present the theoretical foundation of my *praxis* as a teacher. In doing so, I ultimately hope to further elaborate what I understand as intercultural language education through concepts and metaphors of an ecological epistemology, which emerged from a new way of looking at additional language teaching in the postmodern world.

2.1 ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD: RETHINKING CONCEPTS AND METAPHORS

What does it mean to teach an additional language in the postmodern world? In this theoretical chapter, this is going to be a leading question for me to discuss conceptual metaphors that underlie current interpretations of language, communication, the language learner and language education. Here, I make use of the term *metaphor* specifically referring to a construct that is much more than just a poetic device. As pointed by Lakoff and Johnsen in their remarkable 1980's production "Metaphors we live by", our everyday life is loaded with metaphorical expressions that help us give sense to the world. Metaphors are, according to them, essential and pervasive in language, communication, thoughts and actions, and such metaphorical language is what shapes the concepts we live by, even when we are not aware of that. By discussing some metaphors of the postmodern in the field of Applied Linguistics, I hope to contextualize in a more holistic way what I mean by intercultural symbolic competence in this study.

2.2 WHAT DO I MEAN BY POSTMODERN?

Before I continue this discussion, addressing the leading question posed by the beginning of this chapter, it is paramount to clarify some of the interpretations ascribed to the concept of postmodernism, since it is going to be tackled many times throughout this study. In general, the idea of the postmodern evokes a shift in the nature of scientific and rational constructions of knowledge or "truth" that is replaced by the possibility of diverse truths, alternative interpretations of the same phenomena or experiences, and a multiplicity of different, but equally valid voices or positions.

To visualize it better, we can have in mind the image of a rhizome, which in botany is a mass of roots that develop from auxiliary buds and can grow into different directions. As a conceptual metaphor, the botanical rhizome is used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to resist the idea of an original source of things and clear conclusions of those things. Postmodernism, in this sense, can be characterized by non-established connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1987). Rather than linearly narrativize history and culture, for example, the rhizome presents history and culture as a map or wide array of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis. In essence, once we consider the metaphor of the rhizome, grand theory is replaced by multivocality, and as a result, a plethora of alternative possibilities opens up as a certain concept can be understood in many different ways. Therefore, in a postmodern perspective, reality cannot be fully grasped beyond principles of heterogeneity and multiplicity.

In a more specific interpretation, postmodernism is used in this study as opposed to a series of modernist fictions about the nature of language, the process of communication, the language learner and the way language education is commonly conceived until nowadays (BELL; POMERANZ, 2014). Although I refer to the present days as the "postmodern world", it would be naive to believe that the modern world is over, like a chapter in a history book. Actually, according to Kramsch (2014), the modern and late modern worlds coexist with increasing unease. If we look at all the features that many additional language teachers take for granted, namely, the existence of nation-states, each with their national language and culture; the existence of standardized languages with their stable grammars and dictionaries; the superiority of national languages over regional dialects; the clear boundaries between native and foreign languages; and the idea of a proper use of language which is only certified by a specific and privileged normative center. All of these factors reinforce that language teaching, in this sense, has been a highly modernist profession, ironically situated in what I previously named "a postmodern world". Having exposed that, I once again refer to the question "What does it mean to teach an additional language in the postmodern world?" and the first step towards an answer is to discuss the very notion of language.

2.3 LANGUAGE FROM AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In recent years, applied linguists have become progressively more critical of the theories of language shaping the field of language education. According to Bell and Pomeranz (2014), language is now being recognized as a socio-cognitive system that exists in a dynamic state, continually being constructed and changed by its users. This challenges the idea of the existence of a natural fixed structure that regulates language and, instead, it emphasizes linguistic variability and change, views that are particularly taken into account and detailed in ecological perspectives on language and language learning (e.g., KRAMSCH, 2006; 2008; VAN LIER, 2004).

To better explain the idea of language from an ecological perspective, I once more will rely on the meanings and images that emerge from this conceptual metaphor. Invented by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (VAN LIER, 2004), the term *ecology* was used in its origin, to describe the multiple relationships of an organism with everything it comes into contact. From its original biological definition, when it was solely related to the study of the environment or specific ecosystems, it has now been used to refer to a worldview that is drastically different from the scientific or rational anthropocentric idea that human beings are in power to control and exploit the earth and its resources. Instead, an ecological perspective is rather *ecocentric* or *geocentric,* meaning that it conceives humans as part of a greater natural order, and always understood in relation to its context. Here, it is noticeable an emphasis on the study of organisms in their relations with the environment, and because of that, ecology can be defined as a contextualized or situated form of research (VAN LIER, 2004).

As a key metaphor to understand language and language learning, an ecological perspective has a number of characteristics that foreground the interconnectedness of the cognitive, interactional, social and historical dimensions of language, departing from the traditional tendency within linguistics and education to see language in static, or decontextualized ways (BELL; POMERANZ, 2014). Such characteristics, according to Van Lier (2004) are not exclusively related to an ecological approach, but in their totality, they amount to a new way of looking at language learning, which means that the way we understand language somehow has a number of consequences on how we define linguistics and conceptualize language

learning. In the discussion that follows, I briefly describe some key features of an ecological perspective summarized in the two constructs set below:

> 1.Language does not arise from *input* that is processed, but from *affordances* that are brought forth by active engagement, and which enable further action and interaction.
> 2.Language *emerges* from semiotic activity. (VAN LIER, 2004. p. 146).

First and foremost, ecological linguistics defines language as a relational construct, in the sense that language is what permeates the relations between people and the world. Here, a crucial concept is that of *affordance*, a term coined by Gibson (1986), an American psychologist, to refer to the idea of perception, not as a mental capacity, but as an ecological phenomenon, which results from the interaction between an organism and its surrounding environment. In applied linguistics, Van Lier (2004) makes use of the concept of affordance to refer to a relationship between learners and the environment that signals an opportunity for or inhibition of action. Stoffregen (2003) adds that affordances are not properties of the environment, nor are they intrinsic in the organisms. Instead, they emerge from the interaction between both and can be best understood in social practices.

Context plays an important role in ecological linguistics. Here, it is not simply what surrounds language, but what defines it (VAN LIER, 2004). Paramount to the understanding of affordance, the notion of context also foregrounds other characteristics of ecological linguistics, as the concept of *emergence*, for instance, which upholds the idea that language learning does not occur gradually or linearly, apart from the social and physical environment, but it rather emerges from the interaction between learners' dispositions and a context that stimulates learning. This leads us to take an integrated view of language and context, as the two exist in a dialectical relationship with one constituting the other. From an emergentist perspective, the various language-using events, which we participate, provide us with opportunities to adhere to normative ways of doing things or to creatively depart from them by various degrees (BELL; POMERANZ, 2014). In this view of language, our linguistic repertoires develop in response to conversational goals, contextual and discursive constraints, and affordances offered by the contexts.

Through the discussion set above, it is possible to notice that the metaphor of ecology, whether in life sciences or in linguistics, is related to the idea of *holism*.

Once we assume a holistic approach to linguistics, language cannot be studied as an isolate, self-contained system, but rather in relation to its personal, situational, cultural and societal factors that collectively shape its activity (KRAMSCH; STEFFENSEN, 2008).

Aligned with this holistic stance, there is a particular emphasis on Bakhtin's notion of language as dialogic. In that sense, ecological linguistics invoke the idea of language as embedded in multiple, but not necessarily equally accessible, layers of synchronically and diachronically organized context. Blommaert (2010), for instance, highlights this point by claiming that, whereas language-in-use or discourse takes place in a synchronic event, it is also the product of several layers of historicity, some of which are within the grasp the participants, while others remain invisible but are nevertheless present, what he refers to as layered simultaneity. In this sense, adopting an ecological perspective encourages teachers and learners to move beyond a view of language as a structural system only, to one that encompasses its variable, dynamic, dialogic, and, above all, situated nature.

2.4 FROM LANGUAGE TO *(TRANS)LANGUAGING*

As language teachers, adopting an ecological view leads us to recognize language as a fluid set of resources, and focus on the development of *communicative repertoires.* Rymes (2010), briefly defines communicative repertoires as the ways that individuals "use languages and other means of communication (gesture, dress, posture and other media) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate" (p. 528). According to the author, an individual's communicative repertoire is not simply an array of multiple national languages, but rather an ever-changing assembly of different genres, speech styles, pragmatic routines and other recurring chunks of language complemented by a range of resources for making meaning. As individuals move through the world, and engage in interactive moments within the different contexts in which they participate, their communicative repertoires embody the traces of their various life experiences and subjectivities. In this sense, the notion of communicative repertoires allows us to see language as an idiosyncratic construct, which is to a certain extent, particular to the individuals and their experiences of life.

The notion of communicative repertoires reinforces the ecological view of language as human action and a way of being, and calls upon a different metaphor. From an object, a noun, which is something we possess, or use – as a tool for communication, for example – language is now seen as a verb, as human action and a possibility of being. In an attempt to deconstruct the structuralist mindset regarding language, a growing body of literature accepts that it is not a pre-given thing able to be decomposed into fragments, but it is rather a human action by someone in particular, in a particular context. Based on this metaphor of language as a verb, a relatively large number of scholars have used the notion of *languaging* to address this issue[2].

In this study, I adopt a view of languaging that is directly related to Maturana and Varela's (1998) theory of *autopoesis,* which argues that we cannot separate our biological and social history of actions from the ways in which we perceive the reality around us. From this understanding of language as human action, "all doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing" (p. 26), which means that *autopoietic languaging* is related to being and doing of language as it shapes us as individuals, and continuously constitutes us differently as we interact with others. Language, therefore, is seen as an ongoing process that only exists in languaging, as the authors explain:

> It is by languaging that the act of knowing, in the behavioral coordination which is language, brings forth a world. We work out our lives in a mutual linguistic coupling, not because language permits us to reveal ourselves but because we are constituted in language in a continuous becoming that we bring forth with others (MATURANA; VARELA, 1998. p. 234–235).

The discussion on languaging evokes a tendency in poststructuralist sociolinguistics which focuses on the social diversity of speech types and deconstruct the notion of distinct national languages, and consequently that of bilingualism or multilingualism. This view underscores an understanding of different languages based on the way that individuals become social actors and distinguish among themselves through their particular languaging, a perspective supported by authors such as Makoni and Pennycook (2007), who defend the idea of separate national languages as an invention, and disinvent the concept of multilingualism and plurality

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[2] e.g., SWAIN, 2010; GARCIA, 2007; CREESE; BLACKLEDGE, 2010; MATURANA; VARELA, 1998.

of languages. These authors see Languaging as a construct that orients social interactions in ways that may produce the unity of certain language practices into so-called languages. In this sense, different language practices create a network of transformations that generate complex languaging and, at the same time, produces the unity of certain language practices as a *language* (GARCÍA; LEIVA, 2014).

Based on the poststructuralist conceptualization of languaging, which is a way of being that encompasses the whole social world, we can understand *translanguaging* as a construct that goes beyond the idea of mixing or switching of two static language codes. Differently from that, translanguaging, as García and Leiva (2014) point out, is about a new languaging reality, "original and independent from any of their "parents" or codes" (p. 203). It is a possibility of languaging in different social, cultural and political contexts, which allows fluid discourses to flow, therefore giving voice to new social realities.

In practice, at a communicative situation translanguagers employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposals to achieve their communicative aims as best as they can, independently of how well they know the involved languages (JORGENSEN, 2008). From this perspective, translanguaging can be understood as the development of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard to complete adherence to socially and politically defined languages (GARCÍA; OTHERGUY, 2015).

Furthermore, this notion of translanguaging can be understood in the light of the concept of *heteroglossia*, a construct created by the translators of Bakhtin's work to encompass the author's ideas related to the concepts of "diversity in speechness", "diversity in languageness", and "diversity in voicedness"[3] (MADSEN, 2015). As an umbrella term for these aspects of linguistic diversity, heteroglossia describes how social actors use various socioideological languages, codes and voices in the different contexts, which they participate. Such perspective towards language, as mentioned earlier in this theoretical review, strongly influences how we define a

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[3] These ideas refer to the Bakhtin's concepts of multidiscursivity (*raznorečie*), multivoicedness (*raznogolosie*), and linguistic diversity (*raznojazyčie*). Multidiscursivity encompasses the plurality of speech types or discourses. It refers to a "multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems" (Bakhtin 1981a, p. 288). Multivoicedness means that, as we position ourselves in relation to world views and discourses, we consequently 'borrow' and appropriate the voices of others. Finally, linguistic diversity refers to the traces that are left behind in language as a result of social differentiation (ibid., p.293). Here, there is no explicit distinction between linguistic diversity within one or among several 'national languages'.

number of other constructs, and evidently how we conceptualize language learning. In the following subsection, I continue this discussion by rethinking the notion of communication from an ecological perspective.

2.5 COMMUNICATION FROM AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The ecological views of language discussed in the previous section pushes us to reconsider what we understand by communication. In the language classroom, the notion of communication is frequently reduced to an exchange of information, based on a transmission model that tends to ignore the interpretive and interpersonal work that goes on in interaction (COOK, 2000). Based on the idea of *ecology*, a wide range of cognitive, social and environmental factors must be taken into consideration while conceptualizing communication, and understanding the dynamic ways in which meanings emerge from interaction.

According to Bell and Pomerantz (2014), work in ethnomethodology and interactional sociolinguistics has been paramount to underscore these dynamic views of communication. Seminal writings, such as the work of Linell (1998), emphasizes that individuals work together to jointly construct and negotiate relevant elements of the interaction and the way they should be understood. Aligned with that, John Gumperz (1982) draws on the notion of contextualization cues as a way to understand how meanings are interpreted in interaction. According to the author, contextualization cues can be defined as "any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signaling of contextual presuppositions" (p. 131), and any of these cues must be negotiated between participants each time it is used. In addition to that, Gumperz (1982) points out that when interactants negotiate meanings, they must have access to a range of shared patterns of frameworks for interpreting communication, which leads us to the understanding that meanings are not only jointly constructed and negotiated, but also mediated.

However, as highlighted by Bell and Pomerantz (2014), this mediation process should not be understood as conventional ways of doing and being framed in a national or ethnic culture, which would be paradoxical in relation to an ecological understanding of language. Indeed, Gumperz (1982) highlights that contextualization cues are learned and passed on as specific patterns across social groups, but since language is understood under the principles of variability and dynamism, cues must

also be seen as variable and dynamic, mainly if we consider the fact that languages are not restricted to national spaces.

Bearing that in mind, Bell and Pomerantz (2014) suggest that it is more useful to understand people in communication as social actors who rely on loosely organized and constantly changing "interpretive repertoires". This way, it is possible to move away from static and unitary views of meaning making, and take up an understanding of meanings as "not simply shared, coherent constructions about experience, but rather fragmented, contradictory and contested within the practices of a social group, because they are constituted moments of interaction" (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013, p. 21). Moreover, and once again drawing upon Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, meaning is as much a synchronic concept as a diachronic one. In this sense, meaning making occurs in real time, but it is always a subject to the meaning-making moments that have come before it. Thus, as language educators, we have the challenge to, first, move away from a transmission model to one that conceives communication as interpretive, co-constructed, and mediated across timescales, and second, bring this theoretical understanding to the reality of our classrooms.

In relation to that, Kramsch (2006) states that communication in the global age requires competencies other than just mere efficiency and claimed that it is no longer appropriate to give students a tourist-like competence to exchange information with native speakers from well-defined national languages within well-defined national cultures. According to her, students need a much more sophisticated competence in the manipulation of symbolic systems, what she calls symbolic competence, a key term that will be discussed in a more detailed way later in this chapter.

2.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION

As I have already mentioned in this discussion, the way we understand language strongly influences how we define linguistics and conceptualize language learning. But how can an ecological view towards language inform our teaching practices? What possible changes would it bring to our understanding of language learning? And what can we expect from the language learner in the postmodern

world? From now on, I will make use of the metaphor of *ecology* to address central questions that are directly related to the reality of a language classroom.

Starting from the way we understand language learners, an ecological perspective leads us to move away from the idea of them as empty vessels waiting to be filled with the target language forms and rules, and instead, adopt a view of our students as meaning makers, who come into our classrooms with different communicative resources. From this view, in the experience of learning students engage with the resources developed in class in different ways and, because people's communicative repertoires are dynamic and flexible, both students and teachers must recognize themselves as multiligual subjects.

As Kramsch (2009) explains, multilingual subjects are not necessarily those who speak many languages with the same proficiency, but rather someone who has an acute awareness of the social, cultural and emotional contexts in which their various languages have grown, and of the life experiences they evoke. Here, the notion of multilingualism does not refer to a collection of different national languages only, but rather to various socioideological languages, codes and voices in the different contexts where social actors participate. Given that, in the reality of our classrooms, we should recognize our students as multilingual subjects whose linguistic repertoires are composed by various (national, regional and idiosyncratic) languages that might be used for different purposes, not only for accomplishing practical communicative goals, but also as a source of pleasure, a puzzle, or a way of understanding oneself and others (KRAMSCH, 2009).

Based on an ecological view of language as *languaging*, communication as an interpretive act, and the understanding of language learners as multilingual subjects, a number of approaches[4] to language education have moved away from a view of learning as the development of communicative competence only, and highlighted the existential, social, and personal nature of a kind of learning with profound, humane and educative purposes.

The teaching and learning of additional languages have traditionally been based on the concept of languages as *skills* that can be sold as packaged commodities in the life-long learning market (KELLY; JONES, 2003). From this view,

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[4] Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997), symbolic competence (KRAMSCH, 2006), translanguaging (CREESE; BLACKLEDGE, 2010), dynamic bilingualism and pluriliteracy (GARCIA, 2009), plurilingualism (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2000) are some examples.

the main purpose of learning is, in many cases, related to promising returns on an investment of time and money on the student's part, and acquiring a certain qualification for a better working condition. For Barnett (2000), such model of education is based on a prevailing positivism and a potentially technocratic ideology that makes it difficult to defend that languages and humanities, in general, should address broader issues of human value, conduct and purpose, which is described by the author as *supercomplexity*. Such issues are hard to be translated to a utilitarian model of education where each activity must be described easily and quantified accordingly.

In this study, I agree with Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) when they claim that this view of language as a commodity is disempowering and destructive of the value of education. Here, I stand up for an alternative way to this model of language learning through the notion of *languaging*, which proposes a paradigm of education that caters for the co-construction of "full, risky, bodily, critical" (p. 90) intercultural beings who, through their learning experiences, become able to understand the varied and multiple reality of which we are part.

In this perspective of language education, the whole "landscape" of learning changes. The classroom moves its furniture, assuming a disposition that ensures exchange and collaboration, and the school breaks down its walls to become a place connected to whole social world, where different viewpoints are explored and experienced through meaning-making practices (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004). From an ecological view, the classroom context is not simply the environment where the language learned can be performed to answer a question posed by a teacher. It is a genuine experience of languaging where the possibility of communication and active meaning making, although structured and responsive, is languaging with lives that go beyond the classroom thresholds (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004).

In general, ecological perspectives on language education share the understanding that "learning is a nonlinear, relational human activity, co-constructed between humans and their environment, contingent upon their position in space and history, and a site of struggle for the control of social power and cultural memory" (KRAMSCH, 2002b, p. 5). Based on this premise, the metaphor of *ecology* can be understood as an ontological view of language education, in the sense that, instead of focusing on the development of pragmatic skills, learning a language is seen as an experience that provokes critical understanding of the multiple discursive realities that

co-exist in a classroom and come to fore in the interaction between teacher and students. In the following subsection, I discuss some examples of such ecological language pedagogy based on the constructs of intercultural and symbolic competence, ultimately presenting the main contours of what I mean by "intercultural symbolic competence", a working concept that emerged from my own *praxis* as a researcher and a pedagogue, and will be used throughout this study to provide both theoretical and heuristic support for generating and analyzing data.

2.6.1 Intercultural and symbolic competence informing language pedagogy

Considering a view of language teaching and learning as an experience that goes far beyond the development of an ability to use language as tool for instrumental goals, a number of scholars[5] highlight issues of culture, interculturality, and the subjective dimensions of language learning to propose new models for language pedagogy based on ecological perspectives. In fact, the exploration of cultural aspects has long been part of additional language teaching and learning, whether grounded on a paradigm where the implicit conception of the *national* constitutes the natural frame of reference, or through practices that seek to break such language-culture nexus, by setting organizational and discursive traits that defy essentialized interpretations of language and culture (RISAGER, 2007). In the communicative approach, for example, the role of culture in language learning was commonly related to the performance of pragmatic functions and notions expressed through language in everyday ways of speaking and acting. Such understanding of culture, however, still relied on the notion of universally shared basic human needs negotiated through universal speech functions, which from a postmodern view, is an illusory and an imperialistic premise (KRAMSCH, 1998).

With the socio-cultural turn in Applied Linguistics, the last few decades have seen a growing interest in a trend of intercultural dimension to language pedagogy exemplified on seminal writings, such as Kramsch (1993, 1998), Byram's (1997), and lately, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013). Differently from the communicative approach, these authors had an understanding of communication as context-sensitive, negotiated as well as variable, and learners as engaged in understanding their own

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[5] e.g., Kramsch (2006), Risager (2007), and Byram (1997).

languages and cultures in relation to the others'. Due to that, a vast range of research has been theorizing on how language and culture should be dealt in the classroom, and various models of intercultural competence have been developed ever since.

Amongst the most influential models that propose a reconceptualization of language learning from an ecological view, there is the work of Claire Kramsch, who has long been shaping how culture figures in the field of modern language education and what processes underlie intercultural learning. In her earliest work, Kramsch (1993) exposes how the notions of context, discourse and dialogism are relevant to language learning and proposes a model of language education in which language is dialectally related to culture, and both are materialized in interaction as "the product of self and other perceptions" (p. 205). Through Kramsch's emphasis on the notion of discourse, the conceptual boundaries between language and culture became blurry and the structuralist separation of *language as a code* and *culture as products* could not cope with the complexity of their relationship.

In alignment with a view of language learning as a social practice, Kramsch (1993) underscores the notion of *meaning* as a relational construct, and claimed that culture learning necessarily involves moments of conflict as learners struggle to negotiate meanings in between their own perspectives, what she calls *C1*, and the perspective of the other, *C2*. Here, a key element to understand Kramsch's earliest developments on intercultural language education is the notion of *third place*, a conceptual metaphor that embraces the idea of cultural hybridity as encounters materialized in postmodern scenarios of ambivalence and in-betweeness, where meanings and symbols of culture are not stable or fixed.

This concept of hybridity emerged in the context of additional language education during the 1990s, and it was particularly at that time when Kramsch (1993) elaborated on the concept of *third place* to set a new pedagogy based on the creation of "a sphere of interculturality" (p. 205). This metaphor was used by the author to refer to personal learning experiences through which students would have a deep understanding of cultural boundaries, and ultimately deconstruct the idea of culture as a monolithic entity. In such meaning-making process, notions such as

national borders, ethnic or religious boundaries are put at stake, what provokes a kind of ambivalent tension that both unites and divides people on cultural *fault lines*[6].

Cultural fault lines are to be explored in classroom, and in order to do so, Kramsch (1993) proposes a different pedagogy to language and culture by suggesting four lines of thought that cater for (1) the co-construction of a *sphere of interculturality*, where learners understand how meanings are constructed through interaction; (2) the teaching of culture as a "process that applies itself to understanding foreignness or otherness" (p. 206); (3) the understanding of culture as difference, moving beyond national stereotypes; and (4) the language teaching as a practice that embraces other disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and semiology.

Another influential model in intercultural language teaching is proposed by Byram (1997), who elaborated on the notion of *intercultural speaker* as someone who is able to communicate across cultural boundaries, to predict misunderstandings, and to cope with the affective and cognitive demands in the relationship with the other. Through his model, Byram (1997) defends that the dichotomy native versus non-native speaker should give space for the emergence of a pedagogy that privileges intercultural speakers.

Byram's contributions to intercultural language teaching focuses on the development of a concept which he refers to as intercultural communicative competence (ICC), a componential model of a comprehensive knowledge, addressed by the author as "*Savoirs*", that involves a set of specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for intercultural speakers/mediators. Knowledge (*Savoirs*) is addressed by the author as the understanding of self and others, of their products, practices, and the general processes of interaction. Such knowledge about the other may be held consciously or unconsciously, and it comes from the experiences of interlocutors with another culture, or from experiences of learning about other languages and cultures (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013). In this sense, *Savoirs*, as an umbrella term in this model, constitutes a comprehensive body of knowledge from which other operations can be performed, such as specific attitudes (*savoir être*),

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[6] This term is used by Kramsch (1993) as a metaphor to refer to intercultural language learning as conflictual moments of interaction in the context of additional language learning.

skills (*savoir comprendre*), and dispositions to interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*) and understand the other (*savoir s'engager*), as summarized below[7]:

Savoir être: attitudes that encompass curiosity and openness, as well as readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment about others, and a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings so as to view them from a decentered perspective.

Savoir comprendre: skills of interpreting texts, interactions and cultural practices by comparing them with aspects of one's own culture. In intercultural language education, learning to interpret texts or practices of a different culture involves learning to understand the knowledge that lies upon the act of interpretation, and how such knowledge is used.

Savoir apprendre/faire: an ability to construct new knowledge, to make discoveries through social interaction or in the use of texts. In the processes of communication and interpretation, learners are engaged in a continuous process of knowledge building through understandings reached in the experience with other languages and cultures.

Savoir s'engager: an ability to make critical evaluations of aspects of one's own and other cultures. Such ability includes investigating and understanding ideological perspectives of others communicated through language use and behaviors.

The model of *savoirs* presented by Byram has been influential, but some limitations in the way it constructs interculturality can be pointed out. To begin with, it does not elaborate on the ways in which language affects culture and culture affects language, and how learners understand this (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013). In recent years, Byram (2012) has been revisiting his model of ICC to propose further developments on the processes for developing such competence, with a main focus on critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*), the core of his model. Specifically, the author calls for a need to clarify the relationship between ICC, language awareness, and cultural awareness. In relation to that, Byram (2012) comments:

> "(…) What we need is a model which represents language and culture holistically and shows the relationship between language competence - including language awareness - and intercultural competence, including cultural awareness. Such a model should be produced for pedagogical

[7] Adapted from Byram (1997, p.34)

purposes, i.e. it should help teachers and learners to clarify what needs to be taught and learnt, and in such a model, the concept of awareness should be crucial" (p. 6).

Byram's considerations upon his model of ICC reveal the author's concerns in relation to pedagogical practice. Here, in addition to his observations on "*what*" should be taught and learnt, I highlight another relevant pedagogical issue, which is the importance of discussing "*how*" to teach and learn from an intercultural perspective, i.e., how teacher's mediation, through classroom interaction, can facilitate the co-construction of intercultural competence. In respect to this, Kearney (2015) argues that analyzing specific interactions and patterns of teaching and learning practices can begin to clarify both practically and theoretically how such complex competence looks like in real classrooms. According to her, the purpose of studying the teaching and learning activities from one classroom in detail is not only to illustrate how a certain theoretical construct, in this case ICC, can be understood in practice, but also to shed light on how pedagogical practice can push theory forward.

In addition to Byram's reconsiderations on his intercultural model, recent developments on Kramsch's understanding of intercultural language education also led her to reconsider earlier assumptions. The reinterpretation of the notion of *third place* is a good example of such conceptual shifts. It was in 2006, in the Modern Language Journal, when she proposed a reconceptualization of the term through the creation of what she called 'symbolic competence' (hereinafter SC), a concept not meant to replace the idea of intercultural competence, but to provide a more dynamic understanding to the earlier metaphor of *space* developed in the beginning of the 1990s.

According to the author, nowadays, cultural borders are more fluid, due to a globalized economy in which computer-mediated communication has spread a common world language (Kramsch, 2006). In this context, the definition of culture moves away from earlier interpretations guided by a modernist notion of membership in a national community and gains a more dynamic connotation of discourse and the production of meaning. Therefore, culture is rather seen as a process than an object, or a place. In this vein, the metaphor of the *third place*, used to deconstruct traditional dualities in additional language education, seems far too limited. In relation to that, the author argues that *third place* is a spatial metaphor that seems too static for a relational state of mind that should enable multilingual speakers to operate through

languages. Also, it reconstructs the imaginary existence of a first and a second place (or country of origin and host country). And finally, it ignores the symbolic nature of the multilingual subjects who make sense of their lives through the use of multiple symbolic systems.

Kramsch (2011) discusses the notion of SC in relation to a *third place* as an ability to recognize the background of utterances and their intertextualities, to question established categories, and place them in their historical and subjective contexts. Ultimately, it stands for an ability to resignify, reframe, and *re-* or transcontextualize utterances by playing with the tension between text and context.

The concept of SC has been developed and resignified since it was firstly elaborated in 2006, when it was mostly related to an interpretive act, or an ability to manipulate symbolic systems, to interpret signs and their multiple relations to other signs (KRAMSCH, 2006). The earlier concept gained other contours in 2008, when it incorporated the possibility of recreation of realities in multilingual contexts, defined by the author as an ability to position oneself as a multilingual subject, so as to understand the cultural memories evoked by symbolic systems, and ultimately as the ability to perform and create alternative realities (KRAMSCH; WHITESIDE, 2008). More recently, in 2011, it was defined as an ability to manipulate the three dimensions of language as symbolic system, i.e., symbolic representation, symbolic action, symbolic power (KRAMSCH, 2011).

Drawing upon Kramsch's more recent conceptualization of SC, there seems to be an emphasis on the notion of *discourse* as symbolic representation, action and power. According to her, the activity of language involves a *symbolic representation*, which is on the level of denotations, connotations, lexical and grammatical categories, idealized cognitive models, prototypes, and stereotypes. Through language, we also materialize a *symbolic action*, which encompasses performatives, symbolic interaction rituals, roles, and genres. And ultimately, from a critical sociological view, language is also *symbolic power*, which stands for values, intertextualities, subjectivities, and historicities. From this perspective, language is related to what words index and what they reveal about social relations, individual and collective memories, emotions and aspirations (KRAMSCH, 2011a).

Now, various additional theorizations of symbolic competence have been explored and it has been understood in different ways, but these multiple

interpretations similarly stress the operation of SC through subject positioning[8], historicity[9], and the creation of alternative realities, what would ultimately lead to the ability of reframing human thought and action (KRAMSCH; WHITESIDE, 2008).

It is also important to mention that some criticism has been raised in relation to the concept of SC. Riedner (2015) questions if it is a component of communicative competence or an alternative organizing principle; and also questions if there are different theories of language underlying each construct. And Kern (2015) claims that the term "competence" is somewhat deceptive, as it seems to entail subcomponents that can be tested, like communicative competence. Byram (2011) also recognizes that for many educationists, the idea of *competence* refers to skills acquired through repetitive activities, which a master might demonstrate to an apprentice, what is, according to him, a somewhat reductionist view of competence as a mindless repetition of behavior. In relation to that, Byram argues that *competence* can be also used as a way to refer to reflection and criticality, and he has done it himself through the notion of critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). In other words, the construct of competence can and should address to what is referred by the author as *surface skills* and *deep capacities* for understanding.

Byram (2011) continues stating that, not only his, but many other models of ICC include some surface and some depth competences. The pragmatic competences of greeting and leave-taking can be seen as an example of the former, as they can be taught and learned as semi-automatic and repetitive skills. And, as an example of the latter, Byram cites Kramsch's concept of SC, considering that a depth competence in ICC would refer to an ability to reflect upon discursive practices, and to ask questions that seek to unveil what is beyond the words in their literal meanings. In a nutshell, the author concludes that ICC as greetings and leave takings (surface) demands training in *savoir-faire*. Otherwise, ICC as critical discourse analysis (depth) demands education in *savoir s'engager*. At this point,

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[8] The notion of 'subject positioning', as discussed by Davies & Harré (1990), suggests that whenever people engage in interaction, a subject position is created. Such view underscores the idea that people are, at the same time, producers and products of discourse. They are 'producers' in the sense that they manipulate discourse to position themselves in a particular way, and 'products' in the social constructionist sense that their identities "come to be produced by socially and culturally available discourse" (p. 140).

[9] 'Historicity' is addressed by Kramsch (2008) as the cultural memories evoked by symbolic systems. According to the author, any interactive moment or turn-at-talk can become what she calls "*lieu de mémoire*" (p. 401) as a reference to Pierre Nora (1997). From this view, communication is always a site of memories constituted by sedimented representations of people which are remembered by individuals and serve as valid historical models.

Byram equates symbolic competence to reflection and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). In this study, however, I approach intercultural learning through a dimensional, rather than a componential model, which somehow leads me to those definitions of intercultural competence that highlight its discursive nature, such as the perspectives defended by Kramsch. This specific theoretical positioning will be paramount for the development of my pedagogical practices, which will be fully addressed later in this study.

Although I am discussing different views of intercultural competence as distinct models postulated by different authors, the notion of symbolic competence can be approximated to other interpretations of language and culture, and interculturally oriented pedagogies. Here, I call special attention to Risager (2007) notion of *languaculture* as a comprehensive and theoretically encompassing construct to account for the complexity of how language and culture are related in different ways. Such concept was central for the author to formulate a theoretically justified alternative to the national paradigm, what she refers to as a *transnational paradigm.* My interest with the notion of *languaculture,* however, is to analyze it in parallel with Kramsch's understanding of SC, to see how both constructs complement each other and can be approximated in theory and pedagogical practice.

Much of what is said by Risager (2007) in terms of *languaculture,* comes from the linguist anthropologist Michael Agar (1994), who employs the term to define the interface between culture and those aspects of language that are 'culture bound'. In his view, "[c]ulture is in language, and language is loaded with culture" (p. 28), and this can be observed in interactions where interlocutors become aware of their cultural differences. Agar's interest lies in semantic and pragmatic features that may lead to communication breakdown. In other words, his study of *languaculture* lies in 'culture-specific concepts' and those aspects of interaction whereby meaning is created as a result of sociolinguistic and sociocultural rules.

Although relevant, Agar's analysis of *languaculture* is purely anecdotal and lacks systemic analysis through scientific research, what was somehow done by Risager who, based on Agar's theorization, proposed a highly systematic definition of the term.

Risager identifies three points of view or loci for *languaculture*: linguistic practice, which refers to oral and linguistic practice in interaction; linguistic resources, stands for socially constituted knowledge of language; and linguistic system, what is

defined by her as discursively constructed notion of language (i.e., English, Portuguese etc.). For each of these loci, different dimensions can be identified. The first one corresponds to Agar's definition of *linguaculture,* which is the semantic and pragmatic dimension. Here, the author refers to constancy and variability in the semantics and pragmatics of specific languages. The second is the poetic dimension. Culture here is synonymous with aesthetics and specific kinds of meanings constructed through the phonological and syllabic structure of a language, its rhymes and relationships and writing, genres etc. And finally, there is the identity dimension, which is related to social variation of a specific language as users bring to the fore their own understanding of the world onto the interlocutors, consequently inviting them to react. Language and culture, in this sense, are related to identity construction.

Although, Risager (2007) somehow refers to Kramsch's view of 'language relation to culture' in her construct of *languaculture*, she reviewed Kramsch's work before her development of the notion of symbolic competence, and if we take into account more recent studies, other possible theoretical bridges can be established as a way to further theorize, and ultimately transpose concepts that still remain somewhat nebulous to our pedagogic practices.

Kramsch's concept of symbolic competence shares some similarities with Risager's *languaculture*. Both recognize the resonances of personal historicity, knowledge of different languages, and the individual experience in the world as composing elements of one's subjectivity. Therefore, when interacting with others, subtle semiotic practices that draw on a multiplicity of perceptual clues to make and convey meanings are needed, rather than mere communicative strategies (KRAMSCH, 2006). Also, they seem to agree on the fact that language and culture are related in multiple and complex ways, not only in semantic and pragmatic features, but also in the very linguistic forms, what is understood by Kramsch as any linguistic, textual, visual, acoustic or poetic manifestation.

As it could be noticed through this discussion, models of intercultural competence do not necessarily have to be analyzed as separated and independent constructs, but rather, they can be juxtaposed, and operationalized as different perspectives of the same complex kaleidoscope. Such multiplicity of theoretical contributions that sometimes converge, and other times diverge might lead us to conclude that interculturality does not refer to a specific approach or pedagogy, but

rather a complex network of different theorizations and pedagogical practices. Therefore, attempting to integrate an intercultural dimension to language education can only be done beyond methods.

Diaz (2011) criticizes teaching approaches that conceptualize the development of ICC as teaching. According to her, this belief should be reconsidered carefully, for it implies a somewhat static viewpoint. She continues arguing that the term 'culture teaching' throughout the literature suggests that culture can be taught by presenting facts, and concrete answers to questions such as *why, what, how*. Our challenge is, therefore, to conceptualize intercultural language teaching as a process of exploration, and challenge currently predominant practices that ignore the relevance of students' personal experiences, and provide authoritative sources of cultural knowledge.

2.6.2 Intercultural and symbolic competence in practice: opening the windows of real classrooms

Ever since Kramsch's first publication on SC in 2006, different authors have been exploring this construct and expanding their notions of how intercultural language education should look like in theory and in relation to pedagogical practices. In this sense, opening the windows of real classrooms and analyzing different teaching activities is paramount, not only to understand how theorizations of SC can inform particular teaching practices, but also to offer theoretical insights that take into account the reality of classroom contexts.

The concept of SC as classroom pedagogical practice has been interpreted in many different ways: as the possibility of representing, doing, and changing things with words (Kramsch 2011); as semiotic awareness and interpretation of film (KAISER; SHIBAHARA 2014), political speeches (KRAMSCH 2011), and literary texts (Kramsch 2006); as an ability to play with language (POMERANZ; BELL, 2007); as critical literacy (KEARNEY 2012, VINALL, 2016); and as multiliteracies (LOPEZ-SANCHEZ, 2009).

Here, I particularly draw upon two different studies with a focus on SC as critical literacy. The first one, conducted by Kearney (2012), reports an ethnographic, discourse-analytic study of a university-level French classroom. In her study, Kearney

(2012) provides a holistic illustration of how students were able to cultivate their symbolic competence in moments of perspective taking from multiple points of view, and how they managed to traverse different levels of meaning making through the instructional environment created by the teacher. The second one was developed by Vinall (2016), and it provides rich insights from the development of project-based activities which focus on how meaning is constructed in the texts in relation to their historical and political contexts, to the readers' own positionality and subjective experiences, and to the cultural values and beliefs that are attached to these meanings. Together, the contributions of these two authors helped me think of the ways in which I could plan for the intercultural dimensions of my own practice, and offered me insights to shape classroom discourse and interaction in a way that students could achieve deeper understandings of meanings of the multiple texts brought to the class. In the following paragraphs, I devote special attention to Kearney (2012) and Vinall (2016) investigations, showing how they provided me with insights for the development of own research initiative.

In a 2007 report issued by the Modern Language Association (MLA), guidelines to additional language education in the U.S. were set with the objective to promote intercultural understanding based on the interpretation of "cultural narratives". Kearney (2012) argues that such guidelines should be further specified, and studied in practice, so it would be possible to understand how learners could be engaged in interpreting cultural narratives, and learn a different language through intercultural experiences.

In this study, the author deconstructs the traditional notion of "narrative" as canonical literary texts and proposes an understanding of cultural narratives as "the multiple (sometimes competing), conventionalized storylines that cultural groups produce and use to make sense of and attribute meaning to their shared experiences" (p. 59). According to her, meanings and perspectives are materialized in these stories through the use of linguistic and other symbols, and whether or not individuals take particular narratives as reasonable, they are available to members of cultural groups as subjects of their meaning-making experiences.

Kearney (2012) also highlights that, while transposing those guidelines to practice, teachers must reflect on which and whose stories they want to include in their instruction, and on how they can provoke questions that have to do with representation, representativeness and point of view. In relation to that, the author

argues that simply reading and discussing texts in class is likely insufficient to encourage deep exploration, understanding or appreciation of others' experience, mainly when learners are distant, in many aspects, from the experiences proposed. Therefore, our challenge as teachers is to foster learners to engage in interpretation and analysis of cultural narratives and the generation of meaning around these, even when they are physically, temporally, linguistically and psychologically apart from the experiences lived by the others.

In order to illustrate these ideas in the reality of a classroom, Kearney (2012) presents an analysis drawn from a larger study in which ethnographic and discourse-analytic methods were applied to locate, describe and analyze classroom practices through which intercultural teaching and learning were constructed. Aiming at understanding how the processes of cultural learning were materialized through the interaction in class, the author conducted classroom observations in a fifth-semester French course from an American university. At the time of the observations, the class was dealing with a thematic unit centered on French experiences of World War II, which was the basis for the teacher (addressed as Emilie in the study) to develop a project called *"Mémoires de Guerre"*, where learners were expected to deeply examine how individuals may have reacted to the experience of a war.

Based on the analysis of classroom interaction, Kearney (2012) is able to show how Emilie's classes embraced aspects of complexity and multivoicedness while learners analyzed multiple cultural narratives that reframe French experiences of WWII. Through her analysis, Kearney led us to see how the instructional environment created by the teacher revealed particular interactional processes that allowed the class to make use of different semiotic resources to develop perspective-taking, critical literacy and interculturality. Furthermore, the author suggested interesting paths for future research that might contribute to the field of intercultural language education, such as the need to identify the ways in which teachers can plan for the cultural dimensions of their practices, and also the relevance of documenting the ways that learners can act as intercultural beings in their learning experiences, i.e., by inhabiting other perspectives, speaking through unfamiliar voices, viewing the world from culturally different eyes.

Kearney's suggestions for future research on intercultural language teaching somehow portrays the central objective of this study, which is to explore my own trajectory as a teacher/researcher while transposing an intercultural dimension from

theory to my own pedagogical practice. In order to accomplish this goal, a study conducted by Vinall (2016) was also paramount, for it offered me a number of insights while designing a project that would facilitate the emergence of intercultural moments in classroom.

Based on the reality of her own teaching context, at an intermediate-level Spanish classroom, Vinall (2016) presents her rationale to develop project-based activities on the famous legend *La Llorona*, which was the theme of the textbook *Pasajes* (2009) used by her group of students. In that context, the author used and expanded her understanding of symbolic competence to encourage students to explore the symbolic dimensions of *La Llorona* as a mother and as a woman whose gendered identities were constructed in the particular historical, political, and social moment of colonialism. In order to reach this objective, Vinall (2016) discusses three specific features of this critical exploration of *La Llorona* that were central to an understanding of symbolic competence, namely *relationality*, *transgression*, and *potentiality*.

These three elements are presented by the author as way to explore the discursive dimensions of symbolic competence, and they were the basis for the development of a sequence of three project-based activities, developed with the objective to facilitate learners' critical reflection on *La Llorona* at multiple levels: as a story, as historical subject, and as cultural representation. Although Vinall's study remains somewhat prescriptive, as the actual implementation of the project and consequent classroom interaction is not documented in her study, she proposes relevant critical questions that can be applied to other language and culture classrooms as teachers deal with iconic characters, texts, or historical subjects that are typically taught.

Together, these two studies helped me to understand the notion of symbolic competence in the reality of language classrooms, and offered me valuable insights to organize project-based activities that involved learners in intercultural experiences that led them to explore, problematize and redraw their borders with others through moments of discussion, critical analysis, and performative creativity.

2.6.3 Intercultural symbolic competence: looking at interculturality as a discursive practice

Throughout this study, I have faced the daunting task of positioning myself critically in relation to theoretical concepts that would inform my *praxis* both as a researcher and a pedagogue. Such reflexive practice was paramount for the development of this piece of research, since it was through this process that I was able to elaborate a pedagogical and an investigative methodology to illustrate how the theoretical debate on language education from an ecological perspective could be experienced through my own pedagogical practice.

Following the reasoning of the postmodern metaphors presented in the beginning of this theoretical review as a contextualizing key to understand language education, I have noticed that my role as an intercultural teacher was to prepare students for a multisymbolic world, which is a rather discursive than tactile, pre-established or natural set of elements and interconnections. In practice, this means that intercultural learning experiences are the process of "destabilizing meanings that have become frozen in the practice of understanding and being understood" (WARNER, 2011), and it is ultimately the transformational engagement with the other, being the other symbolic in nature.

Here, the notion of discourse was central for me to understand how to approach language and culture from a postmodern perspective, and that led me to draw upon the working concept of *intercultural symbolic competence*, which would provide me with the necessary frames to understand how pedagogical practices should look like, as well as to develop a systematized way of analyzing meaning making moments in the classroom and recognizing what could be considered instances of intercultural moments. The choice for the term *intercultural symbolic competence*, in this study, emerged as a result of my reflection upon the discursive dimension of language and culture, and my understanding of intercultural practices as symbolic acts performed by discursively constructed beings who make sense of their worlds, and ultimately transform themselves through constant practices of meaning making.

In this research, the terms *intercultural competence* and *symbolic competence* will not be treated separately, as if they are distinct or supplementary components. Indubitably, when Kramsch (2006) revisited her own understanding of

interculturality and presented a different conceptual metaphor to move away from modernist interpretations of language and culture, which was somehow portrayed in the notion of *third place* (KRAMSCH, 1993), she was not introducing the *symbolic* as a replacement for the *intercultural*, but rather highlighting an awareness of language as discourse and symbolic power.

When dealing with these terms through the development of my own *praxis*, however, I noticed I was still approaching the notion of the *symbolic* with certain confusion in relation to intercultural competence. Such inaccurate theoretical positioning made it difficult for me to understand the conceptual frames of the terms, and ultimately to envision my own practice as a teacher and a researcher. That is why I consider necessary to briefly expose a justification for the choice of the term *intercultural symbolic competence* in this study.

Although the term symbolic competence can be considered a recent theoretical development, conceived in the light of contemporary linguistic practices that take place and are shaped by the increasing development of global communication technologies, its main conceptual revolution relies on the understanding of culture as the construction of meaning and imagined communities, a notion which was already discussed by Kramsch in the end of the 1990s. Back then, the author relied on the term *discourse community* to emphasize that people construct what enables or limits a range of possible meanings through their discursive practices. Culture, in that sense, was already seen as human practices shaped by language and other symbolic systems, and "a site of struggle for the recognition and legitimation of meaning" (KRAMSCH, 2011, p. 355).

Following this reasoning, what is understood as one's culture is not necessarily a collective feeling of membership in a national community or in communities of practice – not to say that such imaginative constructions do not play a role – but through the conceptual key of discourse, one's culture is more accurately related to subjectivity and historicity, dimensions or ever-changing processes which are constructed by sediments of the stories we tell, the life experiences we go through, and the plethora of discourses that give meaning to our lives (KRAMSCH, 2011).

In a post-structurally perspective, discourse is not simply understood as larger units of language organized above the sentence level, but a structuring principle of society, legitimized and conveyed by social institutions, modes of

thoughts, and individual subjectivities (WEEDON, 1987). With an emphasis on the social semiotic processes by which discourses shape the world, the contributions of cultural critics, such as Chris Weedon (1987) were paramount for the understanding that meanings are always socially and historically located in discourses, rather than pre-existent to the articulation of language. Based on that, I started to re-signify what happens in the additional language classroom as discursive practices that point to symbolic actions that invoke many aspects of our subjectivities, such as identity, ideology, belief and power (Young, 2009).

Considering such view of culture as discourse, Kramsch (2011) claims that the development of intercultural competence is not only about tolerance or empathy with others, or understanding people in their cultural contexts, but it is also about looking beyond words and actions so as to understand how values, identities and meanings are disguised behind a common illusion of effective communication. Although the author's considerations stress the need to resignify the understanding of intercultural competence through the key of discourse, the 'discursive aspect' is still presented as a component of a greater competence, as if it is possible for us to constitute ourselves, understand cultural frames or have any contact with others beyond the symbolic dimensions of the discourse. In my view, every single aspect of what is understood as intercultural competence is a matter of a discursive practice. If discourse, as a symbolic system, is understood in levels of representation, action and power, any act of language and, therefore, any instance of meaning making is cultural and organized by discourse. Being intercultural, in this sense, is always playing with symbolic meanings that are often, but not exclusively materialized through language.

This theoretical review was essential for the development of my praxis as a teacher and a researcher, but still there was the challenge of understanding how the notion of intercultural symbolic competence would look like in the reality of a real classroom, more specifically in terms of objectives, learning tasks, classroom interaction, and other actual moment-to-moment practices and behaviors that operate in teaching a language in such ecological scenario. In order to tackle such practical level, and therefore develop a rationale for pedagogical design and data analysis, in this study I have approached intercultural symbolic competence following the key aspects of *relationality, transgression* and *potentiality.* In my view, these three dimensional elements of intercultural symbolic competence capture the essence of

intercultural learning as materialized in discursive practices, allowing me to envision the pedagogical and the investigative phase of this research.

The construct of *relationality* can be understood in relation to intercultural symbolic competence as the understanding that meanings are not constructed in isolation, but they rather reside in the relations, reframings and dialogues that emerge from texts, historical moments, modalities, and the interaction between storytellers and listeners. Teaching a language in this perspective requires what Kern (2015) calls a relational pedagogy, i.e., a critical reflection on the meanings that emerge from interaction, and "it implies inhabiting these in-between spaces so that learners cross these boundaries and critically reflect on the meanings that emerge in the process" (VINALL, 2016. p. 4).

The second conceptual element of intercultural symbolic competence, *transgression*, requires that learners transgress their boundaries as they problematize their own worldviews, and the language they use. In relation to this, Penycook (2006) states that learning, in the perspective of a transgressive pedagogy, involves problematizing ways of thinking and doing, and this critical experience is what allows us to understand ourselves, our history, our culture, and how the boundaries of our thoughts and practices can be traversed (p. 42).

Finally, the notion of *potentiality* evokes the idea that each new meaning that emerges points to the potential for another, which becomes "an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing" (VINALL, 2016, p. 5). In this sense, intercultural symbolic competence is not a finalized ability that can be applied in specific situations, but a potentiality that can be unevenly distributed, and the objective in teaching for the development of intercultural symbolic competence is to help learners become aware of its potentialities as they develop their communicative, analytical and interpretive abilities.

Approaching intercultural symbolic competence through the discursive aspects of relationality, transgression and potentiality was central for me to understand theory and practice as dialectically related, a process which I have been addressing as *praxis* throughout this study. In the following section, I seek to provide more details on the development of my praxis, explaining how such notion of intercultural symbolic competence could be understood through the pedagogical and investigative phases of this study.

2.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this section of the study, I offered a theoretical discussion that aimed at situating the notion of intercultural language education in the postmodern world. In order to do so, I took into consideration what I have been calling "the metaphors of the postmodern" in the field of Applied Linguistics to provide a holistic discussion on what it means to teach an additional language in the postmodern world. To do so, I made use of the conceptual metaphors of *ecology* to rethink notions of language, communication, the language learner and language education, and also proposed a brief review of studies, which have been transposing these ideas from theory to pedagogical practice. Finally, I exposed how the reflection on postmodern conceptual metaphors provided me with a theoretical basis for the development of pedagogical actions and allowed me to systematize heuristic resources for the analysis of what I refer to as "intercultural symbolic competence" as discursive practices.

3 THE METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF MY *PRAXIS*

This qualitative study aims at investigating my trajectory as a teacher/researcher while integrating an intercultural perspective of language education to my own pedagogical practice. In order to achieve this goal, I have followed a three-dimensional research design, with the objective to explore my *praxis* in its theoretical, methodological and interactional levels.

In the present chapter, I provide a reflexive account of the methodological dimension of *praxis*, and in doing so; I approach both the research details and the pedagogical developments of this work, for they encompass the dialectical relationship between theory and practice materialized in this action-research.

For a better organization of the study, this methodological chapter was divided into two main parts. The first one (from subsection 3.1 to 3.6) is an introduction which presents the research questions, provides explanation on qualitative research design, and introduces the participants and the setting where the study was carried out. The second part, (subsection 3.7) provides details about the pedagogical and the investigative phase of this study, which refers to a reflexive account of my creative process as a teacher while integrating an intercultural dimension to my practice, and also to the procedures used to generate and analyze classroom data.

This methodological chapter was designed with a descriptive and interpretive nature, which means that complementary to a systematic description of the empirical extent of this study, there are instances of interpretations that aim to unveil my own subjectivity both as a teacher and as a researcher, and to theoretically justify some specific decisions on the level of pedagogical design.

3.1 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall objective of the present study is to explore my trajectory as a teacher/researcher while transposing an ecological perspective of language education from theory to my own pedagogical practice. Through this action research narrative, I hope to weave interpretations regarding a) the theoretical dimension of my *praxis*, addressing how an ecological epistemology can be used as a theoretical foundation for the understanding of intercultural language education and for the

rationale of my pedagogical actions; b) the methodological dimension of my *praxis*, looking at how specific decisions on the level of design can point to the construction of intercultural moments in class; and c) the interactional dimension of my *praxis,* investigating how intercultural symbolic competence is materialized in discursive practices that emerge in classroom episodes. In order to reach these objectives, this study pursued the following research questions:

RQ1: How can some of the concepts and metaphors of the ecological perspective be used both as guidelines for pedagogical action and as heuristic resources for analysis? *(theoretical dimension)*

RQ2: How the pedagogical tasks designed help learners to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, frames and worldviews in symbolic ways? *(methodological dimension)*

RQ3: How teacher's and learners' discursive practices illustrate the construction of intercultural symbolic competence, in terms of relationality, transgression and potentiality? *(interactional dimension)*

3.2 THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS

This research has an epistemological foundation, which is based on an ecological perspective towards language learning[10]. The key philosophical assumptions of this paradigm are grounded in a constructivist set of beliefs about truth, or ontology, which claims that there is no single reality that can be reduced or approximated but only multiple, participative, and co-created realities that can only be understood through their interconnections. In a more specific interpretation, an ecological approach aims to look at the learning process, the actions and activities of teachers and learners, the multilayered nature of interaction and language use, in all their complexity and as a network of interdependencies among all the elements in the setting, not only at the social level, but also at the physical and symbolic level (VAN LIER, 2010).

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[10] e.g., KRAMSCH, 2002; 2008; VAN LIER, 2004.

3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Dörnyei (2007), qualitative research, in the field of Applied Linguistics, has had an increasing visibility and acceptance since the 90s. This might be due to a growing interest in investigating social, situational and cultural factors of language acquisition and use, which makes this method ideal for providing insights into such contextual conditions and influences. Furthermore, qualitative research is interested in providing descriptive data, rather than making use of statistical procedures (MACKEY; GASS, 2005); thus, the emphasis is on perceiving the intent and meaning of human acts in their natural settings. As this study aims at understanding a given problem from the perspectives of the local context it involves, a qualitative approach appears to be the most suitable method for carrying out this research. Moreover, all core features of a qualitative inquiry (DÖRNYEI, 2007) are present in this study:

1. **Emergent research design:** the research design of this study is open and flexible to possible new details during the process of investigation.
2. **The nature of qualitative data:** this study works with a wide range of data including questionnaires and video recorded classes, which were transformed into a textual form during data processing.
3. **The characteristics of the research setting:** there was the concern not to manipulate the situation under study; in this case, the classroom where data was generated did not suffer any manipulation to fit any criteria.
4. **Insider meaning:** one of the objectives of this research is to explore the students' and my own perspectives and feelings in relation to the experiences lived in class, and in my case, also prior to that, throughout the design of pedagogical tasks.
5. **Small sample size:** taking into consideration that this kind of method is very laborious, small samples of participants were adopted, and data was generated in only one classroom setting.
6. **Interpretive analysis:** the data analysis for this study relied on my subjective interpretation; therefore, since I am, as the researcher, "the main 'measurement device' in the study" (HAVERKAMP, 2005 *apud* DÖRNYEI,

2007, p. 38), my own values and beliefs also become an integral part of the inquiry.

In addition to that, this study carries traits of an action research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) state that "action research may be used in almost any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures cries out for solution, or where some change of feature results in a more desirable outcome" (p. 243). As I have already exposed in this study, the amount of theoretical research on language and culture relationship in English as additional language pedagogy greatly surpasses the amount of empirical research investigating it with real people in real classrooms. Also, very few studies have been carried out in Brazil, where the classroom is still one of the main environments for additional language teaching and learning. As a result, we commonly end up lost with nebulous theoretical concepts that do not seem feasible in the reality of our teaching contexts.

Bearing that in mind, I have chosen to conduct an action research to investigate how intercultural symbolic competence look like in the reality of my own pedagogical practice. Hence, in this study, I assumed the role of the teacher and researcher, therefore, engaging not only with the application and experimentation of ideas in practice, but also with critical reflection of the outcomes of such application and my own position as a pedagogue.

3.4 THE CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION: IFSC

The present study took place at the Federal Institution of Education, Science and Technology of Santa Catarina (IFSC), more specifically in Campus Florianópolis. The decision of choosing this institution as the context of my study was due to a number of reasons. First and foremost, I have set Brazilian public school settings as my research focus ever since I started my studies as a researcher. In spite of that, I had the chance to work as a substitute teacher at IFSC prior to this investigation and, because of that experience, it appeared comfortable for me to investigate a context where I was already known by other teachers and students.

Located in Mauro Ramos Avenue, downtown Florianópolis, this institution currently operates in two levels of education, namely basic and higher education. The basic level of education is constituted by five integrated technical courses, twelve

subsequent technical courses and two permanent vocational training courses, while the higher education level is constituted by ten undergraduate, and two graduate courses, being they on the level of specialization and master's degree, totaling twenty-seven different courses.

By the time this study was conducted, the additional language faculty was composed by six teachers, being two Spanish teachers and four English teachers. Currently, the additional language teachers count on three laboratories where classes take place and a staff room equipped with two computers connected to the internet. The Spanish and English languages are taught permanently for the integrated technical courses, namely Building, Sanitation, Electrotechnology, Electronics and Chemistry. These courses last eight semesters and while Spanish is taught in the second semester, English is taught in the third, fourth and fifth terms. This way, once students reach the third semester, they take a placement test in the first day of English class, so as to organized, independently of their course, according to their level of linguistic proficiency (elementary, intermediate or advanced). Both English and Spanish classes take place once a week, and classes last one hour and forty minutes. *Figure 1* below illustrates how this curriculum is organized throughout the period of eight semesters:

Figure 1 - Additional language teaching in IFSC's integrated courses
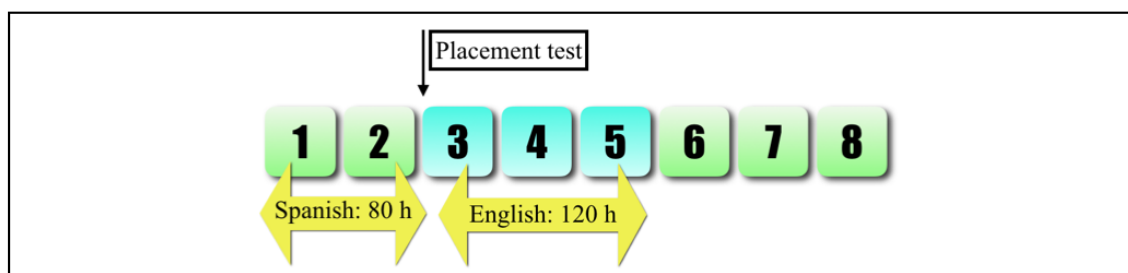
After the placement process, each English teacher is usually responsible for around twenty-five students in class. This number can be higher according to the number of students who may fail the semester, or according to the integrated technical courses, some of which offer higher number of vacancies per semester. It is important to mention that the practice of applying a placement test to organize students according to their linguistic proficiency started to take place in Campus Florianópolis only in 2003, after much negotiation and persistence on the part of the additional language teachers. Florianópolis is one of the only *campi* to adopt this

procedure in the whole state, and every semester, when students provide some feedback on the way that classes are administered, they highlight how comfortable they feel in relation to the way the groups are organized.

In addition, it is also important to emphasize that the objective of the placement test is not to homogenize the groups, but rather to make them feel more comfortable while participating in the practices proposed in class. In practical terms, what we call 'linguistic proficiency' is not only based in factors such as efficiency or accuracy that can be equally applied to all participants, but it is also based in a more subjective way of observing multiple ways of dealing with an additional language in a communicative situation. In this sense, we might look at how creative and innovative students can be with the language, or even how strategic they are so to compensate a possible lack of specific vocabulary during an interview.

In addition to teaching English as a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the aforementioned courses, the English language teachers also offer extracurricular courses, which usually take place once a week. Furthermore, depending on the teachers' availability, extension courses and workshops can be offered, as teachers are also expected to get involved in projects that link the school to the community.

Having explained the general contours of this context, I believe it is relevant to present some details of my experience there as a teacher, since it has a lot to do with my decision to have this institution as my context of investigation. As I started teaching at IFSC, I got in contact with a whole new professional universe. Of course, being a teacher was no longer something new for me, but every institution has its own particularities and challenges, and it would not be different that time. It all begun by the second semester of 2015, when I had just started my doctoral studies. By that time, I did not have in mind to conduct research there, but it did not take me a long time to start seeing interesting avenues for future possibilities.

At IFSC, additional language teaching is not regulated by a strict content-based curriculum, or guided by specific textbooks, which gives the teachers a huge responsibility while having to design a coherent course for the whole semester, but at the same time, it allows us to be creative and constantly innovative in our pedagogical practices. Although this type of context seems quite appealing for those teachers who, like me, love being creative while preparing classes, I admit that, at first, I did not know exactly what to do, but I had a feeling that such challenging experience would be paramount for the purpose of creating interculturally-oriented

projects from scratch, and that was exactly what I was looking for to develop this study.

After many sessions of faculty meetings going through previous course plans, hours spent in cafés with some of the English teachers, and even classes observed, I begun to understand the profile of the students and started thinking of a way to conduct my classes for the integrated courses. As I sat down one day at the staff room with my computer, I remember having a latent thought that it would be interesting to organize the semester into two different projects that could have a theme, rather than specific grammar topics as a point of departure. Also, I was constantly reflecting on how I could transpose interculturality from theory to my own pedagogical practices, and foster students to engage in experiences where they could explore, problematize, and redraw their borders with others.

Such challenging experience allowed me to be a different teacher, and to see my classroom, and my students in a different way. From my view, teaching an additional language in what I have been calling 'postmodern world' is much more than teaching skills to be added to an employability portfolio. It is rather a transformational experience. Students are not empty vessels, but languagers, meaning-makers who move in and through words as actions, who develop and change constantly as the experience of languaging[11] evolves and changes them. According to Phipps and Gonzalez (2004), a languaging student and a languaging teacher are given a unique opportunity to enter the languaging of others, to open up the ways in which the complexity and experience of others may enrich life, and this is exactly the intercultural aspect that I wanted to bring about in my practices as a teacher. Yet in this chapter, I will present how I transposed such ideas from theory to practice through the creation of a cycle of pedagogical tasks.

3.5 THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The group chosen to participate in this study was composed by twenty advanced-level students from the fourth semester of three different integrated technical courses: Sanitation, Building and Electrotechnology. There were nine girls and eleven boys in the classroom, and although they came from different courses,

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[11] As discussed in the theoretical review, the notion of languaging refers to a poststructuralist conceptualization of language as a way of being that encompasses the whole social world.

the group was already consolidated, for they had been studying together ever since the third semester.

My first contact with this class happened during my last semester as substitute teacher at IFSC. It was almost the end of the term and students were presenting their final productions, which would work as their last evaluation. At that time, I did not teach that group, but I was invited by their teacher to attend their presentations and help providing feedback by the end. Little did I know that, because of that experience, I would choose that group to participate in this study.

The presentations given by the students that day revealed an incredible level of creativity. What caught my attention the most was the fact that they were able explore language in different possibilities of semiotic resources, whether through the use of different visual arts (such as slides and posters), through songs played live in different classical instruments, or even through the audience's senses of touch, taste and smell.

At the end of that day, I talked to their teacher about the possibility of creating a project with that group in the following semester, and he encouraged me reinforcing my impressions about them. With that little experience of observation in mind, I spent winter holiday thinking about different possibilities for a teaching experience with that class, and I was worried if the profile of the group would change with my presence in the classroom. Because of these concerns, I got in contact with the teacher who was going to be responsible for that group in the following semester to talk about my research plans, and ask her permission to participate in her classes for a month, so as to bond with the students before taking the lead.

Back to school for a new semester, I started observing classes in that group so as to have a better idea about them. Both teacher and students were very welcoming, and when I introduced myself and explained that I intended to conduct a study with them, everyone seemed eager and curious to participate. In a following class, I briefly introduced the mechanisms of our future classes. I told them we would be together for the whole semester and I would be recording our meetings with the purpose of gathering data for a future research. I also took advantage of that moment to ask them to read and sign a consent form that would regulate their participation in the research. Since they were from fifteen to seventeen years old, they also had to ask their parents to read and sign the form.

As days went by, I started to have a better idea about the group as they got involved in the various activities proposed by the teacher. Classroom discussions were particularly interesting, as the majority of them, mainly the girls, were always engaged and willing to manifest their critical point of view in relation to a specific matter. I found that really intriguing and, one day after class, I shared that feeling with the teacher who told me that they had asked her to bring polemic discussions to the class because they would feel more challenged and provoked to participate.

In addition to my observations, students were also asked to respond to an online questionnaire (*Appendix B*) that would help me understand their profile as an English language learner. I collected their e-mail addresses and sent them a Google Form that consisted of five questions about their learning experiences. From a total of twenty-one students, fifteen of them answered the questionnaire, so although not everyone participated, I considered the sample representative for the whole group.

In the first question, they were asked to write a short paragraph to describe the most memorable experiences they have had while learning English, and also to mention if they had attended a language course or if they had studied by themselves to reach their current level of proficiency. Responses revealed memorable learning experiences that, most of the time, were out of the context of a regular classroom:

> I never liked studying English so I learned everything that I know about the language through movies and music. (PQ-S1)
>
> I can tell you that I learned a lot of the English vocabulary through video games and Internet as a whole (videos, blogs, etc). (PQ-S4)
>
> (…) When I lived in the U.S. with my mom and dad for their jobs. (PQ-S10)
>
> I learned a lot by myself (movies, musics, talking to my friends). I went to an exchange in England and got a scholarship to attend Yale´s summer school. (PQ-S14)

Those testimonials made me realize how common it is for students to be involved in meaningful learning experiences that extrapolate the school context. In those answers, the classroom environment was not the central stage for the learning of an additional language, and students were agents of their own learning processes that took place in many different forms, such as through pleasant moments watching movies, listening to songs, surfing on the Internet or traveling abroad. For them, effective learning should be associated to pleasure.

Based on their answers, it was also noticeable how their affective relationship with the language or even with some of their colleagues were meaningful while learning English:

> I have always really liked English, so I guess it made the learning process so easy I didn't even realize I was learning a new language. (PQ-S4)
>
> I've studied English for like 4 years with my classmate Laila and we are still inseparable. I adore her. (PQ-S9)

Such aspect of the heart in the experience of learning English allows us to understand what influences them the most while 'investing' in an L2. In this respect, Baum (2014) conducted a study with a group of Israeli English pre-service teachers as a way to understand the sources and nature of some positive feelings regarding the imagined foreign language culture (English) and how this emotional connection to the language may have shaped their identities. The feeling of *love* appeared many times in the interviews conducted with his participants, and similarly to the testimonials quoted above, this emotional relationship with the language has to do with sociocultural sources of motivation.

Kramsch (2012) observe that "the visceral reaction of like or dislike to other people or to other languages comes from age-old or childhood memories that are still active in what you associate with these different languages. (…) It's linked to childhood memories, to adolescent dreams, fantasies, aspirations etc." (p. 76). And indeed, through the answers provided above, one might notice that the source of the students' love for English can be found in their childhood or adolescence. In addition to that, Kramsch (2009) suggests that the need to identify with another reality (an imagined community) is an essential condition for the construction of a new social identity in an additional language. Here, students rely on emotional valuations to justify their successful learning experiences, an intrinsic motivation that might be linked to their feelings about an imagined Anglosphere community and their "hopes of self-improvement and dreams of self-expression" (p. 410).

Feelings, by the way, was a central word for another question in which students were supposed to comment on how they feel when they have to speak English in the classroom. Answers repeatedly emphasized feelings of uncomfortableness and anxiety:

Uncomfortable. I usually understand the language but I don't feel confident enough to say it out loud. (PQ-S1)

I think I just feel a little uncomfortable because I don't talk in English that often. (PQ-S3)

I feel a little bit uncomfortable because i never know if i am doing it right. (PQ-S5)

I feel like a retard (PQ-S6)

Even though students claimed to be affectionately involved with the learning of English, there seems to be something in the schooling experience that vanishes those feelings of pleasure and love, giving space to an atmosphere of general uncomfortableness. I wonder what specific aspects of a classroom context make students feel that way, and why, for some reason, the experience of learning in class is so negatively valued by them, but as I talked to them one day at the end of a class, they mentioned that the feeling of being evaluated by the teacher and other colleagues all the time is one of the main reasons why they feel so embarrassed while speaking in class.

Finally, as a way to know better the group, I asked them to choose the options that better expressed the way they wanted to continue learning English in class. The options given were *(1) Through fun and creative experiences with a focus on meaning and not on the structure of the language; (2) Through structural activities as a way to practice grammar topics; (3) Through critical discussions that allow me to express my own opinion about certain topics*. Students were allowed to choose more than one option, and the most voted ones were the first (fifteen answers) and the third options (ten answers), therefore unveiling their wish for learning experiences that would explore their creative potentials.

Although classroom observation was paramount for understanding the profile of the group, some random pieces of conversation during the break or before the beginning of the classes were also important for designing a future project for that group. Out of the class time, I could have a glimpse of what students usually did to pass the time, or talk about subjects that were not related to what was being discussed in class. The extract below is an example of one of those moments:

Today before class, I saw some girls reading. They told me they love fiction books and Netflix TV shows like 'Once Upon a Time'. So do I. (Something on fairytales would be great!)

(Extract from field notes).

All those bits and pieces of classroom observation and conversations with the students gave me the insights to go about making decisions regarding the theme of the project and the types of practices to be designed. Their high level of creativity noticed from my very first contact with them, their willingness to learn through fun and creative experiences in class, and also to be involved in critical discussions, and finally their appreciation of stories, whether in the form of anecdotes told by the teacher, or in books or TV shows, they were all important elements to be considered on the level of design, while planning a cycle of intercultural practices.

3.6 REGULATIONS GOVERNING RESEARCH ETHICAL PRACTICE: UFSC ETHICAL COMMITTEE

In accordance to the resolution 466/2012-CNS/CONEP[12] which postulates the respect to human dignity and special protection to participants of scientific research involving human beings, this piece of research was submitted to the system CEP/Conep under the responsibility of the entitled researcher Dr. Gloria Gil and her assistant Jeová Araújo Rosa Filho. After evaluation, the research project, which was the basis for the development of this study, was approved under the serial number 2.390.899.

In order to fulfill the requirements proposed by the UFSC ethical committee, this project was registered to *Plataforma Brasil* (www.saude.gov.br/plataformabrasil) and the following documents were sent enclosed: a detailed version of the project translated into Portuguese, a concession agreement (a document signed by *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* allowing the entitled researcher and her assistant to conduct research under the name of this institution), a consent letter signed by the school principal of the Federal Institution of Education, Science and Technology of Santa Catarina (IFSC), and an informed consent letter designed both for the participants of this research and their parents.

According to the resolution 466/2012-CNS/CONEP, in order to invite participants to a scientific research, the informed consent letter must present the

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[12] Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa (Committee that regulates research ethical practice)

rationale, aims and procedures that will be used in the research; possible discomforts and risks arising from participation in the research; the assistance that the participants are entitled to have, and guarantee of full freedom and secrecy. All these criteria were regarded before designing the Informed Consent Letter whose clauses can be checked in detail in *Appendix A*.

3.7 THE PEDAGOGICAL AND THE INVESTIGATIVE PHASES OF THE RESEARCH

As it was exposed in the introduction of this chapter, this qualitative research was divided into two different phases: a pedagogical and an investigative phase. The first one concerns the methodological procedures for the design and implementation of the intercultural project, and the second one consisted on the recording of the data and their subsequent transcription and analysis. *Figure 2* below illustrates the organization of each of these phases:

Figure 2 – Phases of the study
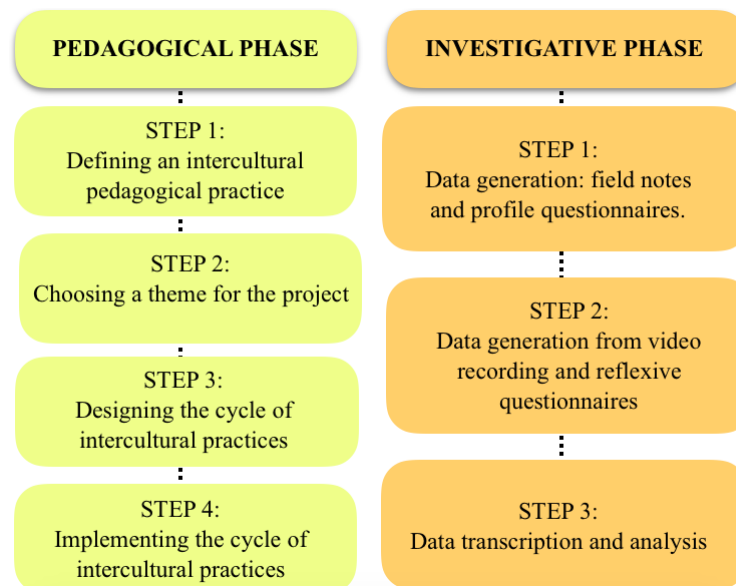
3.7.1 Pedagogical phase

In this subsection, I provide a reflexive account of my creative process as teacher/researcher while integrating an intercultural dimension to my own

pedagogical practice. Here, I also present the methodological procedures for planning a cycle of intercultural practices, which occurred in three steps, as shown in *Figure 2*.

3.7.1.1 Step 1: defining an intercultural pedagogical practice

As I have already presented in the theoretical discussion of this study, an intercultural perspective to additional language teaching can be briefly defined as a way of teaching languages which aims at exploring, problematizing, and re-drawing the borders between the self and the other (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013). Aligned with an ecological view towards language education, an intercultural pedagogy underscores a perspective of language which departs from the modernist notion of it as a set of skills. Here, languages are the medium through which people engage with, make sense of, and shape the world (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004). Students are seen as intercultural beings, or *languagers*, and the experience of learning is seen as a possibility to understand better the varied and multiple reality of which we are part.

Moving from theory to the reality of a classroom and creating a project whose main objective was to bring about intercultural experiences was quite a daunting task. As I opened my computer one day, I remember having nothing but questions as a starting point, as it is illustrated in the extract from my field notes, presented below:

> What do I understand by intercultural language education? What are the objectives of an intercultural activity? How can I involve students in practices that might bring about intercultural experiences in class? Which aspects of intercultural activities should I explore with this group? What could be an interesting theme to organize this project?
>
> (Extract from field notes).

The questions exposed above unveil my main concerns while trying to create an intercultural project, and somehow, they represent the starting point of the whole creative process that I would experience as a teacher-researcher. First, I needed to have a clear understanding of what I understood by an intercultural perspective to language education, and also a consistent definition to what I meant by an intercultural activity. Such theoretical understanding was fundamental for the creation of a cycle of pedagogical practices with a coherent organization and a range of

teaching objectives that would be aligned with the specific theoretical foundation of language teaching from an ecological perspective.

In this study, the intercultural approach for the teaching/learning of an additional language can be understood as pedagogical experiences, planned (intercultural activities/projects) or unplanned moments of classroom interaction (intercultural moments) that can have any of the following teaching objectives[13]:

1. Inclusion of the student's own voice;
2. Co-construction of visible and invisible cultural knowledge;
3. Awareness of the existence of ways of looking at and behaving in the world culturally and linguistically determined;
4. Awareness of cultural non-essentialism: avoiding stereotyping;
5. Awareness of veiled ideologies and of the existence a homogenizing hierarchical model that erases cultural differences and conflicts;
6. Development of 'creative competence': making/doing things with semiotic repertoires.

Based on the objectives set above, an intercultural activity can be defined as a pedagogical practice that aims at exploring and experiencing any of the multiple aspects of culture, understood as ways of doing and thinking of human groups, ultimately promoting identity[14] reconstruction. The starting point for the creation of this cycle of activities was a theme to contextualize it. Here, it was important to be sensitive to students' reality while selecting a guiding theme, since their own experience of life would be paramount for classroom discussions. At this point, it was necessary to bridge the theoretical understanding of interculturality to the context of that particular classroom. Only after that, it would be possible to go about making decisions on the level of pedagogical design, such as choosing the kinds of practices

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[13] Based on Gil, G. (in press). Pedagogia de espanhol como língua adicional e interculturalidade: tecendo caminhos possíveis. In Ortiz, M.L. (org.), *Políticas e valoriz(ação) do ensino de espanhol no contexto brasileiro: desafios*. Campinas: Editora Pontes.

[14] Here, identity is defined as how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future (NORTON, 2013). The idea of identity reconstruction through intercultural moments in class is related to an interactive engagement in the act of meaning-making which, in turn, may imply an identity change in the learner in the act of learning (LIDDICOAT; SCARINO, 2013).

to be developed, and types of productions that could be challenging and interesting for the students.

It took me a month of classroom observations to start having part of those initial questions answered. The weekly routine with the group allowed me to know the students better and little by little, I begun to have that tenuous, but essential intimacy necessary to create a project that would be relevant and pleasant to the whole class. Some specific characteristics of the group were fundamental in my decision, as it is noticeable in another extract of my journal:

> The group is composed by 18 students. In general, they seem very creative and engaged in the discussions set in classroom. Some are extremely shy, though. They seem to love stories. Some of them carry books during the break and they are usually attentive to the teacher's anecdotes. She usually tells them some crazy episodes of her life.
>
> (Extract from field notes)

Based on the observations conducted with that group and the informal conversations with the teacher, I could understand better the profile of the students and make some decisions regarding the theme of the project and the dynamics of the practices to be proposed. Considering the level of creativity of the students, and their relationship with books, and also taking into consideration that literary narratives opens up a vast range of possibilities for pedagogical applications, I decided that dealing with fairy tales seemed an interesting theme to contextualize the project. In the following subsection, I present a justification for such a decision.

Now, it is interesting to look back and realize how this whole research initiative could only take place after the analysis of various theoretical and empirical studies carried out on the subject, many of them were pieces of research conducted by the members of REAL-LCI, such as Rosa Filho (2015), Volpato (2014) and Hilleshein (2014). Likewise, several sessions of discussions with my advisor and colleagues, and of course, the experience from my own practice as a teacher were paramount on the creation this project. Therefore, it would be unfair to claim that this study is only mine, since it reflects the voice of so many people who have collaborated with me so far.

Also, before I continue explaining the details of the project, it is important to highlight that providing a set of methodological movements to construct intercultural moments must be seen very carefully, since interculturality is not a method, in the

sense that it is supposed to be organized into mandatory steps, but it is rather a perspective which is materialized through interaction in class, and in this sense, it is subjective, unpredictable and social/historically situated. With that in mind, the aim of this study is far from proposing a recipe for the development of interculturality, but to share possibilities for planning practices that can bring about intercultural moments. Thus, the suggestions presented here must be seen as a methodological orientation that might facilitate the emergence of intercultural episodes, which can assume different characteristics from one context to another. With my narrative, I hope to be a source of inspiration to other teachers who are eager to think of interculturality in the light of their particular teaching contexts.

3.7.1.2 Step 2: Choosing a theme for the project

> Every real lover of children loves fairy tales; but there are some persons who profess and disdain them as childish nonsense-tales "told by an idiot signifying nothing" even though they may still feel a lingering affection for them in their secret hearts. But fairy tales have a still more important claim upon us. Few realize that these romances of our childhood are something more than nursery stories full of absurdities and impossible incidents designed to catch a vagrant attention or amuse an idle hour. The ordinary reader, like the child [sic] is content to take them at their face value, an interesting literature of a kind, pleasing a taste for romance, or tickling a fancy for the marvelous. But to the rational mind they are something more. Its spirit of inquiry spurs it to see what hidden meanings lie beneath the surface, and to learn the knowledge that fairy tales can bring as to the mental makeup of the men who first told them in the past.

> Macleod Yearsley (1924)

Deciding on the theme to design an intercultural cycle of practices was a challenging moment of this study. On the one hand, I had to take into consideration the various insights from classroom observation so as to propose something that would be interesting for the students, and on the other hand, I had to rationalize possibilities to transpose the theoretical tenets of intercultural language teaching to my own pedagogical practice.

From the classroom observation experience, I had the insight that fairy tales could be an interesting theme to develop the cycle, considering the high level of creativity in the group, and also their relationship with fictional narratives of various

kinds. But how this type of narrative would help me link theory and practice? What fairytales have to do with intercultural/symbolic competence?

Kramsch (2009) suggests that fairy tales and fairytale-like narratives highlight the power of language to bring about events in a 'magical' way. According to her, in stories of this kind, language plays a role that is much more complex than the referential, communicative exchanges of information taught in language textbooks. In the world of fantasy, knowing and using appropriately the names of persons and things can be a matter of life and death. Also, language use might appear in creative and powerful ways, but it can be constrained by conventions and rituals, as it is the case of magic spells and formulas. And in these stories, although language conforms to standard grammar and vocabulary, words always have the potential to mean more than in everyday life. Here, signifiers seem less welded to their signifieds because in the realm of fairytales words are not necessarily bonded to their historical origins, but they float freely as myths or ritualistic utterances.

Unlike fairy tales, language learning is not a matter of life and death, but such digression into the real world can help students understand how the use of symbolic forms is not just a nice way of expressing thoughts, naming things and people, and representing the world in poetic ways. According to Kramsch (2009), fairy tales can unveil deeper truths about the nature and power of symbolic forms to bring about social existence.

In fact, what Kramsch has been suggesting ever since her first publication on symbolic competence in 2006 is that an intercultural/symbolic competence has to be nourished by a literary imagination at all levels of the language curriculum. For her, literature can foster the three major components of symbolic competence: the production of complexity, the tolerance of ambiguity, and an appreciation of form as meaning. These three components should lead teachers to view language and culture, that is, grammar and style, vocabulary and its cultural connotations, texts and their points of view, as inseparable.

Of course, literature is not the only fertile soil to the development of learners' symbolic competence, and I particularly think that the very notion of what literature actually means can be quite problematic. Thus, what I kept in my mind while planning the cycle was that the understanding of language as a system of complex, ambiguous and meaningful symbolic forms can be explored in many different ways in the vast semiotic world around us, not only through literature. Examples of that are

given by the same author, later in 2014, when she proposes a pedagogy that sensitizes learners to stylistic choices and translations of various kinds, such as across linguistic codes, across discourse frames, and across different medium or different modalities.

As students engage in practices of translation, they might have the chance to look both *at* and *through* language. Translation across different codes, for instance, can give students the understanding that differences in meaning between a word, or a phrase in different languages are based not only on conventional semantic definitions, but also on the subjective, social and cultural resonances of utterances. Translation across discourse frames can serve to highlight the importance of framing in global communication. Transposition from one medium to another can alert students to variations in the use of language according to the medium chosen, and transfer across modalities might ultimately help them see how meaning is made not only through verbal, but also through musical and visual language. The world of fairytales is replete with possibilities of these types. Original texts have been translated into different languages, and recontextualized in different versions, parodies, songs, videos, advertisements, and images.

Furthermore, fairytales are a type of cultural narrative, which can be easily found in many different expressive forms, ranging from the linguistic to the visual to any other semiotic mode. Kearney (2012) defines cultural narratives as "multiple (sometimes competing), conventionalized storylines that cultural groups produce and use to make sense of and attribute meaning to their shared experiences" (p. 59). According to the author, such stories are loaded with symbols that signal perspectives and meanings, and whether or not individual members of cultural groups accept particular narratives as reasonable, they are available to group members for purposes of meaning-making through the semiotic tools they share, especially language. Seen from this perspective, cultural narratives are "frames for interpreting collective experiences, clarifying and resolving conflicts, and affirming moral values" (MISHLER, 1995, p. 110). As teachers, we have the challenge to expand our notions of "narrative" so as to include this spectrum of the social functions of stories, and explore them as a way to develop intercultural understanding.

In addition to all that, fairy tales, although set in a world of fantasy, can be viewed as allegories or dramatic representations of the real world. According to Zipes (1975), such stories are an avenue for social dreaming or utopianism. They portray

dreams and nightmares of groups of people and present a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live. They express the desire for a happy ending in which the rewards of love, power and wealth are granted. By giving fairy tales utopian endings, tellers are not just playing with wish fulfillment, but also expressing feelings of dissatisfaction with their actual lives and social positions. In this sense, the utopian perspective becomes a critical, figurative reflection of everyday banality.

A fairy tale is a kind of genre that transmits social, cultural and political messages. It has been consistently linked to nationalism and the formation of a cultural identity, and it is loaded with strong moral connotations that aim to provide both instruction and delight. Such strong moral lessons of fairy tales can be a fertile ground for social criticism. In this sense, stories can be analyzed as a way to reflect critically upon things that we observe and do in our daily lives. For this project, I have chosen to deal with the tale of Cinderella; from its old variants to its contemporary recontextualizations, and the main reason why I have chosen this specific tale is the plethora of critical interpretations that it evokes nowadays.

The popularity of Cinderella has allowed her to step out of the storybook to be represented in opera, ballet, Hollywood films and many other types of media. As a folktale, it is the subject of a number of studies that trace its origins and nuances of over seven hundred versions worldwide. Its oldest documented version comes from China, but the most popular version was first published by Charles Perrault in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* in 1697, and later by the Brothers Grimm in their folktale collection *Grimm's fairy tales.*

In terms of moral connotations, Cinderella is considered a product of male design, which according to Lieberman (1986), serves to acculturate women to an acceptable role as a mother and as a wife in a patriarchal society. By placing females exclusively in domestic roles, and whose ultimate rescue depend on a male figure, this fairy tale, just like many others, projects a normative pattern of behavior imposed by the virtue of one's sex. Baum (2000) suggests that Cinderella passed from her fairytale origins to mythical proportions having escaped the boundaries of her own stories. As a metaphor, Cinderella defines the girls' choices for a romantic partner, the structures of friendship and obedience that girls are trained to uphold, unconditional family love and, not least, ideals of personal appearance and deportment.

A clear example of that is a polemic Brazilian schooling initiative called *Escola de princesas,* a kind of princess academy that aims at preparing girls from four to fifteen years old to act and behave like a princess. The facility offers courses to teach about etiquette, make up, cleaning and organizing the bedroom, and also about how to find the marriage of a lifetime. Therefore, reinforcing the idea that in our society, girls are supposed to be docile, fragile and subservient.

Bearing this discussion in mind, dealing with fairy tales in the classroom does not mean that we are opening up our imagination to escape into a non-existent land, but rather to make greater contact with reality. By creating a project where students could have the chance to recognize, criticize and ultimately reconstruct different 'shades' of Cinderella, they were given the possibility of using symbolic forms to change a certain social structure, and to reframe the world of fairy tales according to their own perspectives.

3.7.1.3 Step 3: designing the cycle of intercultural practices

As it was already stated in this study, an intercultural being can be understood as someone who has the general ability to understand otherness and to be aware of one´s own values and perspectives. In addition to that, Kramsch (2011) proposes that the intercultural communicator needs to develop *symbolic competence*, an ability to make meanings encompassing subjective, aesthetical, historical and ideological dimensions. Here, the word symbolic is used to refer "not only to *representations* of people and objects in the world but to the *construction* of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and values through the use of symbolic forms" (KRAMSCH, 2011, p. 357). But how can we teach this symbolic dimension? How can we foster students to explore, problematize and redraw their borders with others in their learning experiences in class?

The project *Fifty Shades of Cinderella* is an attempt to answer those questions. It was organized as a cycle of pedagogical practices whose main objective was to bring about intercultural experiences in class. The activities to be described here were designed to foster students to explore, problematize and redraw their borders with others through moments of discussion, critical analysis, and performative creativity. During these practices, students were challenged to understand and act with the symbolic power of language as they dealt with stories of

fairy tales in different texts, time and space, modalities and cultures, and ultimately, they were encouraged to create alternative realities in symbolic ways across various medium and modalities, therefore playing with their symbolic/intercultural competence.

The very title of this cycle, *Fifty Shades of Cinderella,* was chosen so as to play with symbolic elements. It evokes an allusion to the various possibilities of recreating the tale of Cinderella, and at the same time, it is an ironic pun with the famous blockbuster *Fifty Shades of Grey*, a polemic movie based on the best seller of the same name by Erika Leonard James, who portrays the main character, a woman, as a naive young girl who gets swept off her feet by a handsome and powerful man. Deep down, it is a Cinderella story, a Cinderella in bondage who, rather than kissed by a froggy Prince, was made to sign a contract for submission with rules and regulations.

The project was organized in a cycle of five intercultural practices.[15] Here, an intercultural practice may range from a single activity such as a critical analysis of a text or video to the development of a sequence of activities that work together. Proponents of intercultural language teaching usually aims at fostering critical reflection, or ethnographic observation in the activities/projects proposed, but in this study, being intercultural also means being able to perform creatively with language. In this sense, interculturality is not only awareness, but also performativity.

The starting point for the creation of the cycle was a topic or theme that would contextualize it. Here, it was important to be sensitive to students' realities while selecting a guiding theme, since their own experience of life would be paramount for classroom discussions. As I have already said, the decision to use fairytales as a theme for this project could only be made after a period of classroom observations and informal talks which allowed me to understand better the profile of the group.

Since students were supposed to work with fairy tales in the whole cycle, the first practice of the project, *Understanding fairy tales*, was an important moment to explore typical features of this type of literary narrative, and provide examples as a way to set the theme in the first class. During this practice, learners were expected to recognize typical characteristics of fairy tales, mention some examples they knew,

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[15] The ideas for the organization of this project were based on Rosa Filho & Gil (2016).

and reflect on possible reasons why some versions of famous fairy tales have changed across the years. Here, the objective was not only to introduce the theme of the project, but also to help learners understand fairy tales as cultural narratives loaded with symbols that signal perspective and meanings that might change from time to time.

In the second practice of the cycle, *Recognizing Cinderella*, learners were engaged in analytical types of activities. The aim of this practice was to expose them to written texts, videos, songs or any other media in which any (or multiple) aspect(s) of culture could be critically analyzed. For this project, I have decided to divide the practices of analysis in two different moments, respectively focusing on *recognizing* (Practice 2) and *problematizing* (Practice 3) representations of Cinderella as a story and as a historical subject across various texts, time and spaces, cultures and languages.

In Practice 2, intercultural symbolic competence was understood as an ability to explore meanings in relation to various texts, historical moments, and the dialogues that emerge between them. Having that in mind, two different activities were designed for Practice 2. In the first one, learners were encouraged to explore the essence of the character Cinderella by analyzing and comparing different versions of this fairytale across the world, namely *The Story of the Black Cow* (a tale from the Himalayas), *Yeh-Shen* (a tale from China) and *Rhodopis* (a tale from Egypt). And after that, in the second activity, learners watched two segments of the movie Cinderella produced by Walt Disney in the 1950s and compared it to advertisements from that time, in which women were portrayed. By engaging in the activities proposed in this practice of the project, students were expected to recognize Cinderella as character in a fairytale story, and in addition to that, to understand those representations as allegories of the real world, therefore exploring fictional characters in relation to historical subjects.

Moving on to the third practice of the project, learners were involved in another activity of analysis, but this time *problematizing* the tales. The analytical activities developed in this practice led students to understand Cinderella as a subversive figure in that she has crossed various borders, be they linguistic, cultural, historical, or textual, and has challenged many power structures. Here, learners were expected to act as intercultural beings while problematizing their boundaries, reflecting on themselves, their own beliefs, and the languages they use. Being

intercultural, in this sense, was seen as a profound and methodical investigation of how we come to understand ourselves, our history, our culture, our knowledge and our experiences, and how the boundaries of our thoughts and practices can be traversed (p. 42).

For this analytical practice, students were exposed to different representations of Cinderella, starting from Dina Goldstein's emblematic photograph of this character sitting in a dingy bar holding a shot glass; moving to a contemporary television advertisement for Converse®, in which the glass slippers are replaced by a pair of sneakers and the royal scene gives space to school corridors and detention rooms; and finally, a Youtube parody, *Tinderella*, which depicts the life of this character in the age of dating apps. After analyzing the images/videos presented in class, learners had to choose the representation that they most identified with, and reflect on some guiding questions that would lead to a classroom discussion.

 In Practice 4, *Reimagining Cinderella,* learners moved from the analysis and discussions set in the previous practices to create something on their own. Current research (e.g., CARTER 2004) emphasizes the need to incorporate activities to foster creativity in the additional language classroom as a way to give pleasure, to evoke alternative fictional worlds that can be recreated in new ways, to express identities, and to establish harmony and convergence as well as disruption and critique. Now, once students have analyzed and problematized many different representations of Cinderella, they would finally have the chance to create alternative realities.

In this creative practice, students were encouraged to recreate their own versions of Cinderella. For this, they would have to play with typical elements of fairytales, think of a different context to set their stories and contextualize the characters, and create a satirical plot in which they could include their voices to deconstruct certain power relations, social structures and stereotypes observed in the tales of Cinderella they have read throughout the cycle.

Finally, the last phase of the cycle, *Reflecting on the experience*, also involves practices of reflection and analysis, but this time, learners were encouraged to think about their own learning processes. Here, they were expected to notice how the experience of the previous practices has contributed to make them realize how relative our values, behaviors and ways of thinking are, and how important is to have a multiple perspective towards a certain reality.

For a better illustration of the pedagogical project as a whole, and as way to summarize how the features of each practice described in this section were based on my understanding of intercultural language education, *Table 1* below sketches a methodological design, presenting the sequence of classroom activities in relation to the key aspects of *Exploring, Problematizing* and *Redrawing.* The complete work plans and the visual material used in class are available in *Appendix C.*

Table 1 – Overview of the cycle of intercultural practices.

EXPLORING		
Practices	**Features**	**Being intercultural**
Practice 1: *Understanding fairytales* **(2h/ 1 meeting)**	Students recognize typical characteristics of fairy tales and brainstorm examples they know. Students discuss how fairy tales have changed across time.	The potential to become aware of and critically reflect on and act on the crossing of multiple borders between linguistic codes and cultural meanings, the self and others, various timescales, historical contexts, and power structures.
Practice 2: *Recognizing Cinderella* **(4h/ 2 meetings)**	Students analyze and compare different fairytales of Cinderella so as to recognize it as a story, historical subject and cultural representation in different texts, time and space, cultures and languages.	
PROBLEMATIZING		
Practices	**Features**	**Being intercultural**
Practice 3: *Problematizing Cinderella* **(2h/ 1 meeting)**	Students analyze transgressive representations of Cinderella and position themselves in relation to them.	The potential to reflect on how relative our values, behaviors and ways of thinking are, and how important it is to have a multiple perspective towards a certain reality.
REDRAWING		
Practices	**Features**	**Being intercultural**
Practice 4: *Reimagining Cinderella* **(4h/ 2 meetings)**	Students resignify, recontextualize, and reframe meanings of Cinderella.	The potential to create alternative realities in symbolic ways across different medium and modalities.
Practice 5: *Reflecting on the experience* **(2h/ 1 meeting)**	Students reflect on their own productions and on their learning experiences in the cycle of intercultural practices.	The potential to play with performative creativity.

Based on the summary of the cycle presented above, I hope to shed light on how theoretical constructs of intercultural language teaching were understood in the

light of my own pedagogical practices. Here, being intercultural was approached as the potential to explore, problematize and redraw multiple borders between linguistic codes and cultural meanings, the self and others, various timescales and historical contexts, and power structures through the creative use of symbolic forms. As I present the course of this cycle further in this study, I hope to give a glimpse of how intercultural symbolic competence looks and feels in the reality of a classroom.

3.7.1.4 Step 4: implementing the cycle of intercultural practices

Once all the practices of the cycle were planned, implementing them in class was the following step. During this phase, a total of twelve classes (six weekly meetings) were used, and all the interactions in class were video recorded.

For the implementation of the project, our meetings took place in the language laboratory, instead of in the usual classroom where students were having classes before. Such decision was made because I needed a classroom setting that could have different dispositions, depending on the interactive features of the practices organized in class. In the lab, as opposed to regular classrooms, desks could be set in different ways, which facilitated the development of practices in groups, or the organization of circles for classroom discussions. Also, during those classes I made use of audio visual equipment, and because of that, being in the lab was very convenient, once I could optimize time by organizing everything before the moment of the class.

During the implementation of the project, the key words that guided my practice as a teacher were 'engagement', 'desire', 'transgression', and 'pleasure' (LAVIOSA, 2014). These words reflect exactly what I wanted to provoke on the students as they participated in the experiences proposed. In pedagogy of engagement, students are given the opportunity to develop their identities by learning to negotiate meanings between languages and cultures. Desire in language is the need to identify with a symbolic Other and find new ways of self-expression beyond the boundaries of one linguistic system and culture (KRAMSCH 2009, p. 14–16). In this sense, during the implementation of the project, I was constantly reflecting on how students could express themselves in different modes of communication and be sensitized to the multiple semiotic possibilities of languages. Transgression means letting students discover unexpected meanings in a text and voice them. It also

means allowing them to display their creative potentials, even if it leads the class to a direction that was not planned before. Finally, I think that learning can be much more effective if it is associated to pleasure, which is a sense of gratification that comes when participation in classroom experiences creates a bond with the whole group. In order to reach that, I tried to value every instance of students' participation by listening to them carefully, encouraging them to see beyond and not to be afraid of sharing their own views.

3.7.2 Investigative phase

The investigative phase of this study consisted on the different procedures used to generate data such as field notes, classroom observations, and questionnaires, the subsequent transcription of classroom observation, and data analysis. It was divided in two steps (see *Figure 2*), being the first one the data generation from field notes and classroom interactions, and the second one the data transcription and analysis.

3.7.2.1 Step 1: data generation from field notes and profile questionnaires

The purpose of the first step of the investigative phase, which took place prior to the pedagogical phase, was to gather data that would help me understand better the future participants of this investigation, which was paramount for the development of the pedagogical project.

With the purpose of getting acquainted with the participants, and also as a way to have insights that would facilitate the development of the pedagogical project, a total of eight classes (four weekly meetings) with the former teacher were observed. From that moment on, I have written field notes as a way to explore my own feelings as a teacher-researcher during the different phases of this study.

In addition to that, prior to the implementation of the pedagogical project, an online profile questionnaire was administered as a way to help me understand the participants' profile as an English language learner. This questionnaire was designed as a Google Form, and it consisted of five questions about their learning experiences. From a total of twenty-one students, fifteen of them answered the questionnaire, so

although not everyone participated, I considered the sample representative for the whole group.

3.7.2.2 Step 2: data generation from video recording and reflexive testimonial

A total of twelve classes (six weekly meetings) were video recorded during the implementation of the pedagogical project. Here, my objective was to gather instances of classroom discussion that could show how the construction of intercultural moments was facilitated through the practices proposed in the project.

Before gathering data, I explained to the students that our meetings were going to be video recorded, and asked them to read and sign a consent form that would regulate their participation in the research. Since they were from fifteen to seventeen years old, they had to ask their parents to read and sign the form. The model of this document can be found in *Appendix A.*

In addition to that, at the end of the implementation phase, students were invited to respond to a reflexive testimonial. This way, I could understand, from their own perspectives, how they felt in relation to the intercultural experiences lived throughout the classes. This reflexive questionnaire was composed by only one open-ended question ("How did you like this experience? Write positive and negative (if you have any) aspects about the cycle of activities developed throughout this project"), and students were allowed to express themselves both in English or in Portuguese.

3.7.2.3 Step 3: data transcription and analysis

The investigative phase of this study focused primarily on the classroom data in order to analyze how intercultural moments, here referred to as "intercultural episodes", could be co-constructed through my interaction with the group of students. Such episodes were moments of classroom discussion, based on the implementation of the practices proposed in the project, where students were able to explore, problematize and redraw their borders with others. During the organization of this data, video recordings from classroom discussions were transcribed based on discourse-analytic methods, and the following transcription conventions were applied:

Table 2 – Transcription conventions.

Symbol	Convention
T	Teacher
S	Student
MS	Male Student
FS	Female Student
Ss	More than one student
(0.0)	pausing as measured in seconds
(unintelligible)	unintelligible or researcher doubt
((double parentheses))	researcher's notes, usually on gesture or other paralinguistic features of interaction
underlining	speaker's stress
[bracket	overlapping speech

Transcription conventions are adapted from Jeffersen (2004)[16].

3.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, I provided the objectives and research questions that guided this study, and situated the reader into the study by describing the research setting and the participants. Also, I presented details regarding the pedagogical and investigative phases of the research. For this purpose, I explored all steps taken while designing a pedagogical project whose main objective was to facilitate intercultural moments in the classroom, and provided information regarding the methods applied to gather and analyze data. The following chapter presents the analysis of a set of interactional moments and learners' written productions that emerged from the implementation of the practices designed in the project.

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[16] Although the author does not differ male from female students in his transcription system, sometimes in this study such differentiation will be necessary for analyzing interactions.

4 THE INTERACTIONAL DIMENSION OF MY *PRAXIS*

This chapter aims at exploring the interactional dimension of my *praxis*, showing how intercultural moments could be co-constructed through the negotiation of meanings in the classroom and how the exploration of fairy tales, as a pedagogical resource, could foster learners to cultivate their intercultural symbolic competence by inhabiting other perspectives, analyzing different levels of meanings, and creatively playing with language. By doing so, I ultimately hope to illustrate how the theoretical debate on language education from an ecological perspective could be experienced through my own pedagogical practice.

As a way to systematize data analysis, classroom episodes and learners' written productions are presented and discussed in this chapter around the key aspects of *relationality, transgression* and *potentiality.* These three dimensional elements were paramount for the development of this part of the investigation, once they were used as analytical constructs for the understanding of intercultural symbolic competence in classroom practices.

As it was previously stated in this study, *relationality* is a construct that evokes teaching from the perspective of a relational pedagogy (KERN, 2015). This means that learning a language involves the understanding that meanings are not constructed in isolation, but they rather reside in the relations, reframings and dialogues that emerge from texts, historical moments, modalities, and the interaction between storytellers and listeners. Following this perspective, learning for the construction of intercultural symbolic competence requires profound reflection on meanings that emerge from interaction, and "it implies inhabiting these in-between spaces so that learners cross these boundaries and critically reflect on the meanings that emerge in the process" (VINALL, 2016. p. 4).

The aspect of *transgression* stands for what Pennycook (2006) refers to as "transgressive pedagogy", in which learning is seen as a transformative experience of problematizing ways of thinking and doing, and ultimately understanding ourselves, our history and culture, and how the boundaries of our thoughts and practices can be traversed. Based on such *transgressive* aspect, learning for the construction of intercultural symbolic competence involves the understanding of reality as multiple discursive dimensions materialized as symbolic representation, symbolic action and symbolic power (KRAMSCH, 2011). In this sense, being intercultural is about

transgressing the pre-given, the alleged natural order, the normative, the common sense, and through such transgressive practice of accessing reality as discourse, being intercultural is about gaining a privileged mentality that leads to a critical understanding and to the transformation of who we are.

Finally, the idea of *potentiality* stresses the possibility of reconstructing alternative realities in symbolic ways. It is therefore "an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing" (VINALL, 2016, p. 5). Following this perspective, being intercultural is not about acquiring a finalized or instrumental ability, which can be applied to specific situations, but it is rather about cultivating a potentiality that can be unevenly distributed. Learning, in this sense, means becoming aware of one's own potentiality at the same time that communicative, analytical, interpretive, and creative abilities are developed.

In order to illustrate intercultural symbolic competence as relationality, transgression and potentiality, this study devotes particular attention to the analysis of classroom interaction for the fact that I have been defending a perspective of additional language pedagogy in which intercultural symbolic competence is collaboratively constructed in the experience of learning. In this sense, the project-based activities presented here certainly facilitated the emergence of intercultural symbolic moments, but it was through dialogue that students could be taken to another level of cultural exploration, and ultimately experiment the transformational engagement by exploring, problematizing, and redrawing the boarders between self and other.

Through the project-based activities developed for this study, learners were encouraged to travel to the world of fairy tales, and more specifically to the story of Cinderella and its multiple reinterpretations. Here, fairy tales were understood not only in its fictional, and imaginary dimension, but also in relation to the reality around us. By creating a project through which students could have the chance to recognize, criticize and ultimately reconstruct different 'shades' of Cinderella, they were given the possibility of using symbolic forms to change a certain social structure, and to reframe the world of fairy tales according to their own perspectives.

In this chapter, the analysis of classroom interaction was organized following the order in which the different practices proposed in the project were implemented (see *Table 1* on *Chapter III*), starting from the first practice, *Understanding Fairy Tales*, which was the introduction of the project, moving to two practices of analysis,

namely *Recognizing Cinderella* and *Problematizing Cinderella*. Then, following that sequence, learners' creative productions were explored, as well as some interactive moments regarding their feedback on the project.

4.1 PRACTICE 1: UNDERSTANDING FAIRY TALES

The general purpose of this introductory practice was to present the theme of the project to the class. Through the activities developed in this moment, learners were expected to recognize typical characteristics of fairy tales, brainstorm examples they knew, and also discuss possible reasons why fairy tales had changed across the time. Here, it was essential for learners to understand the genre of fairy tales, since they would make use of such knowledge to analyze different cultural narratives of that kind, and ultimately recreate their own fairytale worlds. Having that in mind, the theme of the project was introduced through a game in which students, organized in small groups, got a number of hints to figure out the name of the tale being described (complete work plan in Appendix C), and after that, they were encouraged to work in pairs to list characteristics of fairy tales they were familiarized with, and report their answers to the whole class. The following extract depicts the moment:

Excerpt 1: Brainstorming elements of fairytales
01 T:So, can you tell me any typical element of fairytales that came to your mind?
02 S1: There is <u>always</u> a prince and a princess
03 S2: There is a castle, beautiful dresses…
04 T: Very good! What else?
05 S3: Usually there is a witch, or someone really bad.
06 S4: And <u>magic</u>!
07 T: Very good! Can you think of any other characteristic of fairytales?
08 ((students remain silent))
09 T: They also teach us a moral lesson in the end, right?
10 Ss: Yes.
11 T: Do you remember any of these lessons from a fairy tale?
12 S1: Good always wins.
13 T: Good example. That's true! In fairy tales, the hero always defeats the villain.

Although the purpose of the game as an activity to introduce the theme of the project was to create a ludic atmosphere in my first meeting with the group, it also helped me to contextualize a follow-up discussion where learners could collaboratively construct knowledge about fairy tales as a genre. Lines 1,7 and 11

show my moves to foster students to brainstorm typical elements of that type of cultural narrative, and by responding to my questions, they were able to explore a number of aspects, such as common motifs, archetypal characters, typical settings or moral lessons (lines 2-12), that would be paramount for them in future practices of the project.

Following that introduction, I gave learners explicit directions about the second activity of the practice, in which they were asked to read brief passages of fairytale originals and brainstorm possible reasons why those stories have changed so much through time. The passages presented creepy details about old versions of famous fairytales, and gave students the chance to have a glimpse of a fairytale world much more violent than the one they were used to. The excerpt below depicts the moment when students were encouraged to share their impressions:

Excerpt 2: Understanding fairy tales as conventionalized storylines
14 T: So, did you notice many differences from the versions you know?
15 S2: My god! They were <u>really</u> violent!
16 T: Can you give any example of this violence?
17 S3: In Snow White. Her stepmother was like... punished
18 T: That's true. She was punished to death. And why do you think these stories
19 have changed so much?
20 S3: Maybe they had to adapt, you know, for kids.
21 T: So, do you think in the past fairytales were not for kids?
22 S3: Yeah… I don't know.
23 T: You're right! Fairytales were based on really old stories, you know,
24 folklore… They were not specifically created for children in their origins.
25 What else called your attention in these stories?
26 S4: João e Maria, Hansel and Gretel, right? ((asking for confirmation)) The story
27 was based on true facts, when parents abandoned their kids in the forest.
28 T: Good point! So, many of the fictional things we read in fairytales can be
29 related to something that really existed in the past.
30 T: And what about moral lessons? What do you think these fairytales were
31 teaching?
32 S7: That if we do something bad, something bad comes too
32 T: Sure yes! The idea of justice. What else?
34 S2: hmmm don't know.

The episode presented above shows how learners were involved in another interactive moment that helped them construct knowledge about fairy tales. Students' first impressions about the passages, revolving around the idea of violence (line 15) provided an opportunity to discuss how those cultural narratives are loaded with symbols that signal perspective and meanings that might change from time to time,

or even how fairytales can be viewed as allegories or dramatic representations of the real world, as in the moment we discussed the case of Hansel and Gretel (line 26), whose story is an allegory to the many parents who abandoned their children during a major European famine in the 14th century.

Talking about elements of fairy tales in the first class was an important point of departure for the development of the project. Through the interaction in class, learners were able to co-construct an understanding of fairy tales as conventionalized storylines created by cultural groups, contextualized at specific places and times, and related to the reality, although set in a fantasy world. In the upcoming practices of the project, the knowledge of fairy tales as a cultural product will be essential for learners to explore how social, cultural and political messages are materialized in those stories through the use of linguistic and other symbolic forms.

Having introduced the project to the group, the following practices were focused on the analysis and ultimately recreation of the tale of Cinderella. As already exposed in Chapter III, the decision to use this specific tale, from its old variants to its contemporary recontextualizations was due to its popularity and the many possibilities of critical interpretations it evokes. Represented in opera, ballet, famous Hollywood productions and many other types of media, Cinderella, as pointed by Baum (2000), has escaped the stories and gained mythical proportions. Therefore, dealing with this tale in classroom is also about understanding the unveiled ideologies and larger cultural, political and social issues it represents.

4.2 PRACTICE 2: RECOGNIZING CINDERELLA

In the second practice of the project, learners were engaged in analytical types of tasks, with the objective of recognizing the idea of Cinderella in different levels of meaning. Having that in mind, two project-based activities were developed so as to help students understand the essence of Cinderella both as a fictional character and as an allegory of women from a patriarchal perspective. In order to reach that objective, in the first activity, learners were encouraged to explore the essence of the character Cinderella by analyzing and comparing different versions of this fairytale across the world: *The Story of the Black Cow*, a tale from the Himalayas; *Yeh-She*n, a tale from China, and *Rhodopis*, a tale from Egypt. After that, in the second activity, students watched part of the famous Cinderella movie produced by

Walt Disney in the 1950s and compared it to representations of women in famous advertisements from that time (Complete work plan in *Appendix C*). By engaging the students in these two analytical activities, they were expected to understand Cinderella not only as a story, or a character in a movie, but also as a historical subject, in the sense that her fictional existence stands for a production of meanings encompassing the relations of language, history and ideology.

4.2.1 Recognizing Cinderella and its variants in tales across time and space

The story of *Cinderella*, or *The Little Glass Slipper* is an old folktale with thousands of variants across the world. Although each of these versions presents particular details that make them unique, all these stories share a myth-element of unjust oppression and triumphant reward in the story of a young girl who lives in unfortunate circumstances, which are suddenly changed to remarkable fortune. Although the main character's name changes in different languages, in the English-language folklore, "Cinderella" is the name commonly used. The origin of the word "Cinderella" is an adaptation of its French version, *Cendrillon*, written by Charles Perrault. The etimology of both names evokes the word "cinders" (ashes), which is probably related to the fact that in older versions of the story, the young girl was forced to sleep in the kitchen, without blankets, having nothing but ashes to warm herself through the night. That could explain why in Portuguese, Cinderella is also known as *Gata Borralheira*, since the word "borralho" in Portuguese stands for the idea of "ashes". So the title in Portuguese might be an allusion to the image of a cat who sleeps near the ashes of the wood stove to warm itself, a typical rural household scene of the past.

The story of Rhodopis is considered to be the oldest version of this tale. It was first written by the Greek historian Strabo in the 1st century before Christ, and it tells the story of a young courtesan who marries an Egyptian pharaoh. The plot, although loaded with specific symbols from the Egyptian mythology, can be easily recognized as a Cinderella story. Born in Greece, Rhodopis was a taken to Egypt as a slave. There, she had a quite solitary life, having no one but animals as friends. As she was bathing one day, an eagle snatched one of her shoes and dropped it into the lap of the pharaoh. He took that as a sign of god Horus and declared that all women

in Egyt would have to try that shoe, and that he would take the owner to be his queen.

Another famous ancient version of Cinderella comes from China. The tale of Yeh-Shen, which was first published in the 9th-century compilation *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, tells the story of a young girl who lived long before the Qin and Han Dynasty. Yeh-Shen was gifted in many skills such as pottery and poetry, as opposed to her half-sister, who had no special talent, and because of that, she was selfish and cruel to Yeh-Shen.

With the death of her father, Yeh-Shen was forced to become a servant and work for her scheming stepmother and envious sister. Her only pleasure was to talk to her friend, a gold fish, which was actually a guardian spirit sent by her own dead mother. By the time of New Year Festival, it was the spirit of the fish who gave Yeh-Shen a pair of tiny golden slippers and a beautiful gown. In the Festival, everyone admired the beautiful girl, but the fear of being recognized pushed her to leave and accidentally lose one of her golden slippers, which passed on to various people until it reached the hands of the nearby king. Intrigued by the size of that shoe, the king began to search for its owner, and when he finally found her and heard her story, he got struck by her good-nature and beauty, and asked her to come with him to live in the palace as his wife.

Although most of Cinderella stories portray a girl as the main character, the Himalayan anonymous *Story of the Black Cow is* about an orphan boy who was mistreated by his stepmother. Fortunately, he had a magical cow as a friend, and because of her, he never suffered from hunger. One day, while the boy was taking bath at the river, one of his golden hairs fell and a fish ate it. Right after that, a fisher who was nearby caught the fish and took it to the king's palace. When they cut it open, all present admired the lovely golden hair, and when the princess saw it, she said she would never be happy again until she met the owner. The king's men found the boy and took him to the palace where he ended up falling in love with the princess and getting married.

All these tales are loaded with cultural traits that belong to the region from where they originate. In the story of Rhodopis, it was the Egyptian God Horus as a falcon who took one of her shoes. In the story of Yeh-Shen, her father was a cave chief, her gown was made of kingfisher feathers, and instead of a ball, she heads to a typical new year festival. Finally, in the Himalayan tale, a cow is revered as the

source of food and symbol of life. However, despite all the culturally specific elements in these stories, they all share common traits that unite them as what we recognize as a "Cinderella story": the main character is essentially good and mistreated by those with weak moral values, such as envy or greed. There is a magic token/magical helper, which leads the character to a triumphant reward. And also, in all the stories, there is a lost element that connects the main character to the person who would change her/his fate through marriage.

4.2.2 Understanding the essence of Cinderella as a character

Based on the previous considerations, in the first activity of Practice 2, *Recognizing Cinderella,* learners were fostered to understand the essence of Cinderella as a story, and as a character in those three different tales. In order to do so, they had to engage in an analytical activity that challenged them to go beyond the understanding of the texts in isolation to analyze meanings that reside in the relations and dialogues emerging from the texts and the learners' own life experiences with the world of fairy tales.

In order to implement the activity, the classroom was organized in groups, and I gave brief directions explaining that they were going to read different versions of a famous fairytale. At that point, I had not revealed that those tales were all versions of what we know by Cinderella. Each group chose only one of the versions, and after reading, we set a discussion based on the following questions: *(1) Which famous fairytale is it similar to? (2) What typical features of fairytales can be noticed in the story you have read? (3) How did you feel about this tale? What feelings emerged when you read the story?* The excerpt below depicts the conversation that emerged from the second question:

Excerpt 3: Helping learners to develop analytical frameworks
34 T: Okay! Based on the stories you've just read, do you all agree that these
35 versions could be compared to what we believe to be Cinderella?
36 Ss: Yes!
37 T: Okay. So, first let's listen to the group who read The Story of the Black Cow.
38 What are the elements in this story that connect it to the idea of Cinderella?
39 S1: The stepmother
40 S2: Talking animals
41 S3: They get married
42 S4: And also she finds his hair.

43 T: Exactly! Which refers to the idea of a lost element.
44 T: Who is the main character in this tale?
45 S4: It's a boy.
46 S5:Yeah… and this changes a lot of things.
47 T: Like what?
48 S5: I don't know exactly…
49 T:((Laughing)) It's okay. We're going to talk about that in a few minutes.
50 T: What about you guys who read the story of Rhodopis?
51 S5: There were animals and relationship with animals, but I don't think they talk
52 in this story.
53 T: Oh that's true! In Rhodopis' story we don't have talking animals! But I guess
54 she had a good relationship with animals, right?
55 S5: Yeah! She had only animals as friends, actually.
56 T: Exactly! Maybe this gives us the idea of a carrying and innocent person…
57 S5: Yeah… I think so…
58 T: And what about the representation of Yeh-Shen? What are the elements that
59 connect this story to the typical idea of Cinderella?
60 S6: There's a lot of things like the slippers…
61 S2: There is the stepmother.
62 S3: There is a bad stepmother ((laugh)) that treats her badly and humm…
63 S7: There's a wedding and she becomes rich.
64 T: Yes! So, there is this idea of social mobility which is only achieved through
65 marriages. And I guess it's the same in all your stories, right?
66 S2: Yeah! It's not a story about a girl who studied and suddenly "Oh! I have a
67 job now!" ((everybody laughs)).
68 T: Exactly! And also there's a slipper, right?
69 Ss: Yes!
70 T: Just like the one in Cinderella?
71 Ss: No.
72 S2: It's a golden slipper.
73 T: Which is a typical idea of China, right? Gold and excessive amount of colors.
74 S1: Yeah! And there are some cultural elements like the goldfish. ((reading from
75 the cellphone)) "the goldfish is a symbol for wealth, because its first character
76 "jin" means gold and its second character "yu"means "jade". It's like a pun!
77 S2: Gente, gente! And the kingfisher is a metaphor for the most showy forms of
78 female beauty ((reading from her cellphone)).
79 S3: Oh yeah. It makes all sense
80 T: How interesting! Thank you for sharing this information. So, probably you
81 guys noticed a lot of cultural elements in your stories that give us this idea of
82 "Oh! this is Egypt, this is China, and this is the Himalaya", right? probably these
83 are stereotypes about those places, but they have an important role here,because
84 they foster our imagination to understand the characters in the story.
85 T: So, in the story of Cinderella there is a lost element, right? She leaves a
86 slipper behind and that's what connects her to the prince at the end. What about
87 your stories? What is the lost element in there? First, in the Black Cow.
88 S4: His hair. He is a golden boy and he has golden everything
89 ((Ss laugh))
90 T: What about Rhodopis?
91 S5: One of her shoes is taken by a Falcon and given to the Pharaoh. He thinks
92 it's a sign from Horus.

93 T: And here ((looking at Yeh-Shen group)) it was the golden slipper.

Although I had not revealed to the students that those stories were considered old variants of Cinderella, I noticed that it was not difficult for them to figure that out by themselves. As soon as the groups finished reading the tales, they had already recognized them as versions of Cinderella, but even so, I needed to understand which elements from the stories helped them come to that conclusion. Lines 37-38; 50; 58-59 show my moves to foster students to investigate similarities between the tales they had read and the typical representation of Cinderella. Group by group, learners listed a series of elements in their stories, such as archetypal characters (lines 39-40;51;61), central theme (line 63) and significant events of the plot (lines 41-42), and those were the main elements that helped them understand the essence of Cinderella across the texts.

Besides prompting students to list those common elements of Cinderella, I also provided them with supportive recasting to respond to their analysis and, at the same time, scaffold their interpretations to help them to move from the pinpointing of narrative elements to the development of analytical frames. Such pattern of modeling can be noticed many times throughout the discussion. For example, in line 43, a literal example provided by S4, *"And also she finds his hair."* (line 42), was used to formulate a general frame of analysis: *"(...) Which refers to the idea of a lost element."* (line 43). Then, in line 55, a student's observation on the relationship of the main character with animals helped me to define a typical Cinderella's trait of personality: *"Maybe this gives us the idea of a carrying, innocent and good person."* (line 56). Finally, the same type of recasting can be observed when the literal observation provided by S7, *"There's a wedding and she becomes rich.* (line 63), was changed into an analytical frame related to the idea of social mobility through marriage: *"(...)this idea of social mobility which is only achieved through marriage."* (line 64).

From the examples presented, we notice how the negotiation of meanings in class was paramount to encourage learners to develop interpretive skills, moving beyond the literal level of the text to the creation of analytical frames that would facilitate the investigation of Cinderella's essence in the tales brought to class. An example of that can be found in lines 85-93, when I encouraged learners to make

use of the idea of a *lost element* (an analytical frame previously formulated) to identify and compare common elements in the stories.

While the similarities in the tales allowed learners to grasp the essence of Cinderella across different texts, the differences among them gave the group the opportunity to travel to distant places, make sense of different languages, discover unknown symbols of national cultures and experiment a similar, but yet totally different idea of Cinderella. In lines 74-76, for example, S1 investigates the symbol of the *Goldfish* in China, and explores its meaning through the analysis of the Chinese characters for that word. And in lines 77-78, another student researches the metaphor that lies behind the *Kingfisher,* a species of bird used in the tale as a representation of the female beauty*.* The different cultural elements in the stories, not only fostered students' imagination to picture the aesthetical contours of the tales, but also made them realize the multiple symbolic worlds beyond the words in a text. Thus, the analysis has shown how students performed their symbolic intercultural competence so as to understand the essence of Cinderella across different tales.

4.2.3 Exploring critical feelings: focus on learners' subjectivities/emotions

Having explored the idea of "Cinderella" as a relational construct materialized in the dialogues that emerge among various texts, I also fostered learners to talk about how they felt in relation to the tales they had read. By doing so, I wanted to provoke them to position themselves in a different way, moving beyond the safe-ground of rational opinions to the fault lines of personal feelings, where their private voices could be unveiled. This emphasis on the role of emotions in language education is in alignment with a growing body of research interested in the affective and symbolic aspects of language (BELL; POMERANZ, 2014; KRAMSCH, 2009; PHIPPS AND GONZALEZ, 2004). Such view of language results on a perspective of language education that criticizes overly instrumentalist and pragmatic approaches, and supports the call for enhancing teaching practices with creative, student-focused teaching, sensitive to the learner's emotional and intellectual needs, and rich in intercultural knowledge (BAUM, 2014, p.419).

Taking into account the aforementioned body of research which values the exploration of learners' subjectivities and emotions for the construction of intercultural symbolic competence, the following classroom episodes illustrate my attempts to

facilitate intercultural learning experiences, based on the feelings verbalized by students through classroom interaction. With that in mind, in all the subsequent classroom episodes of *Practice 2* (from *excerpt 4* to *8*), I present how I dealt with learners' emotions and how I managed to approach them as a pedagogical strategy for the construction of interculturality.

Excerpt 4: Exploring meanings through feelings
94 T: Now, I have a more subjective question. How do you feel about these tales?
95 What feelings emerged when you read them?
96 ((Ss remain silent))
97 T: It's difficult to answer this type of question right? Normally in school
98 teachers only ask our opinion, what we think about something.
99 ((Ss laugh and agree))
100 MS8: Well, I was just bothered. I mean, how in all Egypt there would be only
101 one girl whose foot would be the right one? Like, they would go to every girl
102 and she the would be the only one with the perfect size. Nonsense!
103 ((Ss laugh))
104 T: Yeah! That's true! Any other idea? ((laughing))
105 FS2: I felt angry because the prince, he stalks her when she goes home and he
106 saw her getting the slipper… So, he thought of putting her in jail and then he
107 looked at her face and thought she was beautiful.
108 FS7: Beauty matters
109 FS1: And the only thing that matters
110 T: And why do you think you felt angry because of that?
111 FS7: 'Cause it only happens with women, like, we have to be pretty and
112 perfect…
112 T: And this is really interesting because in the Story of The Black Cow, we have
113 a boy for the role of Cinderella. Do you think that boy is described the same way
114 Cinderella was as a woman? How was the boy described in the story?
115 FS2: He was represented just was a miserable boy who…
116 FS4: He was mistreated by his stepmother.
117 T: Exactly. And what about the princess he married by the end of the story?
118 FS2: It says that she was pretty, delicate…
119 T: So, we notice that all these adjectives about beauty and sensitivity, delicacy…
120 they are allrelated to women, not to boys.
121 FS2: Yeah… This is interesting.

Several observations may be drawn from the excerpt above. First, it is noticeable that, by asking students to voice their emotions, I somehow disrupted the general kind of interaction that goes on in the classroom, and consequently caused discomfort. The proof of this is the fact that students remained silent after I posed the initial question (lines 94-95), and agreed on the fact that it was difficult for them to position themselves in such subjective manner, when their schooling experience commonly required them to be rational to construct an opinion.

According to Kearney (2012), treating cultural narratives as objects of discussion is not enough to encourage deep exploration of meanings, mainly when students are "so physically, temporally, linguistically and psychologically removed from the experiences in question" (p.59). Taking that into account, relying on emotions may be a way to help students get personally involved in other's experience to explore symbols and meanings in relation to their own feelings.

Little by little, learners felt encouraged to participate, and by reflecting on their own emotions, they were able to go beyond a simple reading and discussion of the text and position themselves critically. In lines 100-102, a male student used the word "bothered" to describe his feeling, and criticized nonsensical aspects of the tale he had read. Later in the discussion, a female student used the word "angry" to describe how she felt in relation to the story of Yeh-Shen. Here, once more I have differentiated male from female students in the transcription of the interaction, for the social experience of being a woman might have influenced the way some learners felt about those cultural narratives. In lines 105-107, one of the girls explained that she felt angry because the prince was seduced by Yeh-Shen's beauty. Her point of view, then, encouraged other girls to voice their opinions: *"Beauty matters "* (line 108); *"And the only thing that matters"* (line 109).

In line 110, I asked S7 to explain her feeling of anger, and by responding to my question she was able to rationalize her emotions and construct what I have called "critical feeling", which refers to the construction of a critical perspective in which the use of reasoning capacities does not suppress personal feelings. Instead, the strategic use of emotions becomes the point of departure for the development of reasoning. This movement, from feelings to reasoning, can be observed in the analysis co-constructed in the classroom based on S7's angry sentiment. In line 111, she used the situation of the Yeh-Shen's story as a metaphor to what happens in real life, and in doing so, she put herself in the character's experience: *"Cause it only happens with women… like, we have to be pretty and perfect..."* Here, S7 re-positioned herself through voicing, and ended up adopting a new point of reference. As the word *"women"* was referred to as *"we"*, the learner made use of a first-person pronoun to include herself and her colleagues in that specific condition.

Based on S7's response, I encouraged learners to continue analyzing gender representation, but this time, in the *Story of the Black Cow,* where the idea of "Cinderella" is enacted by a boy. By doing so, I wanted learners to investigate the

symbolic resources used to compose the character, and understand how being a woman or a man could be explored in the text as an ideological construct. To do so, I asked the group to analyze how the boy was described in the tale (line 114) and compare that description to the adjectives used in relation to the princess, a female character of the same story. Following those directions, students found adjectives such as "miserable" (line115), or "mistreated" (line116) being used in relation to the boy. However, when describing the princess, they could notice how those adjectives would change completely to highlight the female beauty: "It says that she was pretty, delicate" (line 118). Finally, in lines 119-120, I provided students with an extension of their analyses as a way to highlight how words in a text can be viewed from a critical and sociological way.

Based on the interactions that emerged from the first activity of *Practice 2*, it was possible to illustrate how learners managed to compose the essence of Cinderella as a story, as a character, and as a historical subject across various texts, time and space, cultures and languages. Here, cultural narratives were not only used as an object of discussion, but also explored in relation to learners' emotions and understood as symbols and meanings that might represent the world outside the pages of a fairy tale.

4.2.4 Understanding Cinderella as a gender stereotype

The following activity of *Practice 2* required learners to move from the analysis of a 1950 Disney's version of Cinderella to ultimately understand the main character as an allegory of women in popular advertisements of that time. For the first part of this activity, learners watched two movie segments. The first one depicted Cinderella's daily life as a housekeeper, struggling with household chores, and being constantly humiliated by her stepmother and stepsisters. And the second segment presented the character at the royal ball, when she saw the prince for the first time. As students watched the scenes, they were asked to think about adjectives which would describe her appearance and personality.

Figure 3 – Movie segments from Disney's Cinderella (1950).

Source: Google

Through these activities, learners had the chance to explore representations of Cinderella across different modalities, which would ultimately help them see how meanings are made not only of verbal, but also of visual language. *Excerpt 5* below presents the result of such an episode from the talk of that multimodal analytical exercise:

Excerpt 5 – Analyzing Cinderella in the 1950's Disney movie
122 T: Can you set the scene for me? What was happening in the first movie segment?
123 S1: It was breakfast time and the family was wakening up. Cinderella was taking
124 care of everything, preparing coffee, and there was a cat trying to get a mouse.
125 T: Yeah! there is this adventurous story going on there, but here our focus is on
126 how Cinderella is represented in that segment. Right? And how do you see her?
127 FS2: Humble.
128 T: Yes! she was serving other people all the time in a very humble way, because
129 she was not contesting anything, right? What else?
130 FS3: Hmm… Patient.
131 T: And do you remember what elements from the movie segment made you
132 think that she was patient?
133 S4: When she says good morning to everyone, but nobody replies… or when
134 they ask her something and she answers "in a minute" ((imitating her)).
135 ((Everybody laughs))
136 T: What about her appearance?
137 FS2: Simple.
138 T: Yeah! Simple clothing…
139 FS3: But she was beautiful anyway. Even when she was cleaning the house!
140 Her hands are delicate. The hair is perfect. ((laughing))
141 FS2: And her clothes are perfectly clean. There's even a beautiful laço. How do
142 you say that? ((Asking the teacher))
143 It's ribbon.
144 T: And what about the second segment? When she was transformed into the
145 princess that we all know?
146 FS2: Oh she was grateful there.
147 S3: Stunning!
148 T: Yeah! Any other idea?
149 S4: He says she would be a "suitable mother" and "wife".

150 T: And why do you think he thought that?
151 S4: I don't know… maybe because she was "bela, recatada and do lar".
152 ((everybody laughs))
153 T: Was there any other aspect that called your attention?
154 FS5: The fact that the prince doesn't really have a character… He was kind of
155 generic, right?
156 T: What do you mean?
157 FS5: He was just a man… That's all the information we have.

From the excerpt above, it is possible to see how learners were able to deepen their understanding of the main character by connecting representations of Cinderella across different semiotic modes. The segments presented in class allowed them to analyze traits of personality – "humble" (line 127), "patient" (line 130) – and also elements of her physical appearance – "simple" (line 137), "beautiful" (139), "grateful" (142), "stunning" (143), through the connection of verbal and visual resources. In lines 133-134, for example, learners relied on verbal elements of Cinderella speech to indicate some aspects of her personality as a patient woman – *"(…) she says good morning to everyone, but nobody replies… when they ask her something and she answers "in a minute"*. However, in lines 139-141, it was the visual elements of her appearance that helped learners complement their analysis of the character: *"Her hands are delicate. The hair is perfect.", "(…) her clothes are perfectly clean"*. Such multimodal practice was fundamental for the following analysis, when learners would have to explore Cinderella's allegorical traits in advertisements from the 1950s.

In addition to the examples of multimodal analysis, this excerpt shows how intercultural symbolic moments can emerge as a result of meaning making instances constructed in classroom dialogues, and how such communicative events point to the creation of new languaging realities. In line 151, a student made use of a polemic meme about the Brazilian first lady Marcela Temer as an ironic way to provoke humor and recast fairytale scenes in real life issues: *"she was "bela, recatada and do lar[17]"*. Here, Portuguese language was not being used randomly, or as translation strategy to compensate a lack of vocabulary in English. Instead, the use of Portuguese shows how learners can use their full linguistic repertoires, regardless of socially and politically defined languages, to make meanings in translingual territories

[17] My translation: "beautiful, modest and housewife". This expression gained polemic proportions, after Veja magazine published an article about Marcela Temer, Michel Temer's wife, on April 18, 2016.

(OTHERGUY; GARCÍA, 2015). Such translanguaging practice is what allowed the learner to provide the cues necessary for the co-construction of historical meanings, therefore managing to compare Cinderella to Marcela Temer, and to criticize patriarchal definitions of what is it to be a woman.

Moving to the second part of the activity, which aimed at exploring representations of Cinderella as an allegory, learners first brainstormed any information they had about women representations in 1950's advertisements, and then they were given some examples to analyze following these questions: *(1) How were women represented at the time (justify your answer with elements from the images); (2) How do you personally feel about these representations?; (3) How do you relate them to the stories of Cinderella you have read/watched so far?* The images analyzed in class are presented in *Figure 4* below:

Figure 4 – Cleaning Advertisements from the 1950s.

Source: Google

As pointed in *Table 1* (*Chapter III*), the focus of *Practice 2* was centered on the possibility of exploring the essence of Cinderella's narratives as a story and as a historical subject across different texts, time and spaces. The three questions designed for this activity, which are explored below in *Excerpt 6* and *7*, illustrates the rationale of what I have previously defined as an intercultural activity, in the sense that learners would be provoked to reflect and act on the crossing of multiple borders between linguistic codes and cultural meanings, the self and the others, various timescales, and power structures. In addition to that, such methodological design

once more envisioned the exploration of students' particular voices through the strategic use of emotions. In the classroom episodes that follow, I seek to show how such pedagogical movements could contribute for the construction of the learners' intercultural symbolic competence.

Excerpt 6 – Analyzing Cinderella as an allegory
158 T: So in the first question, about how women were represented at that time. So,
159 what do you think about it?
160 MS1: They all look flawless.
161T: I think this a word to describe them, right? Their appearance looks perfect. But
162 which elements from the images give this idea of perfection?
163 MS1: The hairstyle, the beautiful dresses
164 MS2: The shoes!
165 T: Yes! In picture 1, she's wearing high heels.
166 T: What about her position in the advertisement? How are their bodies
167 positioned in the picture?
168 FS3: They are always on the floor!
169 T: Yes! Exactly! And do you think that means something?
170 FS3: They are always cleaning.
171 FS4: Always submissive.
172 MS2: They are all in their homes and they look ok with their situation.
173 FS3: They look happy.
174 ((laugh))
175 FS4: It's like they have no jobs… no paying jobs, you know… the house is their
176 lives, right?
177 T: Exactly! Very good point! Anyone else?
178 ((Nobody replies))

Through this classroom episode, it is noticeable how the borders between verbal and visual language were paramount for the semiotic analysis of Cinderella as an allegory. In this practice, learners were fostered to cultivate their intercultural symbolic competence through the manipulation of symbolic systems, and the interpretation of signs in relation to other signs[18]. Such potential can be observed when, through classroom discussion, meanings were collaboratively constructed based on the analysis of images. As I asked students to verbalize how women were represented in those advertisements and provide elements from the images to support their views, they were able to engage in a practice of languaging, and therefore understand a certain reality as discursively constructed.

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[18] Such understanding of interculturality is based on Kramsch's developments on Symbolic Competence, particularly when she refers to this construct as "an ability to manipulate symbolic systems, to interpret signs and their multiple relations to other signs" (Kramsch, 2006).

In lines 163-164, learners were prompted to investigate visual elements to support their evaluation of women as *"flawless"* (line 160), and eventually relied on aspects of physical appearance to provide such justification: *"The hairstyle, the beautiful dresses"* (line 163)*, "the shoes"* (line 164). Continuing such exercise, and as a way to instigate a deeper analysis of those images, I asked learners to observe how women were framed in the advertisements presented, and to ascribe possible meanings to the position they occupied in the image plane. Students easily recognized the framing – *"They are always on the floor!"* (line 168) – and then came up with their particular interpretations, unveiling layers of ideological meanings. In line 171, for instance, one of the students suggested that such representation of the female body implicates in a submissive view of women. And following that, other students played with sarcasm (line172) or even seemed shocked (line 176), as a way to position themselves in relation to those advertisements which, according to them, portrayed women as beings whose lives were exclusively related to the domestic environment: *"the house is their lives, right?"* (line 176).

Continuing that discussion with a focus on the second question – *"How do you personally feel about these representations?"* (*Excerpt 7*) – learners were encouraged to verbalize their emotions in relation to those images. Once again, the strategic use of feelings was seen as a pedagogical resource to help learners construct reasoning. Here, I wanted students to get involved with those cultural narratives, unveiling traits of their subjectivities, and constructing intercultural moments through critical positioning. The episode below illustrates my movements and provides evidences for the understanding of how intercultural moments can emerge in the classroom when learners give voice to their personal feelings.

Excerpt 7 – Exposing cultural fault lines in the classroom
179 T: So, what about the second question? What do you <u>feel</u> when you see these
180 images?
181 FS3: I wrote here that I feel mad… you know, <u>angry</u> when I see this.
182 T: And why do you think you feel like this?
183 FS3: They were obligated to do it. They didn't have the liberty to choose this
184 life, you know… that's not natural… that's the way they were raised… like robots.
185 T: By natural, you mean that women were not naturally meant to occupy that
186 position? It's just a social discourse imposed on them?
187 FS3: Exactly. Yes.
188 T: What about you boys. What do you feel when you see these images?
189 MS5: I don't feel as bothered as I thought I would.
190 T: And why do you feel like that?

191 MS5: I don't know… Maybe because now it's different.
192 T: So you think this kind of thing is related to the past? It's over?
193 MS5: No, it's not over… But it changed a lot, I guess.
194 T: And how do you relate the stories of Cinderella you've read so far to
195 these images? Do you see anything in common?
196 MS1: Yeah! hmmm… they live to serve
197 T: Yeah! Good point! And what about her appearance?
198 MS1: They all look like Cinderella in the movie. It's crazy. Exactly the same.

In *Excerpt 7*, it is noticeable how the use of emotions engaged learners in a personal involvement with the images, and unveiled traits of different life experiences. In line 181, one of the girls in class claimed to be mad about those images because they represent a way of life which has been so vehemently and dangerously imposed to women over generations that such discourse is commonly taken as a natural behavior: *"They didn't have the liberty to choose this life, you know… that's not natural… that's the way they were raised… like robots"* (lines 183-184). However, the same discomfort, or anger did not seem to exist when one of the boys shared his feelings in relation to the advertisements – *"I don't feel as bothered as I thought I would"* (line 189) – for he believes that nowadays we have considerably changed in terms of gender equality.

As learners positioned themselves critically and voiced their subjectivities in class, as presented in the episodes discussed above, I could observe intercultural symbolic competence as a relational construct, in the sense that it was exactly the subjective experience of being a woman or a man that allowed learners to have different feelings or lenses through which they explored the cultural narratives analyzed in class.

As a teacher, facing situations like that makes me get into a profound reflexive mode and even question my role as a pedagogue. Dealing with our learners' subjectivities is a daunting task. Each one perceives the world in a different way because they have gone through different life experiences, and it is based on such lived experiences that what we call "reality" is constructed. That is why setting classroom discussions based on feelings can be sometimes a deep experience of knowing the other. Feelings instinctively reveal our perceptions in relation to something and expose the frames we use to understand our reality. In the episode above, for instance, the feeling of anger reported by one of the girls revealed a certain sorority and her connection with women struggles for gender equality.

Through emotions, she was able to see beyond literal meanings, access the cultural memories sedimented in those images, and question patriarchal representations materialized in the advertisements.

4.2.5 Moving away from the lesson plan: dealing with the unplanned for the construction of intercultural moments

Although all the students in the group had been demonstrating to have sophisticated interpretive abilities, I have to admit that such deep analysis, as the one presented by FS3, is the result of an idiosyncratic and relational activity. Proof of this is that feelings, and therefore opinions drastically change from person to person. In *Excerpt 7*, at the same time that one of the girls was so angry because of the way women were represented in the 1950s, one of the boys seemed to have a quite different opinion – *"I don't feel as bothered as I thought I would".* (line 189) – and although he justified such indifference by claiming that nowadays the situation has progressively changed, I could only think that he would not share the same feelings of anger, and not feel uncomfortable, for he was in a privileged position as a man.

At that point, in a fraction of a second, I started to question myself about what I should do as a pedagogue, and more specifically as someone interested in intercultural pedagogical practices. I did not know if I should cling to what I had previously designed for the lesson, or change the course of the activities and devote attention to that specific situation. For a moment, I did not have a strategy, so I moved on to another question (line 197), changing the topic of the conversation. However, as we finished the discussion, I turned back to my computer and decided to escape from what was previously planned to show students examples that could make them reflect and problematize representations of women nowadays. Such movement was made for I believe the experience in classroom to be representative as any other life experience, and therefore capable of changing our values, our views and even our feelings in relation to the world. With that in mind, I felt the responsibility of providing that student, who felt somewhat indifferent, with the possibility of going through a learning experience that would perhaps destabilize his certainties about how women are represented in our contemporary society.

In order to do so, I decided to introduce to the group the website of a Brazilian school called "*Escola de Princesas*[19]", literally a "School for Princesses", which claims to educate girls based on moral values that would transform them into real princesses. The extracurricular program offered by the school was designed for girls aged four to fifteen years-old, and it includes classes in chores, makeup design, etiquette and cooking, ultimately imposing upon young women the homemaker lifestyle. The classroom discussion transcribed below illustrates students' reactions to the School for Princesses and presents the pedagogical movements taken for this discussion to happen:

Excerpt 8 – Talking about "Escola de princesas"
199 T: So, you were mentioning before that we've changed a lot from that time in
200 terms of gender equality, but take a look at this project called "Escola de
201 princesas". Have you ever heard of this?
202 FS3: Unfortunately, yes!
203 MS1: I wanted to go there and put fire on this place! ((laughing))
204 T: So, it's a kind of school that is based on certain moral principles, and they say
205 that all women can be trained to live like a princess… You know, they should be
206 fostered to be delicate, sensitive… So I'm just going to show some of the things
207 they offer in this school, and I want you to think about their idea of what is it to
208 be a princess.   ((teacher shows the website to the students)).
209 T: So, what came to your mind when you see this website?
210 MS1: All girls are white, blond and with blue eyes.
211 FS3: They are all straight!
212 T: Yeah! They are all waiting for a prince… and the idea of marrying a man is
213 very strong indeed. Good point. What else, guys?
214 FS3: Does this really exist? ((laughing))
215 T: What about the colors of the webpage?
216 FS3: Yeah! It's all pink! ((laughing))
217 T: Exactly! and what's the meaning of that?
218 FS3: It's really girlish… the cliché.
219 T: And how do you feel about the courses they offer? I heard when you said you
220 wanted to put schools like these on fire. Why?
221 FS3: Yeah! That's an absurd. Schools should do the opposite!
222 MS5: I wouldn't put my daughter in this school. I wouldn't let her grow like that.
223 I mean, the courses are not exactly a problem, but since they believe only girls
224 are supposed to learn that, then we have a problem.
225 FS3: Yeah! they should teach them how to be heroines, not princesses.
226 T: Totally agreed!
227 MS1: There is a shop in Santa Monica, and it's like, you know, the name…
228 "princess and heroes". Quer dizer, não tem nem a escolha. É princesa ou
229 T: Yes! When you were kids, did you have any reference of heroes?
230 FS3: Max Steel ((laughing))

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[19] Source: http://escoladeprincesas.net/ws/

231 FS4: Super Man, Spider Man
232 T: And what about a heroine?
233 MS2: Only the drug.
234 ((everybody laughs))

Excerpt 8 shows my attempts to engage learners in a classroom discussion through which they were expected to notice how gender roles are socially constructed, and also how the representations of women from the 1950s might not necessarily differ from those we have in the contemporary patriarchal society. Right at the beginning, when I tried to collect from the students any background information they would possibly have about the school, some of them immediately verbalized unfavorable opinions, sometimes in a very sarcastic tone: *"I wanted to go there and put fire on this place!"* (line 203).

Jokes aside, I provided some general information about the school, and as I opened their webpage to show students the courses they offer, learners started sharing their opinions in relation to some verbal and visual elements present in the page, collaboratively unveiling the school's representation of women as princesses: *"All girls are white, blond and with blue eyes"* (line 210), *"They are all straight"* (line 211), *"It's really girlish… the cliché"* (line 218). In addition to that, I asked students to share their opinions in relation to the extracurricular courses offered by the school, and as a general feeling of absurdity seemed to set in, I noticed S5 changing his perspective, from indifferent to someone sentimentally involved in the situation: *"I wouldn't put my daughter in this school"* (line 222).

When, through subject positioning, S5 imagined himself as a father and claimed that he would never choose that model of education for her daughter, he was able to get personally involved in the situation and then understand how gender roles, even nowadays, can be ruled by patriarchal discourses. He continued his reasoning emphasizing that the problem with the courses offered was that they support the idea that only girls are supposed to learn about the domestic life, which perpetuates specific gender roles: *"I mean, the courses are not exactly a problem, but since they believe only girls are supposed to learn that, then we have a problem"* (lines 223-224).

Throughout this study I have been claiming that intercultural symbolic competence can be understood as a complex and subjective process of exploring, problematizing and redrawing our borders with others in multiple symbolic ways.

Although, as teachers, we plan pedagogical movements, design strategies and create activities to facilitate the emergence of intercultural moments in class, such process is relational, and therefore idiosyncratic to the extent that it happens differently from person to person, and always in relation to individuals' biographies. This is what Maturana and Varela (1998) address as *autopoesis*, the fact that we cannot separate our biological and social history of actions from the way in which we perceive the world.

Through the classroom episodes presented in this section, it was possible to illustrate how learners shared, negotiated, and sometimes confronted different perspectives based on a range of life experiences that compose their subjectivities. The example of S5, in particular, caught my attention to the fact that, as teachers, we have the power to engage learners in meaningful intercultural experiences that might lead to a new subject positioning, and even a reconstruction of perspectives.

The activities designed for *Practice 2* are an example of my reasoning, as a teacher, on to provide students with intercultural learning experiences as they analyzed representations of Cinderella *in* and *beyond* fairytales. Here, analyzing was not seen as a purely rational activity, apart from emotions and subjectivities, but instead, it meant involvement, subject positioning, and the possibility of constructing critical perspectives loaded with personal feelings.

Despite all my planned movements, an intercultural dimension could only emerge through the practice of languaging in the classroom, which means that it was ecologically and collaboratively constructed through the negotiation of meanings. Here, learning as an intercultural endeavor was not simply the use of an additional language to communicate, but a possibility of *being* and *doing* as we interacted with each other. In the classroom episodes presented so far, such symbolic dimension of languaging allowed learners to express opinions, verbalize emotions, make jokes and play with words, disrupt the boundaries of national languages, and even change their world views. Such symbolic actions are an illustration of what I have been calling intercultural symbolic competence in this study.

In the next section, I continue exploring the development of the project, presenting excerpts of classroom discussions that illustrate how I modeled my discourse to encourage learners to take up various perspectives of interpretation.

4.3 PRACTICE 3: PROBLEMATIZING CINDERELLA

The following extracts of classroom interaction were generated from the implementation of the third practice of the project, when students were involved in analytical types of activities with a focus on *problematizing.* Following this feature of critical exploration allowed me to design activities whose learning objectives were centered on the possibility of questioning pre-established worldviews. In terms of didactic organization, the feature of *problematizing* was evidenced in the activities designed for *Practice 3* as learners were encouraged to analyze subversive representations of Cinderella, and position themselves critically in relation to them.

In the previous practice (Practice 2), whose main focus was *exploring,* students had the chance to understand the essence of Cinderella not only as a character in stories, or movies, but also as a patriarchal representation of women in general. Such 'relational' understanding was facilitated through activities in which learners were encouraged to recognize Cinderella in different tales across the world, in the famous Cinderella movie produced by Walt Disney in the 1950s, and ultimately in representations of women on famous advertisements from that time.

Moving from that experience, learners followed to *Practice 3*, when they were introduced to subversive representations of Cinderella: a Dina Goldstein's emblematic photograph of this character sitting in a dingy bar holding a shot glass; a contemporary television advertisement for Converse®, in which the glass slippers are replaced by a pair of sneakers and the royal scene gives space to school corridors and detention rooms; and, finally, the Youtube parody, *Tinderella*, which depicts the life of this character in the age of dating apps. The complete work plan and the visual resources used for this analytical practice can be found in *Appendix C (Practice 3)*, and *Figure 3* below shows the photograph and a scene of the videos used in class:

Figure 3 – Subversive representations of Cinderella

Source: Google

In those depictions of Cinderella, the idea of *problematizing* resides in many layers of interpretation: it crosses linguistic, cultural, historical, and textual borders. Such representations deconstruct some typical elements of fairytales, which students brainstormed in the first practice of the cycle, such as 'the long ago' or 'the happily ever after'. And also, they challenge prevalent power structures, such as the patriarchal values of marriage and the representation of women as delicate and subordinate figures. By analyzing those symbolic texts, students were encouraged to reflect on how they felt in relation to them, and to problematize the role of fairytales as a cultural narrative that frames a specific social order. The analysis of the following segments of classroom talk shows how I modeled my discourse to encourage students to take up various perspectives of interpretation. *Excerpt 3* reveals my moves to introduce the upcoming analytical activities of the project:

Excerpt 9: Leading the activity
235 T: So, now I want to show you guys <u>different</u> kinds of Cinderella. Some
236 <u>subversive</u> representations of this character. I'm going to show you three
237 different representations: an image and two videos, then you'll choose the one
238 that most calls your <u>attention</u>. okay? Pay close <u>attention</u> to them. So, make sure
239 you observe the center, the background of the image or video. The elements that
240 connect and <u>subvert</u> the idea of Cinderella. <u>Notice all the details.</u>
241 Where she is, what she is doing…

The introductory moment of this class represented in the excerpt above shows how I gave students explicit directions about the practice proposed. In lines 235-236, I briefly explained the procedures of the activity and asked them to choose

one of those representations to analyze more carefully. The repetition of the word "attention" in line 238, and the gestures used to emphasize the directions provided show how students were oriented to take into consideration some specific elements of the image/videos in order to conduct a practice of analysis.

Right at the beginning of this excerpt, I revealed to the students that there was something different about the representations of Cinderella they were going to see (line 235), and subsequent to that, the word "different" was replaced by "subversive" or "subvert" (line 240). By making use of these specific words, I automatically communicated that it was my intention to undermine a certain existing system or set of beliefs related to the previous versions of Cinderella analyzed in class. Here, I not only gave students instructions about the activity, but also revealed my own voice as a private person.

4.3.1 Traversing different levels of meaning

After presenting the image and the videos to the class. Students were asked to reflect upon the following questions: (1) What elements in this image/video are connected to the classic story of Cinderella? (2) What elements are different? (3) What is the context of this image/video? (4) How about the power structures? Is this representation changing anything in relation to the other stories of Cinderella? Here, the rationale of the activity was based on the idea of encouraging learners to interpret different levels of meaning, starting from a literal description, moving to a figurative interpretation of elements, and ultimately drawing upon ideological meanings. After having devoted some time to think about those questions, I invited them to participate in a group discussion to share their perspectives. The following excerpt depicts this moment:

Excerpt 10: Subverting representations of Cinderella
242 T: Okay! So, what about this first image? What are the elements that connect
243 this picture to the the <u>typical</u> idea of Cinderella?
244 S1: The blue dress<u>.</u>
245 T: She is exactly like the Disney version, right?
246 S1: Yeah! The hair… everything!
247 T: And what else? Do you see anything else that could be a reference to this
248 typical image of Cinderella?
249 S2: Maybe the word <u>blue</u> in the scenario?
250 T: Yeah! Very good! One more reference to the Disney version of the character.

251 And what about the elements that subvert the idea of Cinderella in this image?
252 S3: She's not happy!
253 T: Yes! She's not happy. And a happy ending is a typical element in fairytales.
254 How do you think she is feeling?
255 S2: Blue. She's feeling blue.
256 ((Everybody laughs))
257 T: And can you think of any possible reasons for her to feel like this?
258 MS4: The prince left her.
259 FS5: Or she (0.2) left the prince ((laughing)).
260 T: Yeah we never know what comes after the 'happily ever after', right?
261 ((everybody laughs)).
262 T: And what about the context?
263 MS4: It's a bar.
264 T: And what do think about Cinderella at a bar?
265 MS4: It's not the place, humm… it's not an appropriate place for her.
266 T: Why not?
267 MS4: It's like… she doesn't fit there ((laugh))
268 T: Exactly! Maybe that's the idea… to re-imagine Cinderella in many different
269 places, right? Do you think this representation is changing anything in relation to
270 the other stories of Cinderella?
271 FS5: Yes! She can be everywhere. Even a bar! ((laughing))
272 T: Okay! So, let's move to the other representations. First, the Converse®
273 advertisement. What called your attention in this video?
274 FS5: She was not in those feminine ((gestures with the hands)) places…
275 T: What do you mean by feminine places?
276 FS5: There was like a ballet room, a library. They tried to find her there, but she
277 was not there. She was in the detention room. Cinderella in the detention room.
278 T: Exactly! A very subversive place. People who are there probably did
279 something wrong. So, this Cinderella is not as innocent as the others, right?
280 FS5: Yeah! And she was like wearing an All Star in the school, in the party…
281 and having fun with the boys.
282 T: Totally different from the idea of the glass slipper.
283 ((students laguh))
284 T: Okay. What about the last representation? The one about Tinderella…
285 S6: This one was more… more real life than the second video.
286 T: More real life?
287 S6: Yeah! She was using the app.
288 S6: And maybe we don't have the happy end like in the second video.
289 Teacher: I see… well, it is a kind of happy ending, but maybe not a fairy-tale-
290 happy ending, right?
291 ((students laugh))
292 S7: And she's not like "oh! what happens to me now". She's in the app making
293 decisions and she's like… happy alone. She doesn't need a prince.
294 T: Very good point!

        In the excerpt presented above, it is possible to notice some interactional
features which reveal a pattern of modeling that aimed at making students traverse
different levels of interpretation while exploring symbolic representations in its literal,

figurative and ideological stances. Throughout the course of this interaction, different types of moves were taken with the purpose of fostering the class to describe (lines 242-243; 262), analyze (lines 250-251), imagine (lines 153-154; 257) and to position themselves critically (lines 266-267). However, although such modeling sequences guided students in the analytical activity, different levels of interpretation were only achieved because of co-constructed moments of meaning making.

The collaborative practice of interpretation through the interaction in class can be noticed, for instance, in the levels of meaning ascribed to the word *blue*, used many times throughout the discussion. First, when students were finding elements in the photograph that were connected to the typical image of Cinderella, the word blue was used in its literal meaning to describe the appearance of the character: *"the blue dress"* (line 244), or an element of the setting: *"the word blue in the scenario"* (line 249). Then, later in the discussion, the same word was figuratively used to express the character's state of mind: *"she's feeling blue"* (line 255), and it was intentionally uttered to provoke humor. Here, the literal meaning of the word *blue* reinforced the typical image of Cinderella, *"(...) exactly like the Disney version."* (line 245), whereas its figurative meaning revealed the transgressive nature of that photograph, which portrayed a sad princess, and deconstructed the idea of a "happy end".

In this practice of the cycle, students were fostered to take different perspectives of analysis and focus on ideological meanings of the representations shown in class.

Through the analysis of Dina Goldstein's photograph, it is possible to notice how the idea of *transgression* was enacted in different possibilities of interpretation. Cinderella's facial expression, for example, was seen as a symbol of sadness which transgresses the "happily ever after" (lines 252, 255), a typical element of fairytale narratives. And the context of the image, a bar replete with men, was seen as a transgression of the patriarchal ideology underlying the story (lines 262-270).

In *Excerpt 10,* it is possible to see some of my moves to re-position students, encourage them to imagine situations from different perspectives and focus on the interpretation of ideological meanings. First, learners were asked to imagine reasons why Cinderella felt blue in that photograph (line 257). In order to answer that question, students had to re-position themselves by taking somebody else's perspective and, at the same time, reveal their own voices as a private person. Following the course of the interaction, a male student answered: "The prince left

her." (line 258), and right after that, a female student contested what was said before by emphasizing exactly the opposite: "Or <u>she</u> left the prince" (line 259). Here, the replacement of the personal pronoun "her" by "she" provoked a drastic change in the meaning of the sentence. Now, Cinderella was not referred to as an object, but rather as the subject of that specific action, and by changing this order, the student revealed her voice as a woman, and ascribed a transgressive perspective to her interpretation of Goldstein's Cinderella as a symbolic deconstruction of patriarchal ideology.

In addition to that, I also made use of a pattern of modeling that consisted in provoking students with questions that would lead them to a new dimension of analysis that highlights ideological meanings. By doing so, my objective was to encourage learners to create less structured types of answers that would allow me to explore their perspectives in a more organic way, which somehow breaks the modeling pattern used so far. At the end of *Excerpt 4* (lines 262-270), when I asked the class to analyze the context of the image (line 262), it is noticeable how one of the students moved from literal to ideological meanings. First, S4 simply stated that the context was a bar (line 263), and I immediately provoked him to give his personal opinion about that (line 264). S4, then responded with a value judgement: *"it's not an appropriate place for her"* (line 265), and once more, I encouraged him to justify his answer, to which he replied: *"It's like… she doesn't fit there."* (line 267). At the end, I provided support to the student's analysis, *"Exactly! Maybe that's the idea… to re-imagine Cinderella in many different places, right?"* (lines 268-269), as a way to emphasize that the context was not simply a bar in its literal meaning, but another symbol of transgression loaded with ideological meanings.

Another example of that type of modeling can be found when I asked students to share what had called their attention in the first video presented in class (lines 272-273). In line 274, S5 makes a comment regarding the context of the video and what possible claims about Cinderella it might represent: *"she was not in those <u>feminine</u>* ((finger quotes gestures)) *places"*. By emphasizing the word feminine and ascribing finger quotes gestures to it, S5 takes up a critical stance and goes beyond the literal description of the video to reveal its ideological meanings. Here, S5 traversed the limits of verbal language, and through gestures she was able to criticize the sexist and segregative idea that there are appropriate or inappropriate places for a woman to be.

In line 275, when I ask *"What do you mean by feminine places?"* the same type of modeling presented in *Excerpt* 3 was performed, which consisted in provoking students to provide a deeper level of analysis. S5 then explained, through exemplification, what she meant with the word "feminine" used before: *"There was like a ballet room, a library. They tried to find her there, but she was not there. She was in the detention room…"* (line 276-277). Finally, taking advantage on students' analyses, I provided a brief conclusion stating that all those ideological aspects unveiled through the analysis of the video were transgressing the idea of Cinderella as an innocent woman (line 279).

As for the last video presented to the class, the same type of modeling is noticed. In line 285, S6 described the video as *"more real life"* than the other one previously watched, and was fostered to explain what she meant by that (line 286). This attitude of encouraging students to go deeper in their analysis, instead of simply collecting as much answers as possible, allowed me to see their potential to analyze the symbolic value of language. *"Real life"*, in that case, was related to a representation of Cinderella that portrays a contemporary woman in the age of the dating apps (line 287), which explains the parodic nature of the name *Tinderella* as a reference to *Tinder™*. Also, S6 used the term *"real life"* to refer to a type of ending where there is no royal marriage, or marriage of any kind, which is reinforced by another student who highlights the transgressive representation of Cinderella as an independent woman who does not need a prince to have a happy ending (line 292-293).

In the analytical practices discussed here, my role as a teacher was to help students gain perspectives by exploring their knowledge of symbols, be they linguistic or other, and providing them with skills of identification, interpretation and analysis. According to Kearney (2012), perspective-taking in language education refers to a shift of point of view at different levels of language and meaning, through which learners can become aware of the existence of different meaning-making resources while interpreting language, culture, and context-specific meanings.

Ecological perspectives to the teaching of additional languages see perspective-taking as an integral part of a pedagogy that caters for a critical, reflexive and self-engaging model of language education. As a language educator, I see the experience of teaching as an opportunity to make students understand that "communicative competence does not derive from information alone, but from the

symbolic power that comes with the interpretation of signs and their multiple relations to other signs" (KRAMSCH, 2006, p. 252).

Through the classroom episodes presented above, communication was not simply used as a way to exchange information, or as an excuse to make students speak the additional language being taught. Instead, those communicative moments required learners to make use of the L2 meaning-making system to describe, analyze, imagine and position themselves critically and creatively. By diving into the world of fairy tales, language could be experienced beyond the referential, communicative exchanges of information commonly taught in language textbooks, which allowed learners to move through different levels of interpretation while exploring symbolic representations in their literal, figurative and ideological stances.

At this point of the data analysis, I could observe that although I have discussed the features of relationality, transgression and potentiality separately, such division only seemed to exist on the basis of pedagogical organization, in terms of task design, and as an analytical key to set specific themes for discussion. In real moments of classroom experiences, however, I understood intercultural symbolic competence as languaging practices through which meanings were constructed in the relations, reframings and dialogues that emerged from texts and contexts; as the moments when learners transgressed their boundaries and problematized their own perspectives; and ultimately, as they constructed alternative realities, questioning and changing established worldviews in multiple symbolic ways. Here, relationality, transgression and potentiality were complementary aspects of critical exploration and central to my understanding of intercultural symbolic competence in classroom practice.

Having said that, the next section presents the analysis of students' final productions, which is the culminating moment of the project. For this practice, learners were challenged to take into account all the experiences lived in previous classes, and play with their own creative potentials to recreate alternative fictional worlds for the story of Cinderella. Through the analysis of such productions, I seek to analyze how learners cultivated an intercultural symbolic competence through the expression of their identities and desires in their own version of fairytale stories.

4.4 PRACTICE 4: REIMAGINING CINDERELLA

In the culminating practice of the project, learners were organized in pairs and they were asked to re-imagine the story of Cinderella, creating their own version of this fairy tale. In order to do so, their written productions had to follow specific guidelines, which were composed of four main directions: (1) stories should be recognized as fairytale narratives, so texts should play with typical elements of this genre; (2) learners should think of different contexts to set the narrative and contextualize the characters; (3) stories should present a surprising plot, which could be related to a change in the point of view of the narrative, to the creation of new elements etc.; (4) groups should give a critical tone to their stories, reflecting on how their texts portrayed power relations, social structures, stereotypes, and how their voices would appear in the story.

In this activity, learners moved from the analysis and discussions set in the previous practices, through which they explored and problematized different meanings of Cinderella, to finally create alternative realities. Here, the feature of *redrawing* was approached as a pedagogical construct in the sense that the activity was designed as a way to engage learners in discursive practices through which the various meanings that emerge from the story of Cinderella would point to the potential for others, in an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing.

Through the construction of their own stories, learners were led to develop their communicative, analytical, interpretative and ultimately creative potentials. According to Vinall (2016), these potentials are necessary, not only to understand and respond to social situations, texts, and events, but also to shape and to frame the very interactional contexts in which one engages. The goal in language learning from this perspective is, therefore, the potential to create new meanings and to decide when and how to act on this potential.

During the development of this phase, learners were given two weeks to design their stories, and on the week before handing out the final version, they had the chance to present their ideas in class, going over the guidelines proposed for the activity, briefly analyzing how their stories could be related to the tale of Cinderella, and most importantly, allowing me to understand how their particular voices and subjectivities were central for the development of their narratives. For a better

illustration of students' creative process, the extract of this discussion is presented below, prior to the analysis of their written productions:

Excerpt 11: Reconstructing representations of Cinderella

295 T: So, during this week you guys faced the challenge to create your own
296 versions of Cinderella. Now, in this discussion, we're going to reflect on this
297 creative process. So, I want you to share with us details from your versions,
298 and everyone will be allowed to ask questions, ok?
299 T: All right, so what about you girls? ((pointing to the group)). What was your
300 idea?
301 S1: Okay. So, our story is going to talk about a woman who work in this huge
302 fabric, and her co-workers are… They are sad with their working condition, so
303 she's trying to make a revolution without men, because they don't need men
304 ((laugh)).
305 T: So, in your story, Cinderella works in a <u>factory,</u> and she is a revolutionary,
306 right?
307 S2: Yeah. She's the one fighting for the better working conditions.
308 T: And what are the elements that connect this story to the typical idea of
309 Cinderella?
310 S2: She is mistreated by her boss.
311 S1: She lost her parents.
312 T: Interesting context, girls. I guess this says a lot about the moment we're
313 living in Brazil right now. I mean, this clash of social classes and the social
314 movements we're having lately based on different ideological views.
315 T: Okay, what about you boys? ((pointing to another group))
316 S3: So, we decided to mix Star Wars and Cinderella, and then we created
317 "Starella" ((everybody laughs)). And in our story, Starella is a Jedi warrior
318 ((laughing)). She was in a mission to go another planet and she lost her
319 lightsaber and they needed to evacuate, so she comes back without her
320 weapon. So, in the story, she has to find a way to get her weapon back.
321 T: Amazing! I think it was very creative to play with parody. It's going to be
322 interesting to read this humorous version of Cinderella.
323 T: What about the elements that connect this version to the typical story of
324 Cinderella. Did you recognize any? ((directing the question to the whole
325 class))
326 S4: There is a lost element, which is the lightsaber.
327 S5: And when they have to evacuate… humm… it's like the midnight in the
328 original story.
329 T: Yes! Cinderella's curfew, right?
330 T: Okay, girls. What about your story? ((turning to another group))
331 S7: Our story is a about a damaged Cinderella.
332 T: What exactly you mean by damaged?
333 S7: She doesn't have a happy life, you know… just like the real Cinderella,
334 maybe… In our story, her mother is an alcoholic, and she loses her job. So,
335 Cinderella has to live with a lot of difficulties.
336 T: Interesting, so in your story you deconstructed the idea of a happy end?
337 S8: Well, actually the whole story is about living a sad life, but being happy
338 anyway, you know?
339 T: Interesting. Sounds like real life sometimes ((laughing))

340 S8: Exactly ((laughing))

In the classroom episode presented above, three groups of students talked about their final productions, and from what they had exposed in that moment, I could notice how eager they were to reconstruct the image of a Cinderella story, moving away from patriarchal representations that portrayed women as delicate, subordinate, or as a victim, ultimately changing the structure of a fairy tale as a romantic-happy-ended sort of narrative. Here, learners were motivated to create stories that would encompass their particular imagination, desires, and worldviews. Recreating "Cinderella" was therefore a way of symbolically changing the world.

The first group to present the premise of their story transformed Cinderella into a revolutionary woman, who would act as a leader and fight for better working conditions. In *line 303*, the group evidenced disruption and critique in relation to the usual representation of men in fairy tales: *"she's trying to make a revolution without men, because they don't need men"*. Such desire of creating an independent character for their stories was also noticed in a second group (*line 316*), who creatively combined fairytale elements with adventurous traits of Star Wars, transforming Cinderella into a warrior who would ultimately fight against men to rescue her precious weapon. Finally, a third group presented their idea, which they referred to as *"Damaged Cinderella"*, a dramatic story that would tackle issues of alcoholism, depression, and financial problems (*line 333*). Here, I noticed that students were interested in changing the usual course of what we expect as a fairytale narrative, presenting people as flawed, and life as a difficult experience of being happy no matter how impossible it might seem.

Through the ideas presented in class, it was possible to observe that students concentrated on elements that would both converge and disrupt the reality commonly presented in fairy tales, and such intertextual and transgressive endeavor was the basis for the construction of new meanings. Given that, the analysis of *Practice 4* systematically presents examples of intertextual and transgressive elements found on learners' final productions, since the meanings that might emerge from such discursive elements can be central for the understanding of how students creatively used their intercultural symbolic competence as a potential to create new discursive realities, whether through processes of convergence or critique.

A total of seven stories were created, but only four of them will be presented in this section, for they compose a comprehensive sample of analysis, being at the same time a reduced amount of data, making it possible for me to carefully address the textual details that illustrate students' intercultural symbolic competence. For a better organization of the analysis, after the discussion on each of the four narratives, the stories will be exposed on a table, presenting some basic information regarding title and setting, as well as summary of the intertextual and transgressive elements in the plot. In addition to that, each table will provide a summary of how I analyzed learners' productions in terms of symbolic power, therefore illustrating how the stories presented represent learners' particular voices and point to a social criticism, which can be seen as a way of changing the world with words.

The first story to be analyzed, entitled *"The proletariat revolution started by another Cinderella",* caught my attention for it reveals aspects of disruption and critique right from the beginning. The narrative does not start with the typical *"once upon a time"*, but with the authors positioning themselves in relation to the construction of their main character as a strong woman:

> So we're supposed to create a whole new version of Cinderella. And what went through our minds in the exact time we heard about the project was a woman that could break with the system patterns. Our woman, Cindy, knows how to revolutionize better than we do since she works in a terrible factory (passage from "The proletariat revolution started by another Cinderella").

Through this introduction, it is noticeable how eager learners were to create a female character who would stand for subversiveness, instead of obedience, being therefore a political symbol of social revolution. Although such transgressive aspect is the basis for the development of the narrative, the main character can be easily recognized as a version of Cinderella, starting with her own name, "Cindy", and her working context, as a reference to the typical miserable living conditions of the character in the fairy tale.

On the development of the story, the narrative builds on more aspects of convergence and disruption, which were artfully crafted by the students as a way of composing a different shade of a Cinderella story. Cindy, the main character, is described as an open-minded woman who, despite the lack of study was aware of the injustices of a capitalist society. Just like the typical Cinderella, Cindy had a tough workload of fourteen hours per day, but she was not born rich as in the fairy tale, nor

she was alone in that situation. Instead, she represented a collective experience of being a poor, working-class person who had been working since she was a little girl, not to serve her stepmother and stepsisters, but a man, her boss, who was named Gordon.

The role of Gordon in the story also represents an act of disruption in relation to the typical narrative of Cinderella. Here, the male representation does not stand for a happy end, a promising marriage that would work as a triumphant reward to the main character. Instead, he is portrayed as an abusive villain with weak moral values, quite different from the image of a fairytale prince: *"He was so narrow-minded, cruel, abusive and disgusting that all his workers feared him. Sometimes, he did not give food or water for his workers under the excuse that the production was very slow and they needed to do it faster".* In this version of Cinderella, the representation of the villain as a man was also a way of drawing criticism towards the values of a patriarchal society, as it can be noticed in the following extract from the narrative:

> Cindy grew up building hatred and anger from him. For his monster-like behavior. For his abusive manners. For his disgusting commentaries about her and her body, about her mom and all other women that worked in there (passage from "The proletariat revolution started by another Cinderella").

Differently from the typical Cinderella story, in which women compete against each other for the appreciation of a man, here they are connected by a feeling of sorority, and it is based on such collective experience of being a woman that the main character nourishes feelings such as hatred and revenge, a subversive trait which would ultimately lead her to plan a revolution.

Following the course of the narrative, other intertextual and transgressive elements are presented as a way to make us recognize the main character as a different version of Cinderella. Eventually, Cindy's parents die due to terrible working conditions in Gordon's factory and the main character becomes an orphan, as in the fairy tale, but instead of finding an enchanted prince and getting married to live happily ever after, Cindy's fate promised something quite different. She would lead workers to protest for better working conditions, taking over the factory to set a strike, killing Gordon and eventually dying for the cause: *"Cindy was shot by a police officer that stormed through their backs. But she was relieved. She knew that everything was going to be fine. Everyone that worked there would get better work conditions. She lived and died for the greater good."*

Through this narrative, learners managed to create an alternative reality through their languaging practices. Here, intercultural symbolic competence was understood as the creative potential of using discourse to criticize patriarchal representations of women, and portray "Cinderella" as a symbol of courage and social revolution. In this narrative, it was noticeable how, as women, the authors' particular voices and subjectivities, were central for the development of their narratives, and how engaged they were in deconstructing the stereotypes usually presented in fairy tales:

> Cindy is a inspiration 'till this days. Not like those that you see in commercials and movies, she wasn't made from the mind of a sick society, which tries to put into every new generation that being a girl or a woman is about being submissive, "plastic-beautiful", that getting into fights isn't right. No, Cindy IS real. Unfortunately, there are still many girls who live under the same circumstances but are invisible for our society. The story of Cindy's life is here to give them some strength since we aren't able to physically support them (passage from "The proletariat revolution started by another Cinderella").

In the concluding paragraph of story, presented above, I could see how learners were personally engaged in creating a story whose political symbols would stand for a representation of women, which learners identified with. Through processes of convergence and transgression, the meanings of Cinderella were creatively used for the deconstruction of discourses about women as "submissive, plastic-beautiful and delicate", and through such languaging practices, students constituted themselves as critical intercultural beings. The table below provides an overview of the analysis of this first story:

Table 3 – Analysis of learners' written production (story 01).

Title of the story	"The proletariat revolution started by another Cinderella"
Context (setting)	A shoe manufacturing factory.
Intertextual elements (convergence)	1. The name of the main character is "Cindy". 2. The main character is essentially good. 3. Her living conditions are miserable. 4. The presence of a villain with weak moral values, who mistreats the main character. 5. The main character becomes an orphan.
Transgressive elements (disruption and critique)	1. The main character comes from a working-class family. 2. The main character nourishes feelings such as hatred and revenge. 3. The villain is an abusive man, instead of a stepmother.

	4. The main character's fate is decided by her own will. It does not include a man or a marriage.
	5. The character's triumphant reward is a social cause which leads her to death.
	6. The main character represents a collective experience of women.
Symbolic power	Learners criticize patriarchal representations of women, and portray "Cinderella" as a symbol of courage and social revolution, criticizing the structure of a capitalist society.

Following the same vein of the story analyzed above, in which the typical representation of Cinderella as a princess was disrupted, the narrative presented below, entitled "*Starella*", also transformed its main character into a heroine. The title calls attention to its parodic plot, which combines elements from the typical Cinderella story with the adventurous traits of "Star Wars".

Playing with humor was the basis for the development of this story. The narrative, which is set in a galaxy far away, presents Cinderella as a heroine, a Jedi warrior who was sent in a mission to a desert planet. The story creatively sets the mood of a fairytale narrative, starting its first line with the typical *"A long time ago"*, and also presents the idea of a lost element, which would connect the destiny of the main character to a triumphant reward:

> In Coruscant, Cinderella realized that she lost her lightsaber, Jedi's weapon, in her last mission in Nabb. She was worried because a Jedi can't lose his lightsaber. Immediately, Cinderella returns to Nabb to search her weapon (passage from "Starella").

Unlike the typical Cinderella tale, in which the lost element, a glass slipper, is a fashion symbol strongly linked to the idea of the feminine as fragile and delicate, in this new version of the story, the main character loses a weapon, which is a representation of her power as a warrior. Although this lost element might, at first sight, represent an aspect of transgression to subvert the fragile image of the character as a princess, learners worked on details to create intertextual references between the two stories. As the glass slipper in the tale of Cinderella was unique and would only fit the right shoe, in the plot of Star Wars, each lightsaber is a unique weapon, hand-built as part of a Jedi's regimen. Such intertextual details used by learners drew my attention to how their creative potentials were used to construct new meanings of Cinderella.

In "Starella", Cinderella's fate does not revolve around love or marriage as a way of conquering happiness. Instead, her relationship with men was depicted as rather turbulent and competitive. Differently from the typical tale, in which the prince searches in the whole kingdom through to find the perfect foot, in this new version of the story, it is Cinderella herself who looks for her lost weapon, and men only make her journey difficult, as it can be noticed in the excerpt below:

> The Jedi warrior used her Jedi powers to pull her weapon of the hand of the old man. She attacked Lou first. Cinderella crossed Hang's neck with the saber and he fell dead". The old man turned on his red lightsaber, so Cinderella realized that that man was Syfo Diaz, a sith known to collect Jedis' lightsabers.
>
> A fight started between Cinderella and Syfo. That battle lasted for hours. In the end, Cinderella cut off his hands with the stolen weapon.
>
> Cinderella arrested Syfo in Coruscant and she give back all lightsaber that was stolen by Syfo Diaz (passage from "Starella").

In this part of the narrative, many were the action verbs used to characterize Cinderella as a warrior and emphasize her physical strength. Words such as "attack", "cross", "cut off", and "arrest" symbolically subvert the submissive and fragile image of the main character in many representations of the tale, which learners studied in class throughout the project, and this possibility of using discourse to redraw a certain social structure illustrates an aspect of intercultural symbolic competence which I have been referring to as *potentiality.*

The main intertextual and transgressive elements, which were the basis for the analysis of intercultural symbolic competence in this story are presented on *Table 4* below:

Table 4 – Analysis of learners' written production (story 02).

Title of the story	"Starella"
Context (setting)	A galaxy far away
Intertextual elements (convergence)	1.The name of the main character is "Cinderella". 2.The story happens in a long time ago. 3.There is a lost element: a lightsaber.

Transgressive elements (disruption and critique)	1. The story is a parody of Star Wars. 2. Cinderella is a warrior. 3. The main character fights against men. 4. The main character's fate does not revolve around love or marriage. 5. The main character is a heroine, instead of a princess who needs to be rescued.
Symbolic power	Learners subvert conventional roles of women as fragile and transform "Cinderella" into a heroine who fights for her own destiny.

In the stories analyzed so far, learners creatively used such potentiality to transgress fairytale narratives as patriarchal representations of women. Through their words, the princess became a revolutionary; the fragile girl became a strong woman who would fight for her destiny, independently of a promising marriage or of family support. In the stories that follow, I analyze other possibilities of recreating Cinderella, based on the disruption of the "happily ever after", and on the ontological reflection of human nature as essentially good or bad.

The story entitled *"Damaged Cinderella"* first called my attention to the very lexical choice of its title. The adjective "damaged" immediately reports an aspect of disruption, emphasizing a depressive and problematic trait that violates the typical idea of a happy end, so common in fairy tales. "Damaged", in this narrative, stands for a representation of the main character as someone who was led to see herself as ugly, weird, but also a person who, despite all difficulties would eventually find happiness through the experience of self-love.

In order to create convergence and disruption in relation to the typical aspects of a Cinderella story, learners creatively played with a series of intertextual and transgressive elements in the plot. Right at the beginning, the main character, Laureen Elliot Fritzberger, is introduced as an orphan on father side, and as a girl who was born rich: "*Her father passed away before she even saw daylight, leaving her and her mother alone in the world. James Fritzberger, a wealthy entrepreneur, left them with a generous inheritance".* However, differently from the original story, the main character had a difficult life as a child, because of her mother's psychological conditions. Such details of the narrative were used as a way of tackling issues related to depression and alcoholism:

Laureen's mother, ended up not being the perfect motherly figure during the girl's childhood. Alcoholic and a dependant of her antidepressants, she tried to step away from Laureen as much as she could to prevent her from being influenced by her mental illness (passage from "Damaged Cinderella").

Following the analysis of the composing elements of the main character drawn from an intertextual dialogue with the story of Cinderella, Laureen is described *"a girl incredibly matured for her age"*, due to a difficult childhood. She was also presented as very creative and as someone who had a talent for sewing. In addition to that, Laureen, just like Cinderella, had the misfortune experience of living in the custody of someone mean – the stepmother and her two daughters – in this case, her aunt, Miranda Elliot, who was also a mother of two.

The main character's traits of personality were also intertextually explored in the story. Laureen was described as *"a naive child who believed in anything and everything she heard"*, and as a person who would see the beauty in everything around her: *"To her, everything was art. Anything was inspiring. She could look at a sidewalk, a plant, a person…"* However, despite all these aspects of convergence, which would make us recognize Laureen as a version of Cinderella, learners reinterpreted typical elements of the story to approach issues that are commonly experienced by teenagers, such as depression, anxiety and body dysmorphic disorder. Throughout the narrative of "Damaged Cinderela", the main character was redrawn as a girl who struggled to accept her own body and who looked for extreme measures to lose weight:

She wanted quick results, and it was by searching on the internet that she found blogs that offered extreme diets that were said to make someone lose 12kg in 15 days, 6kg in 5 days, 9kg in 3 days. That was exactly what she wanted. Nothing but dangerous diets that would lead her to spend her days without putting a single thing in her mouth, and when she did, she would count every and any calories she had eaten (passage from "Damaged Cinderella").

Because of her compulsions, Laureen would become a regular hospital patient at the age of fifteen, and in one the most dramatic episodes of her life, she would nearly die due to an overdose of ephedrine, caffeine and aspirin, which is known as the ECA method, a drug combination used to accelerate metabolism and lose appetite. Unlike Perrault's Cinderella, who had a fairy godmother, and a magical potion to transform her from a peasant into a beautiful princess, Laureen had no

supernatural force to help her become what she wanted to. In this Cinderella story, the make-believe had vanished and the main character's fate was doomed to sorrow and suffering.

In the end of the narrative, however, I could understand what students meant during a classroom discussion, when they mentioned that this version of Cinderella story was about living a sad life, but being happy anyway (*Excerpt 12, line 337*). After uncountable dramatic episodes, Laureen finally learned how to cultivate what was good for her, and as she became adult, she was able to live with her mother again: *"every now and then they fought, but it was a completely healthy relationship and they lived in peace, mostly".*

By creating a story with such dramatic elements, moving away from the imaginary scene of fairy tales to tackle issues that teenagers might go through, learners used the potential of their words to talk about a different kind of happiness, and as a way to encourage those who might be going through a difficult situation. Here, the "happily ever after" was not related to the achievement of a perfect life, but as a rewarding process of self-knowledge and as an experience of self-love. *Table 5* summarizes the elements analyzed in this story:

Table 5 – Analysis of learners' written production (story 03).

Title of the story	"Damaged Cinderella"
Context (setting)	Oxford, England
Intertextual elements (convergence)	1.The main character is a paternal orphan. 2.She was raised by her aunt, who was mother of two. 3.She was constantly mistreated by her aunt. 4.Despite her miserable living conditions, the main character gets inspired by everything around her.
Transgressive elements (disruption and critique)	1.The main character faces a difficult childhood due to an alcoholic and depressed mother. 2.The main character suffers from depression, anxiety and eating disorders. 3.The plot is not about falling in love or getting married. It is about finding self-love.
Symbolic power	Learners deconstruct the "happily ever after" and present life as a difficult learning experience of self-love.

In the last story analyzed in this section, learners also performed their intercultural symbolic competence while constructing intertextual and transgressive

narrative elements, which would ultimately bring an ontological reflection upon the human nature as essentially good or bad.

The story entitled "Ck" was artfully written in the format of a personal diary. The whole story is narrated in first person singular, in a way that it is possible to access the main character's personal feelings. Right at the beginning, the typical entry "dear diary" is used to set the genre, and this writing resource automatically states an aspect of transgression in relation to typical stories of fairy tale, which are usually narrated in third person, and opens with entries such as "A long time ago" or "Once upon a time". Also in this introduction, the main character reveals an important trait of personality, which would lead us to understand her throughout the whole narrative. As she starts writing her diary, she says:

> *Dear diary, today I went to the cine and (coincidentally) met Kyle. He was going to see that new movie everyone is talking about. I thought about going to him to have some friendly talk, but I saw that he was accompanied by a girl, Jennifer was her name, wasn't it? Anyway it would be very rude of me to go and interrupt the two, so I just observed. They get along pretty well, but of course not as much as me and him as we're made for each other <3*[20]
>
> *paper ripping*
>
> - Meh, this doesn't look like me at all. I think I can be myself a bit more. No one except me is going to read anyway (passage from "Ck").

Through this introduction, learners creatively composed a detailed depiction of the moment when the main character was writing her diary. Through the use of a first-person narrator, the inner world and thoughts of the character are revealed in a way that the audience is allowed to understand her mind from a psychological perspective, and ultimately engage empathically with the protagonist. As she rips the paper and starts writing all over, the character reveals moral values that transgress the image of the typical Cinderella:

> *Dear diary, today while talking with Kyle he said he was going to the cine this afternoon to see that movie everyone is talking about. So of course I went there to take care of him, if I didn't, who would? When I got there, there was a girl from our class with him, her name was Jennifer. Who she thinks she is to talk to him like that? Does she really think she can get between our love like that? I won't forgive her. I'll give her a lesson. I have to take better care (passage from "Ck").*

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[20] Italics were kept from the original. It was used as a typing resource to differentiate the moments when the character was literally writing her diary.

Here, Cinderella is portrayed as someone who nourishes feelings such as jealousy – *"Who she thinks she is to talk to him like that?"* – and revenge – *"I won't forgive her. I'll give her a lesson"* – and by doing so, learners disrupt the psychological traits of the main character, reinterpreting her as villain, but at the same time, as a lover. Love, in this case, is not only understood as an emotion that would transform people in many ways for the better, but as a selfish reward, a dispute in which the end justifies the means. In this story, the ultimate transgressive element in relation to fairytale stories is the representation of human nature as fundamentally both good and bad.

Soon after the introduction of the story, the main character introduces herself, and it is interesting to notice how she addresses directly to the reader, as if she was having a real connection with the audience: *"(…) Name's Amy, 16 years old, 2ⁿᵈ year student on Riverside High school, live alone in my parents' house (don't tell the cops) and as you probably figured out by now, I'm in love with a boy named Kyle"*. Through the use of imperative verb forms – *"don't tell the cops"* – and also the use of the personal pronoun *"you"* to refer to the audience, the first-person narrator engages with the readers so as to increase trust for the character. Here, an intertextual element with Cinderella story can also be observed, as the protagonist introduces herself as someone who does not live with presence of parents. In this version of the tale, Cinderella is a teenager named Amy who, under the excuse of love, makes use of non-virtuous means to conquer what she wants, even if it involves lying, stealing or mistreating others.

As the plot develops, learners build on more intertextual and transgressive elements so as to compose their version of Cinderella as a villain. In the fairy tale, the lost element, a glass slipper, is what leads the prince to her beloved. This prop works in the narrative as a metaphorical interpretation of love as a predestined union of soul mates. It evokes the romantic idea that there is one single person who is right, appropriate, and in that case, literally suitable for us. In their version of the story, however, learners presented love as the result of a malicious plot drawn by a girl, and it was interesting to observe how the "lost element" was reinterpreted as an artful transgressive act of deconstructing the romantic representation of love. In "Ck", the lost element was actually stolen and used as a strategic card in a contest for love:

I was planning to just talk to her and make her forget about Kyle, but what I had in front of me was something that would help quite a lot. During break while going to talk with her friends she forgot her cellphone on the table. Well, better take it so the "negotiation" will be easier. I don't know why, but her phone doesn't have any password. Well, that helps even more. Let me see what I can find here… Meh, besides some cringe photos there's nothing worth using. Too bad. I'll put a password just in case she is stubborn (passage from "Ck").

Following the course of the narrative, the stolen cellphone was eventually left behind and Kyle was the one who coincidently found it. He went straight away to Amy's house, hoping that she would help him find its owner. Kyle was particularly motivated because he found a love poem dedicated to him hidden in the phone case. Moved by such expression of love, he decided to search for that person and promise his love to her. As Amy had previously set a password on the phone, it was all she needed to prove that she was its owner, and it was through such non-virtuous acts, such as lying and stealing that she proved to be the person he was looking for. In the end, the protagonist makes fun of the whole situation, as if she was proud of everything she did to dispute someone's affection, and instead of the typical "happily ever after", the closing sentence used to end the story was *"love is truly unfair, isn't it?"*. *Table 6* provides an overview of this story:

Table 6 – Analysis of learners' written production (story 04).

Title of the story	"Ck"
Context (setting)	A high school
Intertextual elements (convergence)	1.There is a lost element, which leads the main character to a man. 2.The main character does not live with her parents. 3.The main character lives a love story.
Transgressive elements (disruption and critique)	1.The story is written as a personal diary, in first person. 2.Cinderella is re-interpreted as a villain. 3.The main character is jealous and vengeful. 4.The main character lies, steals and mistreats others. 5.The lost element does not belong to the main character. It is stolen by her as a way to conquer the beloved.
Symbolic power	Learners subvert the Manichean understanding of human beings as entirely good or bad, reframing "Cinderella" as a villain, who uses non-virtuous means to conquer her beloved.

Based on the analysis of learners' written productions, I could visualize intercultural symbolic competence as a creative process of using language to criticize, subvert, and recreate a certain reality. Here, being intercultural was about understanding the symbolic power of language, and using such power as a discursive possibility to enact particular voices, desires, and ultimately to question hegemonic frames which are commonly taken as natural and normal. In this sense, intercultural symbolic competence was related to the potentiality of values, intertextualities, subjectivities and historicities for the construction of new discursive realities.

As a pedagogue, reading learners' final productions led me to reflect that teaching for the cultivation of what I am calling intercultural symbolic competence is about understanding the humanistic and political value of language education. When we do so, teaching a language becomes an activity that goes beyond the organization of instrumental goals and it turns into a pedagogical experience that caters for the transformation of ourselves through the contact with the other. While reading the stories, I was not concerned about evaluating students in terms of accuracy or grammaticality, but rather in terms of creativity and critical positioning, aspects which were central for me to illustrate the performance of intercultural symbolic competence.

Based on this particular view of language education, I have set central constructs, namely *relationality*, *transgression* and *potentiality* to systematize the analysis of intercultural symbolic competence throughout this study. In this last practice, the aspect of potentiality was observed through discursive practices that point to an act of symbolic power. The different shades through which learners reinterpreted the story of Cinderella point to the message they wanted the world to have, and reflect their profound engagement while fighting for social justice. Their texts are the expressions of their histories as women, as teenagers, as lovers, as dreamers and revolutionaries, and the experience in classroom was a way of legitimizing their voices.

The next section presents the last phase of the cycle, *Meta-analyzing*, when learners were encouraged to provide feedback on how they felt in relation to their learning experiences throughout the project. Here, I was eager to figure out how they would react to and evaluate their own processes of co-constructing intercultural symbolic competence in an additional language class.

4.5 PRACTICE 5: LEARNERS' FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT

Throughout the design and implementation of the project "50 shades of Cinderella", I aimed at reflecting upon my own praxis while teaching a language from an ecological perspective, more specifically situated in the field of intercultural language education. Such heuristic path of constituting myself both as a pedagogue and as a researcher could only be constructed through a dialectical relationship between theory and pedagogical practice, and this was the basis for the development of an informed practice. Here, even the most visible and noticeable aspects of teaching, such as the whole methodological organization, the roles of learners and teacher in the classroom, the ways through which interactions took place, everything was rooted on an axiomatic level of a set of theories or correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. Such dialectical relationship between theory and practice is, by the way, the foundation of what I understand as a teaching *method*[21].

Following this understanding of pedagogical action as the result of a dialectical relationship between theory and practice, the reality of a classroom can be metaphorically illustrated as the image of a tree. In such illustration, the exuberant leaves that shape the canopy structure is the most visible feature of a plant, which is supported by a trunk, a central part of a tree that the branches grow out of. All these visible structures, however, are connected to the root, the organ of a plant that typically lies below the surface of the soil.

Based on this conceptual metaphor for the understanding of pedagogical practice, the leaves stand for the procedures, the most visible classroom trait, which encompasses the moment-to-moment practices and behaviors that operate in teaching a language. The trunk stands for the level of design, which comprises aspects of learning tasks, roles of teachers and learners and how language content is selected and organized. Just like the visible structures of a tree are connected to a

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[21] According to the Richards and Rodgers (1999), the notion of *method* can be understood as an umbrella term described in terms of *approach*, *design* and *procedures*. This conceptual model was developed as a way of revising and extending previous hierarchical definitions, such as Anthony's (1963), which tended to understand pedagogical practice as an application of theory. Following Richards and Rodgers (1999), a method is, at the same time, theoretical and practical in nature, which means that any visible aspect of pedagogical practice is embedded on axiomatic structures, such as theories or conceptions that provide a justification for a certain understanding of language, teaching and learning.

root, in classroom practice, the aspects of procedures and design are theoretically justified and supported by particular conceptualizations of language, teaching and learning.

In *Practice 5*, learners were encouraged to reflect upon their own learning processes throughout the project, and such feedback revealed their impressions in relation to the most visible aspects of classroom experience, which encompass the levels of *design* and *procedure*s. While analyzing learners' responses, I was particularly interested in observing how they felt in relation to those aspects of classroom practice and if/how their opinions would point to the perception of language education as the construction of intercultural symbolic competence.

Data was generated from a written testimonial in which learners were asked to describe how they felt in relation to the project. Due to time constraints, I asked learners to write their testimonials at home, but unfortunately not all of them were able to hand them back to me. Only half of the group, from a total of twenty leaners, responded to the feedback, and in addition to that, not all responses provided a detailed feedback from which I could deeply analyze their impressions. In spite of from these difficulties, the feedback provided allowed me to systematize learners' impressions based on a set of recurrent themes, revolving around aspects of design and procedures, mostly in terms of task design, roles of teacher and students, and classroom interaction, which ultimately led me to observe the value attributed to these pedagogical aspects in relation to their learning experiences. The extracts below illustrate some of these aspects:

> The experience was enjoyable with the multiple dynamics every class. (S1)
>
> The different activities executed in class were very interesting, stimulating our creativity, helping in the interaction of the group, and also informative because now, we know more about fairy tales and its different aspects. (S2)
>
> You let us develop our thoughts and you show interest in discussing them with us. You are always smiling and open, giving to the class a touch of good energy. (S3)
>
> I adore the way we are able to criticize the stories and share our real thoughts about them. (S4)
>
> (…) what I really liked was the opportunity to show our creativity. (S5)

Regarding the evaluation of methodological aspects of the project, learners' feedback pointed to the appreciation of classroom practices as learning experiences which fostered their creativity and led them to interact with the group. Such

appreciation particularly caught my attention, since the development of a creative competence, which stands for the ability of making/doing things with semiotic repertoires, was a central element in my understanding of how intercultural education should look like in classroom practices. According to their responses, the development of such creative competence was facilitated by the methodological movements proposed in class, mostly in relation to the dynamism of the learning tasks, which allowed them to act with language in a creative way.

In the feedback above, learners also exposed their feelings in relation to the way that student-teacher interactions occurred, highlighting how they were able to truly express their perspectives in class: "*You let us develop our thoughts and you show interest in discussing them with us. You are always smiling and open, giving to the class a touch of good energy*" (S3); "*I adore the way we are able to criticize the stories and share our real thoughts about them.*" (S4). The inclusion of students' own voice was also a core element that guided me through the process of constituting myself as an intercultural teacher. Throughout the design and implementation of the project, I was constantly pondering how to make learners feel comfortable to express themselves in class, and which pedagogical strategies I should make use to guarantee that their particular voices were to be enacted. Looking at my experiences as a teacher, I realize that the answer for that question traces back to what Paulo Freire (1974) defines as "education as an act of love". According to the author, dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and for the people. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. In my experience, intercultural education is an act of dialogue, and therefore an act of love. It presupposes the need to recover the humanistic value of education in a world where authority and tradition are at stake. Teaching a language, when constituted by affection, love and dialogue is about the construction of education as a practice of freedom and humanization, and such human dimensions must be interconnected, since it is not possible to teach, in an authentic and committed way, without experiencing the affection, and without dialogue with others.

Throughout the project, learners positioned themselves in relation to their learning experiences as an interactive, critical, and creative endeavor, highlighting such aspects as components of what they felt like a "different kind of learning". This appreciation, in my view, stands for their perception of an intercultural language education:

I was really excited about the project because I've never worked with such open-minded options in the learning of English. (S6)

I liked being in this experience because it felt like a different kind of learning. (S7)

It was interesting to think about the meanings and elements of fairy tales. (S8)

Another cool thing was that you were able to show the aspects of a fairy tale from every angle. From the original versions to parodies and satires. (S9)

As I have already discussed earlier in this study, when we teach for the construction of intercultural symbolic competence, the whole "landscape" of learning changes. The classroom moves its furniture, assuming a disposition that ensures exchange and collaboration, and the school breaks down its walls to become a place connected to whole social world, where different viewpoints and feelings are explored and experienced through meaning-making practices (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004), and this is what learners valued as "open-minded" or "different" in their perceptions.

It is also noteworthy to point that, as a critical pedagogical perspective, an intercultural classroom context is not simply the environment where the language learned can be performed to answer a question posed by a teacher, simply as a way to reach certain instrumental goals. It is rather a genuine experience of languaging where the possibility of communication and active meaning-making, although structured and responsive, is languaging with lives that go beyond the classroom thresholds (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004).

Because the genuine practice of languaging tackles values, beliefs, political positionings, and other discursvive constructions that shape human subjectivities, being critical is not an easy task, and acting critically while learning a language was not something that pleased everyone in class. As the practices developed throughout the project led learners to explore, problematize and redraw their borders with others, I believe that such experience of dealing with differences might have caused some discomfort for those who did not share the same perspectives on a certain subject matter, and who ultimately found it difficult to decenter, as in the case of this student who clearly emphasized such discomfort: *"The only thing that bothers me is to be constantly talking about feminism, sexism, controversial issues, rich and poor… but that's really personal"* (S10).

Reading comments such as the one mentioned above makes me realize how complex it is to deal with multiple subjectivities in a classroom, where the safe-ground of rational opinions meets the unstable fault lines of human emotions. Here, revealing private voices and becoming critical is, without a doubt, a subversive political action of symbolically changing the world. Themes such as feminism, sexism, rich and poor can only be considered "controversial" because of a particular political positioning that delegitimizes the need of criticizing hegemonic constructions. Such hegemonic discourses also tend to disrupt the idea of education as a critical endeavor, and this is the root of a political trend, particularly experienced in Brazil, that fosters perspectives and projections of "Non-Partisan School" (EsP – Escola sem Partido), a conservative-based movement which defends a model of schooling without "indoctrination" in its main agenda, ultimately creating an illusionary neoliberal discourse that underlie the separability of power, politics and education.

Throughout this study, I have been advocating for a model of language education that departs from such view of schools as neutral. Following the epistemology of Critical Pedagogy, in which I situate the field of intercultural language education, the experience of schooling must serve for the development of a critical consciousness. Taking our discursively constructed world for granted is a way of maintaining a naïve consciousness, which according to Freire (1974), leads people to see causality as static, natural, established fact, and thus is deceived in its perception. In this sense, what I have been calling as intercultural symbolic competence is all about the cultivation of a critical consciousness, which stands for the understanding of facts in their circumstantial correlations, and ultimately for the knowledge of how to separate our consciousness from the dominant ideology which socializes us in mass culture, daily life, and indeed, in school.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Through the analysis of the classroom interactions and the learners written productions presented in this chapter, I hope to have illustrated how the experience of teaching and learning an additional language from an ecological perspective goes beyond a model of education which sets instrumental goals based on the notion of efficiency and accountability. Through the classroom reality presented here, the notion of *languaging* or discourse led me to understand language as a verb, a way of

being, encompassing the whole social world (PHIPPS; GONZALEZ, 2004). In this scenario, the act of teaching was about skilling people, rather than adding on detachable skills, and the experience of learning was seen as an opportunity for learners to become *languagers,* active agents who make sense of, and transform their realities in multiple symbolic ways.

Through the learning tasks proposed in the different practices of the project, learners were able to (1) co-construct a knowledge of fairy tales as cultural narratives that might allegorically represent the real world, (2) explore the idea of Cinderella in different levels of meaning, through multiple symbolic representations that transgress various borders, be they linguistic, cultural, historical, or textual, and has challenged many power structures, and also (3) create alternative realities, redrawing the world of fairy tales.

In the pages above, intercultural learning was understood in classroom practice as pedagogical experiences in which learners were fostered to look both *at* and *through* language as a symbolic system (KRAMSCH, 2006). Bearing this in mind, the pedagogical project entitled "50 shades of Cinderella" was foregrounded on a notion of language as discourse, which means that language learning was seen as more than the development of an ability to use language as a means to communicate, but instead, or in addition to, it was a possibility to understand otherness and to be aware of one's own values and perspectives. Here, interculturality was materialized in the symbolic dimension of discourse, as learners positioned themselves critically and co-constructed meanings encompassing subjective, aesthetical, historical and ideological dimensions. Such discursive nature of interculturality was central for the development of this study, not only in terms of pedagogical decisions, but also as a rationale for data analysis, and that explains the reason why I have used the term "symbolic" when referring to intercultural competence.

The pedagogical experience presented in this chapter also captured the development of my own praxis as an intercultural teacher, portraying not only those moments when my enacted practices were guided by a previous methodological planning, but also the unplanned moments of interaction, in-flight decisions, and a constant process of reflection *on* action and *in* action which constituted the heuristic endeavor of understanding intercultural language education through the lenses of my own teaching practice. Bearing in mind the analysis developed in this section, the

following chapter presents, in a more concise manner, a discussion which aims at addressing the research questions that guided this study.

5 IN CLOSING

In this concluding chapter, I present the final remarks of this piece of study. In doing so, I start by drawing a summary of the dissertation and of the findings, once more addressing the research questions that supported this investigation, and providing a brief overview of my *praxis* as an intercultural teacher/researcher. Moreover, this chapter brings to the fore the limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research in the field, and the implications of this experience on how I see myself as a researcher and as a teacher.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

This study was constructed as a qualitative research narrative through which I was able to depict the constitution of my own *praxis* while understanding the meanings of an intercultural perspective to language education, both in light of recent theorizations and through my own pedagogical practices.

As I have exposed in the introductory chapter, the reason why I was particularly motivated in researching interculturality in language education interweaves academic and personal reasons. Academic in the sense that this study is an attempt to shed light on understanding how interculturality can be experienced in classroom contexts, particularly looking at how teacher's mediation through classroom interaction can facilitate the co-construction of intercultural symbolic competence; and personal in the sense that this study represents my political positioning as someone who strongly believes that schooling experience must take learners to an emancipatory process of critical consciousness-raising, because this is how they can be encouraged to act for progressive social changes. In this regard, I agree with Rubem Alves (1984) when he claims that *"todo ato de pesquisa é um ato político"*[22], being therefore impossible to set a clear-cut separation between researchers and their objects of study.

Having those motivations in mind, in this action research narrative I aimed at investigating a) the theoretical dimension of my *praxis*, addressing how an ecological

[22] My translation: "every act of research is a political act".

epistemology could be used as a theoretical foundation for the construction of my pedagogical actions; b) the methodological dimension of my *praxis*, looking at how specific decisions on the level of design pointed to the construction of intercultural moments in class; and c) the interactional dimension of my *praxis,* investigating how intercultural symbolic competence is materialized in discursive practices that emerge in classroom episodes. In order to reach these objectives, this study pursued the following research questions:

RQ1: How can some of the concepts and metaphors of the ecological perspective be used both as guidelines for pedagogical action and heuristic resources for analysis? *(theoretical dimension)*

RQ2: How the pedagogical tasks designed help learners to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, frames and worldviews in symbolic ways? *(methodological dimension)*

RQ3: How teacher's and learners' discursive practices illustrate the construction of intercultural symbolic competence, in terms of relationality, transgression and potentiality? *(interactional dimension)*

To fulfill the objectives of this study and answer the research questions, I explored my *praxis* in a three-dimensional perspective with the objective of exploring its theoretical, methodological and interactional stances.

Following this systematization, in Chapter II, I discussed conceptual metaphors of the postmodern, which I referred to as *ecological perspectives*, to position myself in relation to fundamental definitions of language, communication, the language learner and language education, and to ultimately present how such theoretical debate could be approached as the rationale for the development of an intercultural pedagogy. In Chapter III, I provided a reflexive account of my creative process as teacher while integrating an intercultural dimension to my own pedagogical practice, and in doing so, I presented details regarding the design of a pedagogical project, through which learners were fostered to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, frames and worldviews in moments of discussion, critical analysis, and performative creativity. Following that, in Chapter IV, I addressed the interactional dimension of my *praxis* through the analysis of classroom data. In this part of the study, data analysis was systematized around the key aspects of *relationality, transgression* and *potentiality,* which were elements used as analytical

constructs for the understanding of intercultural symbolic competence from a discourse-based perspective.

In the following subsections, I provide a brief discussion on each of the aforementioned research questions and in doing so; I hope to summarize the findings of the present study.

5.2 DISCUSSING FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

The first research question of this study was designed as a way of exploring how the theoretical debate on language education from an ecological perspective could be approached both as fundamental principles for my pedagogical actions and as a heuristic resource for data analysis. In this sense, research question one holistically explores the foundation of my *praxis*, providing support for the theoretical and subsequent practical dimensions of this study.

The concepts and metaphors presented in Chapter II were paramount for me to frame the theoretical contours of my *praxis* and therefore justify particular pedagogical movements on the basis of a theoretical positioning regarding language teaching and learning. As a way to organize this discussion, the theoretical review of this research was based upon a central question, which aimed at understanding what it means to teach an additional language in the postmodern world.

In such postmodern framing, the idea of *ecology* was approached as a key metaphor to address particular views shaping the field of language education that foreground the interconnectedness of the cognitive, interactional, social and historical dimensions of language, departing from the traditional tendency within linguistics and education to see language in static, or decontextualized ways.

From this discussion, I have stressed out the relevance of context, in saying that language does not arrive from input, but from affordances that emerge as we communicatively engage with one another, and also in saying that language emerges from semiotic activity. This all means that adopting an ecological perspective is about moving beyond a view of language as a structural system only, to one that encompasses its variable, dynamic, dialogic, and, above all, situated nature.

 Such integrated understanding led me to recognize language as a fluid set of resources and focus on the development of learners' communicative repertoires. This ecological view of language entails another enlightening conceptual metaphor,

which was paramount for the construction of my pedagogical actions. From an object, a noun, language is now seen as a verb, as human action and as a possibility of being. The emphasis on language as *languaging,* or as an ontological process that is inseparable from our biological and social history gave me the understanding that teaching language in what I have called "the postmodern world" is about dealing with students as social actors who distinguish among themselves through their particular discursive practices.

This ecological view of language as subjective and historically situated discursive practices also led me to reconsider what I understand as communication, departing from a transmission model, in which communicating is reduced to an exchange of information, to take into account the interpretive and interpersonal work that goes on in interaction. This means that in the experience of teaching a language, it was paramount for me to encourage learners to look beyond words and actions, so as to understand how values, identities and meanings might be disguised behind a common illusion of effective communication, and also how any instance of meaning making is therefore cultural and organized by discourse.

As I have advocated in Chapter II, the way we understand language strongly influences how we conceptualize language learning. In this sense, the notion of discourse was central for me to understand how to approach language and culture from a postmodern perspective, and that led me to draw upon the working concept of *intercultural symbolic competence*, which provided me with the necessary frames to understand how pedagogical practices should look like, as well as to develop a systematized way of analyzing meaning making moments in the classroom, and recognizing what could be considered instances of intercultural moments. The choice for the term *intercultural symbolic competence* in this study emerged as a result of my reflection upon the discursive dimension of language and culture, and my understanding of intercultural practices as symbolic acts performed by discursively constructed beings who make sense of their worlds, and ultimately transform themselves through meaning-making practices.

An ecological epistemology not only provided me with a theoretical basis for my pedagogical actions, but also allowed me to systematize heuristic resources for the analysis of intercultural symbolic competence in terms of discursive practices. In this study, I have approached interculturality following the key aspects of *relationality, transgression* and *potentiality;* three-dimensional analytical constructs which capture

the essence of intercultural learning as materialized in discursive practices. These constructs will be further examined in relation to research question three, when I will review the interactional dimension of intercultural symbolic competence in classroom practices.

5.3 DISCUSSING FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

Moving from the previous discussion, in which I could present the notion of intercultural language education through postmodern conceptual metaphors, the second research question of this study aimed at exploring an intercultural perspective on the level of design, that is, in terms of teaching methodology. In doing so, my objective was to discuss the rationale behind my pedagogical planning and ultimately justify how the learning tasks implemented in class were expected to help learners to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, frames and worldviews in symbolic ways.

In order to respond to this question, I organized the pedagogical phase of this research into four steps (see *Chapter III*) and provided a reflexive account of my creative process as teacher while integrating an intercultural dimension to my own pedagogical practice. Following this organization, I defined what I understand as an intercultural practice (step 1), justified the thematic choice for the pedagogical project implemented in class (step 2), presented the rationale behind the cycle of intercultural practices (step 3), and also provided details regarding the implementation of the project (step 4). Research question two, therefore, could be answered based on the discussion of these methodological steps, but more particularly taking into account what I have presented in *step 3*.

Organized as a cycle of pedagogical practices whose main objective was to bring about intercultural experiences in class, the project *Fifty Shades of Cinderella* was composed of a cycle of tasks through which learners were fostered to explore, problematize and redraw narratives, frames and worldviews through moments of discussion, critical analysis, and performative creativity. During these practices, students were challenged to understand and act with the symbolic power of language as they dealt with stories of fairy tales in different texts, time and space, modalities and cultures, and ultimately, they were encouraged to create alternative realities, in

symbolic ways, therefore cultivating intercultural symbolic competence throughout these practices was all about being critical and creative.

The project was organized in a cycle of five practices, namely *Understanding Fairy Tales, Recognizing Cinderella, Problematizing Cinderella, Reimagining Cinderella* and *Reflecting on the Experience.* Together, all these five practices were planned movements envisioned to help learners go through the experience of *exploring*, *problematizing* and *redrawing*, which were terms used as key features to approach intercultural language learning on the level of methodological design (See *Table 1,* presented in Chapter III, for an overview of the project in relation to the aforementioned features).

Based on the implementation of this project, it was possible for me to observe how the tasks designed involved students in exploring, problematizing and redrawing narratives, frames and worldviews in symbolic ways*.* In Practice 1, students were able to (1) explore the literary genre of fairy tales in terms thematic content, particularly in relation to common motifs, archetypal characters, typical settings or moral lessons, and (2) co-construct an understanding of fairy tales as conventionalized storylines created by cultural groups, contextualized at specific places and times, and related to reality, although set in a fantasy world*.*

In *Practice 2*, learners went through an analytical process of understanding Cinderella both as a fictional character and as an allegory of women from a patriarchal perspective. In doing so, they were able to (1) understand the idea of Cinderella as a relational construct, materialized in the dialogues that emerged among various texts, modalities, time and space, cultures and languages; (2) to approach cultural narratives in relation to their own emotions, unveiling how they felt about allegorical symbols and meanings that might represent the world outside the pages of a fairy tale; (3) and ultimately to use such "critical feelings" as a strategic point of departure for the development of a new subject positioning, and even for a reconstruction of perspectives.

Through the pedagogical movements of *Practice 3*, learners were encouraged to problematize subversive representations of Cinderella, and position themselves critically in relation to them. Through the implementation of this practice, learners were able to (1) take up various perspectives of interpretation, and to understand how apparently random elements of a text/image/video can come together to make particular claims about the world; (2) and they were also able to

traverse different levels of interpretation, moving from literal, to figurative, and ultimately reaching ideological meanings.

As for *Practice 4*, learners' final productions could be seen as discursive practices through which the various meanings that emerged from the story of Cinderella would point to the potential for others, in an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing. Through the implementation of this pedagogical practice, I could observe that (1) learners managed to create stories that encompassed their particular imagination, desires, and worldviews, therefore recreating "Cinderella" was a way of symbolically changing the world; (2) learners played with their creative potentials, making use of strategic discursive elements that would bring about processes of convergence and critique, and this was paramount for me to understand the performance of their intercultural symbolic competence; and finally, through *Practice 4*, (3) learners approached discursive practices as symbolic power, while questioning and redrawing hegemonic frames which are commonly taken as natural and normal.

5.4 DISCUSSING FINDINGS: RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

The third research question of this study aimed at approaching its interactional dimension. In doing so, my objective was particularly to explore how the discursive practices situated in the classroom context would point to the construction of intercultural symbolic competence.

In order to address such dimension of my *praxis*, data was gathered from the transcription of classroom interactions, which I refer to as *classroom episodes,* and also from learners' written productions, which were created by students as a final task of the project implemented in classroom. Data analysis was systematized around the key aspects of *relationality, transgression* and *potentiality,* three-dimensional elements used as analytical constructs for the understanding of intercultural symbolic competence from a discourse-based perspective. These elements emerged as heuristic resources situated in an ecological epistemology in which the understanding of *being intercultural* was framed in relation to the key notion of discourse.

Following such post-modern epistemology, the notion of *relationality* highlights that learning a language, from an intercultural perspective, involves the

understanding that meanings are not constructed in isolation, but they rather reside in the relations, reframings and dialogues that emerge from texts, historical moments, modalities, and the interaction between storytellers and listeners.

The aspect of *transgression* led me to see intercultural learning as an ability to transgress the pre-given, the alleged natural order, the normative, the common sense, and through such transgressive practice of accessing reality as discourse, being intercultural is ultimately about gaining a privileged mentality that leads to a critical understanding and to the transformation of who we are.

Finally, the idea of *potentiality* is what allowed me to envision intercultural learning as the possibility of reconstructing alternative realities in symbolic ways, in an endless process of resignification, recontextualization, and reframing. Based on these three constructs, being intercultural is not about acquiring a finalized or instrumental ability, which can be applied to specific situations, but it is rather about cultivating a potentiality that can be unevenly distributed. Learning, in this sense, means becoming aware of one's own potentiality at the same time that communicative, analytical, interpretive and creative abilities are developed.

Through the analysis of classroom data, intercultural symbolic competence could be understood in terms of *relationality, transgression and potentiality* as learners (1) developed interpretive skills, which allowed them to create analytical frames for the understanding of Cinderella as a character and as an allegorical symbol, across different texts, modalities and historical moments; (2) as learners shared, negotiated, and sometimes confronted different perspectives, enacting their subjectivities in class, and therefore revealing how their perceptions are grounded on particular life experiences; (3)as they traversed different levels of interpretation, while exploring symbolic representations in their literal, figurative and ideological stances; (3) and as they creatively used the potentiality of values, intertextualities, subjectivities and historicities for the construction of new discursive realities. In doing so, learners were able to approach the symbolic power of discourse to enact their particular voices, desires, and ultimately to question the discursive frames which compose their own realities.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While looking at this research as a whole, I must acknowledge that although I have been devoted to bring valuable contributions to the area of additional language education and to provide an experiential account on intercultural teaching from the lenses of my own *praxis*, being a researcher and investigating complex phenomena involves the need to set boundaries so as to effectively engage in analysis, and this has to be undertaken with an awareness of the limitations of such practices (BAKER, 2015 *apud* DE SOUZA HALL, 2016).

The first limitation regards the fact that the classroom context investigated in this study might not be representative of the most common picture we have of a public school classroom in Brazil. As I mentioned in Chapter III, students at IFSC-Florianópolis go through a placement test as soon as they reach the third semester at the institution, so as to be organized according to their level of proficiency. In this sense, although I have set Brazilian public school settings as my research focus, investigating an advanced-level group at IFSC is certainly different from the contexts where students come to class with various learning backgrounds, in terms of language proficiency, being challenging, for example, to conduct lessons all in English. Therefore, future studies might consider investigating the particularities of developing intercultural language teaching in such contexts.

In addition to the aforementioned contextual features, some limitations can be drawn regarding aspects of methodological design. Planning pedagogical movements has indeed contributed to the understanding of intercultural symbolic competence as a pedagogical practice. However, following pre-established classroom procedures made it difficult for me to scape what was previously set and therefore be more open to deal with unplanned moments. Also, I wish I could have had the chance to explore learners' final productions as process rather than a product, exploring their reasoning and subject positioning along the construction of their texts. I believe this would bring about rich insights for data analysis.

In relation to possible paths of further investigation, particularly in classes with learners of drastically different levels of proficiency, I believe that teachers should aim at the development of integrated repertoires, and in doing so, intercultural moments could be co-constructed and analyzed in relation to the idea of

translanguaging. Although I have approached this concept in this research, future studies would indeed provide rich insights on how *translaguaging* can ensure social justice education, challenging us to expand traditional forms of thinking and approaching culturally responsive pedagogies to create greater equity in access and achievements for all learners.

Nevertheless, I consider that the methodological design I followed was significant, especially because there are few studies that focus on actual intercultural classroom practices and which explore the co-construction of interculturality through the lenses of one's own *praxis.* In this sense, I believe that further action research should be undertaken in order to discuss aspects that so far have been left undiscussed here, and ultimately to depart from modernist research traditions, solidifying the understanding of science as personal narratives.

5.6 LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD: HOW THIS STUDY HAS TRANSFORMED ME AS A RESEARCHER AND AS A TEACHER

Getting to the end of this study makes me feel emotional and profoundly reflexive, and that is why I would like to "dock my boat" after this long, adventurous journey of self-knowledge making sense of how such experience has contributed towards the construction of who I am today, as a researcher and as a teacher.

I still remember the moment when I defended my master's thesis and after my presentation, professor Hamilton, one of the members of the board, looked at me and asked: *"Jeová, where are you in the study? The only moment I could hear your voice, as a person, was in your acknowledgements".* It has been six years since that episode, and I can still remember his words for they made me realize that doing research, for me, was about keeping myself distant from my object of study. That was how I thought the scientific discourse was supposed to be, and in following such "impersonal" point of reference, my objective as a researcher was particularly based on the illusory ideal of discovering the "truth". I wanted to have a clear understanding of interculturality, in terms of theoretical concepts, and to visualize how those concepts would apply to the reality of the investigated contexts. In that research design, I believed that my personal voice should be avoided, and that was noticeable through the very lexical choices of my text – all written in impersonal third person singular.

Following the course of my doctoral studies has given me the chance to reconsider the meanings of qualitative research in education and to understand the value of my subjectivity as a researcher. In this journey, I have learned to resist the idea of an original source of things and clear conclusions of those things and came to understand reality as a wide array of attractions and influences with no specific genesis or "single truth". I also realized how positioning myself and revealing my private voice is paramount for the purpose of narrativizing science. According to Rajagopalan (2003), thinking of science as narratives allows us to move beyond the idea that research is about reaching clear and unfailing conclusions to understand that it is rather about the reasoning of a particular person who does not always walk on accurate and straight lines.

In this process of understanding the scope of qualitative research from a postmodern perspective and ultimately (re) constructing myself as a researcher, I could also experience how social interaction played an important role. It was particularly due to the guidance of my advisor, Gloria Gil, and the moments of discussion set with my colleagues from the research group that I started to make sense of how an ecological epistemology would not only lead me to rethink fundamental concepts of my theoretical framework, but to reconsider the very foundations of how I envisioned myself as a researcher.

All these personal experiences explain the reason why I have chosen to write this whole dissertation in first person, and why I have decided to understand intercultural language education from the lenses of my own *praxis.* In doing so, not only I have presented my subjectivity in the aesthetic construction of the research text, but also approached it as the means through which I could conduct this investigation.

As a teacher, I have also gone through a deep transformational experience. In Chapter III, while describing the development of the pedagogical phase of the study, I pointed out how difficult it was for me to move from theory to the reality of a classroom, and at that moment, when I was full of doubts, I can still remember writing down the questions below:

> What do I understand by intercultural language education? What are the objectives of an intercultural activity? How can I involve students in practices that might bring about intercultural experiences in class? Which aspects of intercultural activities should I explore with this group? What could be an interesting theme to organize this project?

(Extract from field notes).

Looking back, I now notice that being in doubt is always the beginning of a great change. It was particularly because of my uncertainties that I figured out I was going through a process of reconstructing who I was as a teacher and therefore what and how I was supposed to teach, and what I should expect from my students in classroom. This process of knowledge construction was the result of a reflective practice through which I could experience how, as pointed by Horton and Freire (1990), "my ideas have changed and are constantly changing and should change and that I'm proud of my inconsistencies as I am my consistencies" (p. 10).

Dealing with language as discourse, and being an intercultural teacher allowed me to see the classroom beyond the safe-ground of rational opinions, and to understand how learning can be a transformative experience if we explore the fault lines of learners' personal feelings. Horton and Freire (1990) defend that, as pedagogues, we should break the status *quo* and question traditional models of teaching, and in doing so, we should be aware that "there is no creativity without rupture, without a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision" (p. 38). I agree with that, and throughout this research narrative, I hope to have illustrated my own experience while dealing with conflicts.

From now on, I try to look at every teaching context with that same feeling of uncertainty, because I believe this to be the root of a reflective behavior that leads to the construction of a transformative *praxis.*

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7 APPENDIX A - Informed consent letter

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO
(Elaborado de acordo com a Resolução 466/2012-CNS/CONEP)

Solicitamos a sua autorização para convidar o(a) seu/sua filho(a) para participar, como voluntário (a), da pesquisa qualitativa *Mundos além das palavras: explorando a dimensão simbólica na aula de inglês como língua adicional*, sob responsabilidade da pesquisadora e orientadora *Gloria Gil* e de seu pesquisador assistente *Jeová Araújo Rosa Filho*, tendo por objetivo investigar, através de experiências em sala de aula, potencialidades de uma perspectiva intercultural para o ensino de inglês como língua adicional.

Para realização deste trabalho, o(a) seu/sua filho(a) participará de aulas que acontecerão dentro do *Instituto Federal de Educação de Santa Catarina - Campus Florianópolis*, durante os horários estipulados pelo colégio para as aulas de inglês. As aulas serão ministradas pelo pesquisador assistente, *Jeová Araújo Rosa Filho*, sob a supervisão da pesquisadora responsável, *Gloria Gil* e da professora do IFSC responsável pela disciplina de língua inglesa. Todas as aulas serão gravadas e, após cada aula, você responderá questionários sobre as atividades realizadas durante a aula. Todos os alunos presentes e os quais os pais permitiram a participação nessa pesquisa poderão participar de entrevistas que serão gravadas. Todos os instrumentos mencionados (gravações, filmagens e questionários) servem para que seja possível compreender os desafios e potencialidades das propostas pedagógicas construídas em sala de aula.

Esclarecemos que manteremos em anonimato, sob sigilo absoluto, durante e após o término do estudo, todos os dados que identifiquem os participantes da pesquisa. Informamos também que após o término da pesquisa, serão destruídos de todo e qualquer tipo de mídia que possa vir a identificá-lo(a) tais como filmagens, fotos, gravações etc., não restando nada que venha a comprometer o anonimato de participação agora ou futuramente.

Na pesquisa qualitativa, habitualmente, não existe desconforto ou riscos físicos. Entretanto o participante poderá se sentir desconfortável em compartilhar informações pessoais, confidenciais ou falar sobre alguns tópicos que causem

incômodo. Portanto, deixamos claro que nenhum participante precisará responder a qualquer pergunta ou compartilhar informações obtidas em debate/entrevista/pesquisa, caso a considere de ordem pessoal ou sinta qualquer desconforto em falar.

Caso seu/sua filho(a) sinta algo dentro desses padrões, comunique aos pesquisadores para que sejam tomadas as devidas providências. Imediatamente abandonaremos o uso de qualquer possível informação que seja avaliada pelo participante como imprópria.

A participação nessa pesquisa é de grande valor. Através dela, buscaremos desenvolver estratégias que busquem contribuir com o ensino de línguas adicionais no Brasil.

O participante terá os seguintes direitos: o recebimento de uma via assinada do TCLE, a garantia de esclarecimento e resposta a qualquer pergunta; a liberdade de abandonar a pesquisa a qualquer momento sem prejuízo para si ou para seu tratamento (se for o caso); a garantia de que em caso haja algum dano a sua pessoa (ou o dependente), os prejuízos serão assumidos pelos pesquisadores ou pela instituição responsável, inclusive acompanhamento médico e hospitalar (se for o caso). Caso haja gastos adicionais, os mesmos serão absorvidos pelos pesquisadores.

Duas vias deste documento estão sendo rubricadas e assinadas por você e pelo pesquisador assistente, Jeová Araújo Rosa Filho. Guarde cuidadosamente a sua via, pois é um documento que traz importantes informações de contato e garante os seus direitos como participante da pesquisa.

Afirmadas as responsabilidades acima, Eu, Jeová Araújo Rosa Filho, me responsabilizo em cumprir as exigências aqui expostas, previstas nos itens IV.3 e IV.4 da resolução CNS466/2012. Em caso de dúvidas e esclarecimentos você deve procurar os pesquisadores Glória Gil (glorigil@gmail.com) ou Jeová Araújo Rosa Filho (jeoh.mail@gmail.com).

Caso suas dúvidas não sejam resolvidas pelos pesquisadores ou os direitos dos participantes sejam negados, favor recorrer ao Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos (CEPSH) da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, localizado Prédio Reitoria II, 4ºandar, sala 401, na Rua Desembargador Vitor Lima, nº 222, Trindade, Florianópolis. Telefone para contato: 3721-6094.

CONSENTIMENTO DO RESPONSÁVEL PARA A PARTICIPAÇÃO DO/A VOLUNTÁRIO

Eu [xxxxxxx] CPF [xxxxxxx] abaixo assinado, responsável por [xxxxxxx] autorizo a sua participação no estudo [xxxxxxx], como voluntário(a). Fui devidamente informado(a) e esclarecido(a) pelo(a) pesquisador(a) sobre a pesquisa, os procedimentos nela envolvidos, assim como os possíveis riscos e benefícios decorrentes da participação dele(a). Foi-me garantido que posso retirar o meu consentimento a qualquer momento, sem que isto leve a qualquer penalidade para mim ou para o(a) menor em questão.

8 APPENDIX B - Participants' profile questionnaire

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROFILE

This questionnaire will help me understand your profile as an English language learner. You can answer this in English or in Portuguese.

E-mail address _____

What is your name? _____

How old are you? _____

What is your level of English?

(   ) Intermediate

(   ) Advanced

How did you learn English? *Write a paragraph to describe the most memorable experiences you had while learning English. Mention if you have attended a language school of if you have studied by yourself.*

Do you use English outside the classroom? In which situations?

Do you speak other languages in addition to English?

How do you feel when you speak English? *Some people feel like a different person, some feel uncomfortable... how do you feel about it? Let your mind flow and write a paragraph to express the emotions you feel when you speak English.*

Thank you so much for your participation!

9 APPENDIX C - Visual material and complete work plans

Practice 1
Activity 1 - Elements of fairy tales (2h - 1 meeting)

Objective: Contextualize the theme of the project by exploring elements of fairytales and understand learners' perspectives in relation to this type of cultural narrative.

Settings: teacher-students, students-students (pair and group work)

Steps:

1. Ask students if they like fairytales. Collect their answers and set the theme of the project.
2. Break the ice with the game "fairytale quiz". Students get a number of hints and they have to figure out the name of that tale in English. Each group receive a number of frogs, and for each correct answer they get one of their frogs transformed into a prince. The winning group is the one with the largest number of princes.
3. After that, have students organized in pairs and ask them to list characteristics of fairytales they know. Then open discussion with the whole group.
4. Explain to the group that fairytales have changed across the years and prepare them to read some details about old versions of famous fairytales. Students continue organized in pairs to read the text.
5. Ask them to reflect on the question: *why do you think fairytales have changed so much across the years?* Give them some time and, after that, open discussion.

Hints used for the game:

Hints	Answer
This fairy tale features three pigs who build three houses of different materials	The Three Little Pigs
The origins of this European fairy tale can be traced back to the 17th century. It's about a young girl and a Big Bad Wolf.	Little Red Riding Hood
In this story, a princess magically transforms a small creature into a handsome prince.	The Frog Prince
In this fairy tale, a young brother and sister are kidnapped by a cannibalistic witch who lives in forest in a house constructed of cake and confectionery.	Hansel and Gretel
It is a folk tale embodying a myth-element of unjust oppression/triumphant reward.	Cinderella
With this fairy tale, we learn that true beauty comes from within.	Beauty and the Beast
"Mirror mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?"	Snow White
It's the story of a miller who lies to the king, telling him that his daughter can transform straw into gold.	Rumpelstiltskin

Text used in class:

CREEPY DETAILS ABOUT ORIGINAL VERSIONS OF FAIRYTALES

In some versions, it's not a kiss from the princess that transforms the frog into a prince but chopping off his head. In the original Brothers Grimm version, the princess slams the frog into the wall to turn him back into a prince. Ouch!

The original Snow White paints a much darker story with the evil queen ordering the huntsman to take Snow White into the woods, kill her, and bring back her liver and lungs for the queen to eat. Later in the story, the prince and Snow White are getting married and invite all royalty in the land. The evil queen shows up, unknowing it was her stepdaughter's wedding. When she arrives, she's forced to step into burning-hot iron shoes brought from the fireplace and dance until she dies. That's a hell of a tango.

Do you know how Hansel and Gretel end up "lost" in the forest? Don't be fooled, it was no mistake. Their parents deserted them in the forest. This fact might have referred to the many parents who abandoned their children during a major European famine in the 14th century.

In a Brothers Grimm version, Cinderella's eldest sister, in an attempt to fit into the glass slipper, cuts off her toes. The second sister cuts off her heel. In both cases, two doves sent by Cinderella's dead mother alert the prince of the sisters' blood in the slippers. Though Cinderella was finally found to be the true owner of the slipper, during her wedding to the prince the doves return and poke her older sisters' eyes out.

The original version of Rapunzel still features a beautiful girl with long hair trapped in a tower by an evil witch. However, when the witch finds the prince has been visiting Rapunzel, who is pregnant, she cuts off the girl's hair and banishes her from the tower. The prince returns that night and crawls up the hair only to find the evil witch. She pushes him off the tower into thornbushes which break his fall and stab his eyes out.

Yes, off to grandmother's house she went, but in some original versions, the wolf arrived to the house early and chopped up the grandmother, putting her flesh in the pantry and blood in a wine bottle. He tells Red to have something to eat and she does, unknowing she's actually eating her own grandmother.

Practice 2

Activity 1 - Cinderella across the world (2h - 1 meeting)

Objective: explore the essence of the character Cinderella by analyzing and comparing different versions of this fairytale across the world: The Story of the Black Cow (a tale from the Himalayas), Yeh-Shen (a tale from China) and Rhodopis (a tale from Egypt). By doing so, learners are expected to recognize it as a story, historical subject and cultural representation in different texts, time and space, cultures and languages.

Settings: teacher-students, students-students (group work)

Steps:

1. Have students organized in groups and tell them they are going to read different versions of a famous fairytale: The Story of the Black Cow (a tale from the Himalayas), Yeh-Shen (a tale from China) and Rhodopis (a tale from Egypt). Do not reveal that these tales are all versions of what we know by Cinderella. Each group will choose only one of these versions.

2. After reading, set a discussion based on the following questions: *(1) Which famous fairytale is it similar to? (2) What typical features of fairytales can be noticed in the story you have read? (3) How did you feel about this tale? What feelings emerged when you read the story?*

3. As a way to encourage learners to compare their stories, ask them to create a poster to present the tale they read to the whole class. Instructions are provided on the slide presentation:

4. When finished, ask learners to compare the tales they read by reflecting on differences and similarities among them.

Presentation used in class: guidelines for the creation of the posters:

Create a poster to present the fairytale you've read to the whole class

1. Draw the main character following the descriptions of the story and using your imagination. (How is Cinderella represented in this story?)
2. List the main events of the story (What happens in the plot?)
3. Describe the secondary characters and their relationship to the main character.
4. Describe the setting and contextualize the story. (Where does the story take place?/What different cultural elements do you find in the story?)
5. Describe the power structures in the story? (How are women/men, rich/poor represented in the story?)
6. What is the "Happy Ending" in this story?

When the posters are finished, go around the classroom and compare the tales. What is different and similar about them? (Take notes)

Versions of fairytales used in class:

RHODOPIS (Ροδώπις)

adapted from the Strabo, 1st century BC

Long ago in the land of Egypt, there lived a slave girl named Rhodopis. She was born in Greece, but had been kidnapped by pirates and sold into Egyptian slavery. The man who bought her was a kind old man, but he spent most of his time sleeping and never saw how much Rhodopis suffered at the hands of his other servants, who teased her endlessly. Their hair was straight and black and elegant; her hair was golden, curly and frizzy. Their eyes were brown and black and deep, but hers were green and bright. Their skin glowed like copper and bronze and sand, but Rhodopis had fair skin that burnt in the sun.

They made her do all their work while the old man slept. "Go to the river and wash the clothes. "Mend my robe," "Bake the bread," they would scream at her.

Rhodopis had only animals for friends. She had trained the birds to eat from her hand, a monkey to sit on her shoulder, and the old hippopotamus would get out of the mud just to be closer to her. At the end of the day, if she wasn't too tired, she would go down to the river to be with the animals, and if she had any energy left from the hard day's work, she would dance and sing for them.

One evening, Rhodopis went down to the river near her animals, and danced and sang so lightly and so well that her feet barely touched the ground, and the old man woke from his sleep and listened to her singing. He admired her dancing, and felt that one so talented should not be without shoes. He ordered her a special pair of *slippers*. They were soft and a delicious rose-red color. Now the servant girls *teased* her even more, so jealous they were of her beautiful red slippers.

A little while after this, the Pharaoh announced that he would *hold court* in Memphis and all in the kingdom were invited. Naturally Rhodopis wanted to go, to dance and sing with the others. But it was not to be. The servant girls prepared to leave in their finest clothes and they gave Rhodopis more things to do before they returned, and it would be impossible for her to get them all done before the court began.

They pulled their *raft* away leaving Rhodopis on the bank. As she began to wash the clothes in the river she sang a sad little song, for she was very disappointed not to be going. The splashing of the water wet Rhodopis's slippers. She quickly grabbed them up, took them off and placed them in the sun to dry.

As she was continuing with her chores, the sky darkened and as she looked up she saw a falcon fly down and catch one of her slippers. Rhodopis was terrified because she knew it was the god Horus who had taken her shoe. Rhodopis protected the other slipper in her tunic and went back to work, wondering what Horus' appearance could mean.

Now, the Pharaoh, Amasis, Pharaoh of all Egypt was just beginning to hold court, sitting on his throne looking out over the people, and feeling very bored. He much preferred to be riding across the desert in his *chariot*, and the dancing was uninspired. He wanted a distraction.

Suddenly the falcon flew down and dropped the rose-red golden slipper in his lap. The Pharaoh caught up the slipper and examined it closely. He knew that was a sign from the god Horus. He stared at the slipper until he had deciphered its meaning, and then declared that all maidens in Egypt must try on the slipper, and that he would take the owner to be his Queen. And so it happened that by the time the servant girls arrived, the celebrations had ended, and Pharaoh had left by chariot in search of the owner of the red-rose slipper.

After searching all through the large cities and not finding the owner, Pharaoh began to travel the Nile pulling into every landing, ordering maidens to try on the slipper. Soon he came to the house of Rhodopis' master, and when Rhodopis heard the sounds of the trumpets, she hid, fearful of what it could mean. The other servant girls ran to the landing to try on the shoe while Rhodopis hid in the bushes.

Of course, the moment that the other servant girls saw the shoe they recognized that it belonged to Rhodopis, but said nothing, such was their envy and hatred of her. However, they could not force their feet into the slipper.

While they were failing, and pretending to succeed, the Pharaoh spied Rhodopis hiding in the bushes and asked her to try on the slipper. She slid her tiny foot into the slipper and then pulled the other from her tunic.

Then Pharaoh knew that she was chosen by the Gods to be his wife, and pronounced that she would be his queen. The servant girls cried out that she was a

slave and not even Egyptian, and that her hair, eyes, skin and clothes were unsuitable; any of them would be a more fitting Queen.

But the Pharaoh said: "She is the most Egyptian of all...for her eyes are as green as the Nile, her hair like papyrus, and her skin as pink as the lotus flower."

Slippers - A low shoe that can be slipped on and off easily.

To tease - To make fun of someone.

To hold court - to attract people who want your attention.

Raft - A flat structure, typically made of planks, logs, or barrels, that floats on water.

Chariot - An ancient horse-drawn vehicle.

THE STORY OF THE BLACK COW
adapted from John Murray, 1906

There was a certain Brahmin whose wife died leaving him one little son. For some time, the two lived happily together, but at last the Brahmin married for a second time, and the woman, who had a daughter of her own, was very unkind to her little stepson.

Each day the two children went out together to attend to the *cattle*, and at night they returned home to eat their food. But the cakes made by the Brahmin's wife for her stepson were of ashes, with just a little flour mixed in to give them the appearance of food; and the child at in silence, for he was afraid to complain. However, when he was alone in the forest he suffered from hunger, and a black cow saw this, and asked him what was the matter.

The boy told her everything, and presently she beat her *hooves* upon the ground. As she did so, sweets of all kinds appeared, which the child ate *greedily*, and shared with his little sister, warning her not to mention to the stepmother what the black cow had done.

However, the stepmother suspected that he drank the milk while leading her cows; so, she told her little daughter to keep a good look-out on all his doings, and to

let her know. At last the girl confessed that they ate sweets every day, and the black cow provided the feast.

That day when the Brahmin came home his wife begged him to sell the black cow, and said she would neither sleep nor eat until this was done. The poor boy was sad when he heard this, and went at once to his favorite, where, throwing himself on the black cow's neck, he cried.

"Do not weep, my child, but get up on my back, and I will carry you to a place of safety where we can still be together." So, they escaped to a forest, and there lived in peace and security for many days.

Now, in the forest there was a hole, which led to the home of the Great Snake, who was believed to hold up the universe. Into this hope, the black cow poured five *seers* of milk daily to feed the snake. This pleased the snake so much that he said one day: "I must go up into the world and see for myself the creature who is so good to me and who sends me such good milk to drink."

When he came, he saw the black cow *grazing* with the boy beside her.

The cow asked no favors for herself, but when the snake asked what she would like, she said she would like her son, as she called the Brahmin's son, to be clothed in gold from head to foot, and that all his body might shine as gold.

This wish the snake readily granted, but both cow and boy afterwards regretted their request, for they feared robbers.

One day as the boy had his bath by the river, some of his golden hair fell into the water, and was swallowed by a fish. This fish was caught by a fisherman, and taken for sale to the King's Palace. When they cut it open, all present admired the lovely golden hair, and when the Princess saw it, she said she would never be happy again until she met the owner. The fisherman was asked where he caught the fish, and people were sent in all directions in boats.

At last a man in one of the boats espied in the distance a beautiful shining object taking a bath by the river-side. Little by little the boat came closer and closer; then the man called out and asked the bather to come a little nearer. At first the Brahmin's son would not listen, but after a time he came up to the boat, when, to his surprise, he was tied up, and carried away.

Arrived at the King's Palace he met the Princess, who was very beautiful; and when he saw her he forgot everything else, and thought only of her.

After a short time, they were married, and spent many happy days together; but someone chanced to offer them a sweet cake, such as the black cow often gave her boy, and in a state of remorse, the Brahmin's son remembered his faithful friend and went to the place in the distant forest where he had last seen her.

Arrived there he found only a few bones of dead cattle scattered on the ground.

He was heart-broken at the sight, and gathered all the bones together into a funeral *pyre*, upon which he declared he would take his own life; but just as he was about to do this, his old friend, the black cow, appeared.

They were overjoyed to see each other, and she told him she had only kept the bones there to test his affection; but now that she was satisfied that he had not forgotten her, the meeting was full of happiness and joy, so they held a great feast for many days and then went their separate ways as before.

cattle - a group of various domesticated cows.
hooves - the hard covering on the foot of an animal (such as a horse or a cow).
greedily - having a strong or great desire for food.
seers - a traditional unit of mass and volume used in large parts of Asia.
grazing - a method of feeding in which a herbivore feeds on plants such as grasses.
pyre - a structure, usually made of wood, for burning a body as part of a funeral rite.

YEH-SHEN (葉限))

Adapted from the the 9th-century compilation Miscellaneous Morsels

In a distant past, even before the Chin and the Han dynasties, there lived a cave chief of southern China by the name of Wu. As was the custom in those days, Chief Wu had taken two wives. Each wife in her turn had presented Wu with a baby daughter. But one of the wives sickened and died, and not too many days after, Chief Wu died too.

Yeh-Shen, the little orphan, grew up with her stepmother. She was a bright child and lovely, too, with skin as smooth as ivory and dark pools for eyes. Her stepmother was jealous of all this beauty and goodness, for her own daughter was not pretty at all. Because of that, she gave poor Yeh-Shen the heaviest and most unpleasant *chores*.

The only friend that Yeh-Shen had was a fish. It was a beautiful fish with golden eyes, and every day it would come out of the water and wait for Yeh-Shen to feed it.

Somehow the stepmother heard of this. She hurried down to the pond, but she was unable to see the fish. The stepmother, however, thought of a plan. She walked home and asked Yeh-Shen to collect some firewood. The minute the girl was out, her stepmother slipped on Yeh-Shen's coat and went down again to the pond. This time the big fish saw Yeh-Shens's familiar jacket and came to her, expecting to be fed. But the stepmother, having hidden a dagger in her sleeve, stabbed the fish, and took it home to cook for dinner.

When Yeh-Shen came to the pond that evening, she found her pet had disappeared.

Crying desperately, Yeh-Shen sat up and noticed a very old man looking down at her.

"Kind uncle, who may you be?" Yeh-Shen asked.

That is not important, my child. All you must know is that I have been sent to tell you of the incredible powers of your fish.

"My fish, but sir…" The girl's eyes filled with tears, and she could not go on.

"Yes, my child, your fish is no longer alive, and I must tell you that your stepmother is once more the cause of your sorrow." Yeh-Shen gasped in horror, but the old man went on.

Now you must listen carefully to this: The bones of your fish are filled with a powerful spirit. Whenever you are in serious need, you must kneel before them and let them know your heart's desire. But do not waste their gifts.

Time went by, and Yeh-Shen, who was often left alone, took comfort in speaking to the bones of her fish. When she was hungry, which happened quite often, Yeh-Shen asked the bones for food. In this way, Yeh-Shen managed to live

from day to day, but she lived in dread that her stepmother would discover her secret and take even that away from her.

So, the time passed and spring came. Festival time was approaching. It was the busiest time of the year. At the spring festival, young men and young women from the village hoped to meet and to choose whom they would marry. How Yeh-Shen longed to go! But her stepmother had other plans. She hoped to find a husband for her own daughter and did not want any man to see Yeh-Shen first.

When finally the holiday arrived, the stepmother and her daughter dressed themselves in their finest clothes and left Yeh-Shen home.

As soon as she was alone, Yeh-Shen went to speak to the bones of her fish.

"Oh, dear friend, I long to go to the festival, but I cannot show myself in these rags. Is there somewhere I could borrow clothes fit to wear to the feast?" At once she found herself dressed in a beautiful blue gown, with *kingfisher* feathers around her shoulders. On her tiny feet were the most beautiful *slippers* she had ever seen. They were gold, in a pattern like the scales of a fish.

"Be sure you do not lose your golden shoes", said the spirit of the bones.

Yeh-Shen promised to be careful and went to the feast. All around her, people whispered:

"Look at that beautiful girl! Who can she be?"

Upon hearing this, Yeh-Shen jumped up and ran off before her stepsister could notice her. In doing so, she lost one of her golden slippers. No sooner had the shoe fallen from her foot than all her fine clothes turned back to rags. Only the tiny golden shoe remained.

The stepmother left the gathering to check on Yeh-Shen, but when she returned home, she found the girl asleep, with her arms wrapped around a fruit tree.

Meantime, a villager had found the shoe. Recognizing its value, he sold it to a merchant, who presented it in turn to the king of the island kingdom of To Han.

The king was more than happy to accept the slipper as a gift, and he was determined to find the woman to whom the shoe belonged.

A search was begun among the ladies of his kingdom, but all who tried on the slipper found it impossibly small. Yeh-Shen's stepmother and stepsister were among them, but not Yeh-Shen; they had told her to stay home.

It was not until the blackest part of the night, while the moon hid behind a cloud, that Yeh-Shen dared to show her face. Sinking down to her knees, the girl in rags examined the tiny shoe. Only when she was sure that this was the missing mate to her own golden slipper, she dared to pick it up.

Now, when the king saw Yeh-Shen take the precious slipper, he wanted to throw the girl into prison as a thief. But when she turned to leave, he saw her face, and, at once, was enchanted by her beauty.

The king let her go and quietly followed her home.

All this time, Yeh-Shen was unaware of the excitement she had caused. She made her way home and was about to hide both slippers in her bedding when there was a pounding at the door. Yeh-Shen went to see who it was and found a king at her doorstep. She was very frightened at first, but the king spoke to her in a kind voice and asked her to try the golden slippers on her feet. The maiden did as she was told, and as she stood in her golden shoes, her rags were transformed once more into the feathered and beautiful blue gown, and the king suddenly knew in his heart that he had found his true love.

chores - daily tasks

kingfisher - a group of small brightly colored birds

slippers - A low shoe that can be slipped on and off easily.

Practice 2

Activity 2 - Cinderella *in* and *beyond* fairy tales (2h - 1 meeting)

Objective: explore the essence of Cinderella not only as a character from literary texts or fiction movies, but also as a patriarchal representation of women in general.

**Settings:** teacher-students, students-students (pair work)

Steps:

1. Start the class by telling students that they are going to watch two segments of the famous Cinderella movie produced by Walt Disney in the 1950s. (The first segment shows Cinderella in her morning routine, struggling with household chores, and the second one depicts her at the royal ball, when she sees the prince for the first time.). As students watch the scenes, ask them to think of adjectives to describe her appearance and personality. When finished, set discussion with the group.

2. Ask students if they know any advertisement from the 50s, the same time the Disney's movie was produced, and if so, ask them if they remember how women were represented in those ads. After discussion, tell them they are going to analyze some ads from the 50s in which women were portrayed.

3. Give students the following questions in a handout as a guide for the analysis: *(1) How were women represented at that time? (justify your answer with elements from the images) (2) Ho do you personally feel about these representations? (3) How do you relate them to the stories of Cinderella you've read/ watched so far? Do they have anything in common?*

4. Have students organized in pairs to discuss the questions, and after some time, open discussion with the whole group.

Slides used in class: advertisements from the 50s

Handout used in class:

- How were women represented at that time? (justify your answer with elements of the images)
- How do you personally feel about these representations?
- How do you relate them to the stories of Cinderella you've read so far? Do they have anything in common?
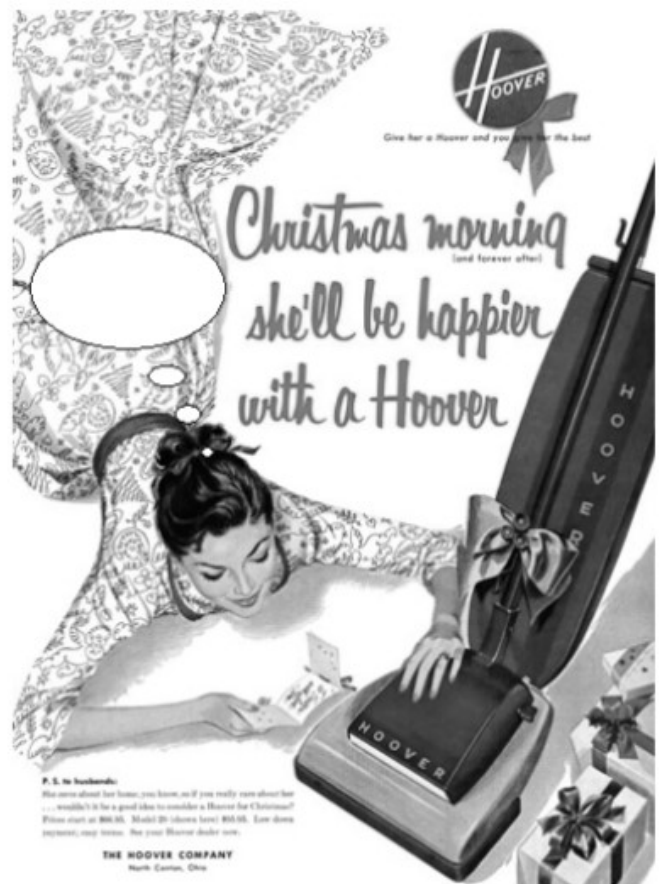
Practice 3

Activity 1: *Problematizing Cinderella* **(2h - 1 meeting)**

Objective: problematize the role of fairytales as a cultural narrative that frames a specific social order by analyzing transgressive representations of Cinderella.

Settings: teacher-students (individual work, and discussion with the whole group)

Steps:

1. Tell students they are going to see different kinds of Cinderella. Encourage them to analyze subversive depictions of Cinderella in three different forms: an image and two videos, and they should choose the one that calls their attention the most. The first representation is a photograph by Dina Goldstein, the second one is a Converse® commercial, and the third representation is a Youtube parody named "Tinderella".

2. Link to video 1 (Converse® commercial) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irjBsJbhXsY

3. Link to video 2 (Tinderella) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLoRPielarA

4. Before showing the image and videos, give students guidelines for this analytical practice, and foster them to carefully analyze as much elements as possible.

5. Present the slideshow with the photograph and videos, and give students a handout with the following guiding questions: *(1) What elements in this image/video are connected to the classic story of Cinderella? (2) What elements are different? (Cinderella's appearance/Scenario/Characters/Narrative/ The happy ending) (3) What is the context of this image/video? (4) How about the power structures? Is this representation changing anything in relation to the other stories of Cinderella?*

6. Give students some time to analyze the representation they most identified with and then set discussion.

Picture presented in class: Dina Goldstein's Cinderella

Handout used in class:

CINDERELLA? ARE YOU SURE IT'S HER?

Chose the representation of Cinderella that you most identify with and answer the questions:

1. What elements in this image/video are connected to the classic story of Cinderella?
2. What elements are different? (Cinderella's appearance/Scenario/ Characters/Narrative/ The happy ending)
3. What is the context of this image/video?
4. How about the power structures? Is this representation changing anything in relation to the other stories of Cinderella?

Practice 4

Activity 1: *Reimagining Cinderella* (2h - 1 meeting)

Objective: Make use of multiple symbolic forms create alternative realities and express students voice through the creation of an identity product.

Settings: teacher-students, students-students (group work)

Steps:

1. Have students organized in pairs and tell them they are going to have the chance to create their own version of Cinderella. The idea is to compose an e-book with their own creations as a way to finish the project 50 shades of Cinderella.

2. Discuss the guidelines for the creation of their versions of Cinderella, and emphasize the following aspects: (1) Students should play with some typical elements of fairytales (criticizing or reinforcing them), (2) They can think of a different context to set their stories and contextualize the characters. (They can choose anywhere in the world), (3) They can create a surprising plot (change the point of view of the story, create new elements…), (4) The groups should give a critical tone to their stories (what power relations, social structures, stereotypes are being deconstructed? How does their voice appear in the story?).

3. Allow students to create a short story, a poem, comics or even a song or a video. They should express themselves the way they want to.

4. Set the pairs and give them time to organize their ideas. Provide them with a handout containing the guidelines previously discussed.

5. The groups can take this activity as a homework and bring their productions on a following week to share with the rest of the group.

Handout used in class:

50 SHADES OF CINDERELLA

You should:
- Play with some typical elements of fairytales (criticizing or reinforcing them).
- Think of a different context to set your story and contextualize the characters. (You can choose anywhere in the world)
- Create a surprising plot.
- Since it will be a satire, remember to give a critical tone to your story (what power relations, social structures, stereotypes are being deconstructed? How does your voice appear in the story?)

10 APPENDIX D – Learners' final productions

THE STORY OF DERELA

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Derela, she was totally a punk, with her spiked hair, spiked necklace, black tank top, black bots, tattos, etc. Anyway, this is how the history begins, one day, Derela was discussing with her mother because she wanted money to go out with her friends, but Derela's mother don't have a penny to give to her, and needs her help to clean the house. After to much time discussing, Derele yells: "You suck! I just wanted to have some fun, i am going there no matter what you say!" and then Derela's mother says: "Fine, but when you reach home you will have some work to do". Derela was getting out of her house, but she realizes that she forgot about the money, so she decides to take her mother's money without being seen, there was more than 200US$ inside the closet, Derela takes it all with a happy smile in the face. When she was on the way to meting point, a black dude arrives holding a gun like a gangster, and says to Derela: "Gimme everythin' yo' have, bitch". She had no choice but give the money and the cellphone to him, but she doesn't care to much, so she just went to the meting point.

When she reachs there, everyone laughs at her because she lost her mother's money that was denyied and have no way to get it back, felling sad and angry, Derela decides to quit and go home. She reachs home with no problem, but her mother ask's her about the missing money, Derela says that she doesn't know what happened, but it doesn't convincess her mother, and they start another discussion, while the intense discussion Derela's mother says: "You are not even my daughter, you are adopted", Derela goes crazy hearing that, she rushed in rage and beat her "mother" until she became unconscious. Seeing what she have done, Derela decides to run away from home, and after a long walk, she reachs in a place that she really doesn't know. A little time before this...

The black dude whos stole Derela's cellphone was trying to sell it to a drugs dealler, whose nickname was "Smoke", but he instead took the cellphone and said to him: "Git out o' my fuckin' street, nizzle". Smoke didn't know the code to unlock the cellphone, homever, he saw the girl in the photo of the lock screen, and thinks:"dat be a nice a biatch ta me", believing that she is the owner of the cellphone he tells

everyone of his gang to be aware of a girl that looks like the one in the photo of the cellphone's lock screen.

Back to the normal timeline, a black dude aproachs Derela and take a photo of her, Derela didn't notice it because she was so woriied about everything that she was not even paying attention to the street, the black dude sends a message to Smoke saying that he found the girl who may be the belonger of the cellphone, and sends the photo, and the location. Smoke reads the message, and quick gets to the location with the stolen cellphone, after reaching

there, he starts looking around, just to find the Girl who is the owner of the phone. After some walk, Smoke sees a girl that looks like the one in the photo, he starts walking toward her. Meanwhile, Derela was still lost in the unknow place, then another black dude aproachs her, he takes a cellphone from his pocket, and question Derela: "Be dis cellphone yours?". Surprised, Derela answers him saying that this is her cellphone, and them, they start talking, and talking, and talking. After that meeting, Smoke realized that Derela would be a great girlfriend. Derela don't have anywere to go, so Smoke invites her to his house. Derela realized that Smoke is a Drug Dealer, but she is not afraid, she sees him as an opurtunity to be more popular and gain respect from the others, so she decided to be his girlfriend. They slept together in that night, and after that, they start living together, both of them lived a happy life with each other, while Derela's "mother" was trying to find her missing "daughter".

CINDERELLA RAP

In what world are we
Where we usually see
Pretty people aside from those layed on the streets
Where appeerence "looks better" than good friendships
Where this beautiful girl
Was not excluded from future hopes
But even then, a cell phone deserved more attention than those

Internet made her stay home

Drinking some Cokes

Uploading images of fake happiness to some random folks

And she said "Oh look at dem likes"

While her brother left home to study rights

Nights? She used it to display her dresses rings and earrings, through photos

Taken by her golden phone which was always ringing

But in reality she was all alone

Because all she did, was focus on her phone

Well, life goes on

Independent of the circumstances she was on

She was in high school, her last year

But those F's in the tests didn't semmed she cared for her career

And one day, she took so many shots

She got drunk and could only see dots

The next morning she woke up

Went to the bathroom to dress up

"What time is it" she asked herself

Then she looked for her phone on her shelf

"Oh my god" she screamed and started to freak out

It couldn't be found anywhere and began to look to her friends with doubt

She didn't know what she was gonna do

She was angry at everyone and everything that came through

After some time, she got isolated

Smoking some cracks to fill the addiction she praised

Out of the blue, she saw her phone

In the hand of a guy she found handsome

She couldn't believe in what she saw

A present that could not be paid off

She fell in love for his action

But he just wanted a girl's affection

Opportunist as he was

Started exploring her to do everything he demanded

Because her phone was all she wanted

Just so you know how bad was this fella

She started living like a real servant Cinderella

THE PROLETARIAT REVOLUTION STARTED BY ANOTHER CINDERELLA

So we're supposed to create a whole new version of Cinderella. And what went through our minds in the exact time we heard about the project was a woman that could break with the system patterns. Our woman, Cindy, knows how to revolutionize better than we do since she works in a terrible factory.

Oh, yeah. We're in the 21th century, but our dear character still works in a shaky situation so as many workers around the world, and that's what capitalism do to them. If you're a woman, then you're even more in trouble.

Cindy, even without many years of study, was a very open-minded woman, so different than her co-workers. What obviously wasn't their fault, 'cause they haven't had any opportunities.

Their routine was tough. Every morning they had to wake up around 5 0' clock because they had to accomplish 14 hours of daily work. The factory was distant from the urban zone and the work conditions weren't checked by any legislation at all. They had to produce shoes that would go to the malls with a very expensive price, but their payment couldn't provide much for any of the families involved.

Cindy, our main character, had been working since she was a little girl. Their parents felt terrible but there was no option left. They were poor and most of the time didn't have anything to eat. For the sake of their family, the only option available was to put Cindy to work in the same factory as their.

The early days were tough for Cindy. She didn't have any instructions or didn't have any experience in creating shoes before because she was a child, but her boss, Gordon, just could not understand that.

He was so narrow-minded, cruel, abusive and disgusting that all his workers feared him. Sometimes, he did not give food or water for his workers under the excuse of ''the production was very slow and they needed to do it faster''.

Cindy grew up building hatred and anger from him. For his monster-like behavior. For his abusive manners. For his disgusting commentaries about her and her body, about her mom and all other women that worked in there.

When she turned 18, she began to think differently from her co-workers. She realized that they didn't need a man like him telling what to do and punishing them if they did it wrong. Nobody needs that. Nobody needs punishment from manufacturing a shoe in a wrong way.

Inspired by the proletariat revolutions that were happening in Europe, she started to plan a revolution in her factory. She exposed her ideas to her mother and father, but they told her to drop that ''childish revolutionary speech'''. If the factory stops, they'll be fired, having no place to work afterwards. Cindy understood their fear, but she knew that something needed to be done to stop Gordon. That awful man. So Cindy started to talk with her friends at the factory.

In secret meetings, they started to plan an inside-out revolution. The plan consisted on doing a strike, locking the factory, stopping all production and then walk to Gordon's office and protest for better work conditions. But there was a problem. They were few. How could they stop a factory, with hundreds of workers, without any problem?

So, they started to spread the idea to the people around the village that were tired of that abusive work. Even the outsiders! And soon, they gathered half of the factory workers and a lot of citizens for their revolution.

Eventually Cindy's mother died of sickness, caused by the contaminated food that Gordon was giving. Later, her father died too. That was the spark that ignited the revolution inside Cindy. Gordon was cruel and needed a bullet in his head!

The day has come. The crowd had arrived early and they had locked the factory's gates with chains and padlocks. There was some workers screaming wanting to get it in, but Cindy's group didn't listen. Everything was doing fine, until the police and the police's horsemen arrived.

They didn't even tried to dialogue with the workers, just went straight to the breaking into the factory and going straight to the beating and arresting whoever was

in front of them part. Cindy's group rushed to Gordon's office, struggling through his personal security. Gordon ran like a coward he was, fearing for his life and his money.

The revolutionary group reached him. Gordon's offered gold, offered promotions, offered whatever came to his mind. But they didn't wanted gold or riches or promotions, they wanted his life. Cindy shot him, with a flintlock pistol she have grabbed from the hand of a police officer when the fight started.

He was dead. His monocle was broken from his fall. He died with his mouth open, showing his golden teeth. That disgusting pig was dead. It was over. But the victory was short-lived. Cindy was shot by a police officer that stormed through their backs. But she was relieved. She knew that everything was going to be fine. Everyone that worked there would get better work conditions. She lived and died for the greater good.

Cindy is a inspiration 'till this days. Not like those that you see in commercials and movies, she wasn't made from the mind of a sick society, which tries to put into every new generation that being a girl or a woman is about being submissive, "plastic-beautiful", that getting into fights isn't right. No, Cindy IS real. Unfortunately, there are still many girls who live under the same circumstances but are invisible for our society. The story of Cindy's life is here to give them some strength since we aren't able to physically support them.

DAMAGED CINDERELLA

Born in the 4th of March, 1996, in Oxford, England, Laureen Elliot Fritzberger had always been a lost girl. Her father passed away before she even saw daylight, leaving her and her mother alone in the world. James Fritzberger, a wealthy entrepreneur, left them with a generous inheritance, but that wasn't enough to fill the void in the house they lived in. Depressed because of the trauma of losing her husband in a period that was supposed to be so happy for both of them, Rosemary Elliot, Laureen's mother, ended up not being the perfect motherly figure during the

girl's childhood. Alcoholic and a dependant of her antidepressants, she tried to step away from Laureen as much as she could to prevent her from being influenced by her mental illness. Laureen, a girl incredibly mature for her age, understood her mother's situation as well as she could. That was her way of protecting her, of loving her, and she knew that if she could, she would spend more time around Laureen. In their time together, Rosemary taught her to sew, arousing interest in fashion in the girl that already loved to draw, making it possible for her to start her first creations at early age, dressing the dolls her mother bought for her when she was ten. The situation got more complicated when Rosemary lost her job as a cello teacher. Her poems were not enough to carry through both of their lives the way they used to be. 2007 was a disturbed year to them, but specially to Rosemary. Laureen's mother was dumped in the pit of her own depression and couldn't get back on her feet like she used to before. Her breakdowns were recurrent, she missed her dead husband again - even though he passed away many years ago - in an extreme way, leading her to the inability to take care of her daughter. When the police knew about the situation, Rosemary lost Laureen's custody, which was transferred to her aunt, Miranda Elliot, who was mother of two.

She was diagnosed with depression and anxiety at twelve years old, when she was taken away from her mother. Because of the way she was treated by her aunt, who did not want to have her custody, her illness only got worse. Miranda used to tell her that her drawings were ugly, that her clothes were weird and made her ashamed of her body, even though there was nothing wrong with it.

Laureen was a naive child and believed in anything and everything she heard, making her seek for diets and ways of losing weight and getting her aunt's approval when she was only 14. In the beginning she was doing it in a healthy way, but the abuse she suffered from Miranda made her look for extreme measures. She wanted quick results, and it was by searching on the internet that she found blogs that offered extreme diets that were said to make someone lose 12kg in 15 days, 6kg in 5 days, 9kg in 3 days. That was exactly what she wanted. Nothing but dangerous diets that would lead her to spend her days without putting a single thing in her mouth, and when she did, she would count every and any calories she had eaten.

Her bigger issues were her compulsions. Many times, facing all of that daily stress, Laureen would eat more than she judged to be enough, so she started puking after every meal and

taking laxatives and diuretic pills, which caused her chemical dependency and many other health issues, including a heart condition, caused by her smoking in a failed attempt to fill her empty stomach. After all, it was just smoke. At 15, she became a regular patient at local hospitals, due to her frequent losses of consciousness, stomach ulcers, dehydration and others caused by her mental illnesses. Her aunt Miranda only acknowledged those illnesses as a problem when, at age 16, Laureen had an overdose of the ECA method (ephedrine, caffeine and aspirin), which is used to speed up the metabolism and lose appetite and led her to having a heart attack. Later on, she was hospitalised in the psych ward.

Laureen was a mess, but at least she had things that she learned from her mother that helped her hold on. Ever since a very early age, she had shown herself as an incredible drawer. To her, everything was art. Anything was inspiring. She could look at a sidewalk, a plant, a person, a building and have that memory in her head until she put it off by putting it all on a piece of paper, just the way she was able to remember about it. Yet, her favourite art objects were human beings.

At school, she drew her teachers, colleagues, the hall, the rooms. She had her notebooks taken away from her multiple times for drawing in class instead of paying attention to whatever the teacher was saying. Her teachers did not understand that drawing was her outlet. Sewing had became so essential to her that her doctors provided a sewing machine and put it in her own hospital room, which helped her a lot and contributed to her sewing talent.

She created more beautiful clothing items everyday. The nurses used to give her fabric and Laureen sewed with those fabrics and gave what she had made to the hospital staff, just because she liked doing so. She was only cleared after two years of intensive care and a weight gain of 22kg. After she was released from her own jail, she got herself a job and, for being now a legal adult, went back to living with her mother. They started sewing together again. Every now and then they fought, but it was a completely healthy relationship and they lived in peace, mostly.

After all, there is no such thing as a right or wrong body type. What there is are happy people or unhappy ones, and that's what truly matters in the end.

Ck

Dear diary, today I went to the cine and (coincidentally) met Kyle. He was going to see that new movie everyone is talking about. I thought about going to him to have some friendly talk, but I saw that he was accompanied by a girl, Jennifer was her name, wasn't it? Anyway it would be very rude of me to go and interrupt the two, so I just observed. They get along pretty well, but of course not as much as me and him as we're made for each other <3

paper ripping

-Meh, this doesn't look like me at all. I think I can be myself a bit more. No one except me is going to read anyway.

Dear diary, today while talking with Kyle he said he was going to the cine this afternoon to see that movie everyone is talking about. So of course I went there to take care of him, if I didn't, who would? When I got there, there was a girl from our class with him, her name was Jennifer. Who she thinks she is to talk to him like that? Does she really think she can get between our love like that? I won't forgive her. I'll give her a lesson. I have to take better care.

Yeah. This expresses more what I'm feeling right now. *sigh* Looks like it's time to go to the bed, tomorrow's Monday and this is going to be a long week.

Now that I think about it, I've yet to introduce me, how forgetful of me =P. Name's Amy, 16 years old, 2nd year student on Riverside High school, live alone in my parents' house (don't tell the cops) and as you probably figured out by now, I'm in love with a boy named Kyle. Speaking of him, he should be going to the bus anytime soon.

-I should hurry up.

As I said that I closed the house door and went to the bus stop. There I met Kyle.

-So… Did you like the movie yesterday? – I asked while kissing his cheek

-Yeah! It was pretty good, I understand why everyone is talking about it.

-I see. I should watch it soon then.

-Yeah, you really should.

After we exchanged this few words the bus came. At this time the bus doesn't have many people so there's always place for both of us to sit down, which is amazing. I always observe his expressions to guess what he's thinking and today he's really smiley, what did he and that girl talked about to make him this happy? Besides, he didn't tell me he was going with someone.

-Hey Kyle. – I called him while he stared at the window

-What is it? – He answered immediately

-Just asking, but yesterday… You went to the cine with someone?

-Yeah, I went with a friend, why do you ask?

-Oh… Nothing, you just didn't say you were going with someone.

-Now that you mention it, sorry.

-No problem – I said with a smile.

After the conversation, the rest of the trip was just silence between us. There's something odd in this story and I'll find out. Maybe I'll need to have a little "conversation" with Jennifer today at school.

…

I was planning to just talk to her and make her forget about Kyle, but what I had in front of me was something that would help quite a lot. During break while going to talk with her friends she forgot her cellphone on the table. Well, better take it so the "negotiation" will be easier. I don't know why, but her phone doesn't have any password. Well, that helps even more. Let me see what I can find here… Meh, besides some cringe photos there's nothing worth using. Too bad. I'll put a password just in case she is stubborn.

During the rest of class I heard she asking people around class if they saw her cellphone, but nobody had any idea. No need to worry my dear, you'll have it very soon if you agree with some terms <3.

At the end of the class, I went to talk to Jennifer.

-Hey Jen! May we talk a bit just the two of us? – I asked with a lively voice.

-Sure, but can it be brief? I have some things to do today. – She answered with a puzzled expression.

-No problem.

As we walked down the corridor I was thinking about what I should say. We went to the girls bathroom, luckily no one was there so we could talk for real. After finding my words I said.

-So you like Kyle right? I would like you to stop talking to him. – I said with a serious face.

-It was about that? Sorry, but I'm not giving up on him so easily. Something more? – She responded with a calm expression as it was nothing. She is pissing me off.

-No no, you're not understanding. You stop talking to him or els-

-Or else what? – she interrupted me. Okay, that's how she wants? Fine.

I clenched my fists and started to go in her direction when suddenly a girl appears on the bathroom's door.

-There you are! Jen, we have to go now or we'll be late – What were you two talking about?

-Nothing important, let's go. – She said while she turned her back to me. I hate her, I'll make her life a living hell. Save my words

After she left I took her phone from my pocket. I could use this to make her life pretty bad, but I have a better idea for now. I don't care about what happens with it anymore to be honest, so I'll just leave it here. Maybe if she's lucky someone will give her back.

…

The rest of the day was spent thinking about what I could do to her that would teach her a lesson. While thinking about that I heard someone knock on the door.

-Who could it be?

As I opened the door my expression changed to a really surprised one. It was Kyle that was on the door with a thoughtful face.

-Why are you here? – I asked, still surprised

-I need to ask you something, you talk with the majority of the girls in class, right?

-Yeah.

I do talk with them, but mainly about random things, it's not like I'm their friend or anything like that.

-I found this cellphone at school and wanted to know from whose girl this is from.

It was Jennifer's phone, so he was the one who picked it up, huh? Wait, how does he know it's a girl phone?

-How do you know it's a girl?

-You see… I found this paper on the cellphone case. – He said while handing the paper to me. It was a love poem with his name written in it. So she went as far as writing a poem for him.

-Do you know who the owner of the phone is? – He asked while I read that cringe letter.

-I understand you're interested in who would write this, but why are you going as far as asking me to find out? Normally you would just forget about it. – I said after handing the paper over to him.

-I don't know. Lately I've been thinking and I decided that if someone has that kind of feelings towards me, I'm willing to try.

WAIT A BIT. So if I say this phone is mine, he is willing to go out with me? And most important I can prove it's mine even though it's not, I put a password only I know about after all. Holy… I'm such a genius. While thinking about this I started to blush

-Kyle… To tell you the truth… This phone and this note… is mine. – I said blushing even more. I have to convince him this is really mine.

-Wait, really? – He let out a really surprised voice.

-Y-Yeah, I was scared you would not feel the same about me so I kept it in secret. – After I graduate I should be an actress, I'm really good at it.

-Do you really want to go out with me? – He asked with the most serious face I've ever seen him doing.

-Y-yes. – I said with a weak voice.

Before I could think of anything else he kissed me and my mind went totally blank. I could described what happened after, but I don't this it's suitable for this book, so… Sorry 'bout that. Hehe.

…

After he left I went to my bedroom and jumped to my bed. I just kept staring at the ceiling thinking what just happened. Basically I used some girl love letter and

cellphone to confess my love for the boy I like and she doesn't know anything about it. She probably hates me because of how I treated her and will probably will continue to talk and try to flirt with him. Just to be shocked by an answer like "Sorry, I'm going out with Amy." Hahahahaha. Love is truly unfair, isn't it?

Plot Twist

It all happened in that week, between days 6 and 9 of june, year 1944. Henry Woodlock was a brave British soldier whose only wish was for the war to end and return to his beloved wife and children. He was a selfless humble man, always doing the best he could to provide the best to his family and the people he most cherished and loved. He was not well known among the army, he only had a single friend, but he was truly trustworthy, the most loyal friend a man could ask for, and that friend knew he would never do anything that could end up harming his army fellows.

Henry and his division, who had teamed up with Russia, were fighting tirelessly in order to get Germany back to its own land and hold them back there.

-Make them regret for ever turning up against us, lads! Kill´em dirty peasants and burn their filthy rat holes! Burn´em all! - said Lt. Smith, leader of Henry's division.

Lt. Smith was one typical mean leader. Usually, when something bad happened or a mistake was made (something that was truly his fault), he'd quickly put the blame on somebody else, moreover he'd also punish his soldiers unfairly most of the times, humiliating them. However he was old and war itself had made him weary, resulting in this patterned personality of his.

-Sir, the German army is growing quickly in number, I'm afraid I'll have to take part and find myself through the jungle, but don't you worry about me, I can handle myself, Sir! -Said Henry

-Alright, it's fine by me, just don't make a mess out of it, understood?! Oh, bollocks, why in the name of God would I care?! JUST GO! GO!

So Henry embraced himself and ran to the mysterious wilderness, but not so mysterious for him, as his knowledge of the place was far superior than anyone else in thearmy, he knew exactly what to do, at least he thought he did.

When he found himself alone, deep into the jungle, Henry quickly located the wide and muddy river that was part of his plan, the Hope River, as he'd call it. But as he got closer to the river, he realized his plans had gone horribly wrong, as loads of German soldiers spotted him when he stretched out from the darkness of the jungle. Therefore, Henry found himself having fight for his life, or get as far as he could and as fast as he could. Unfortunately, that quick rush made him lose control of the situation, he panicked. So, without thinking, he jumped unprepared into the river hoping that they would lose sight of him.

Henry wasn't heard or seen for a while.

As the fight went on and the German army was decreasing in number, Henry's friends had grown worried, wondering where he could be at that and what caused him to disappear, specially leaving an entire group of soldiers behind to venture alone in the forest.

-Maybe we should go look for him, I mean, he is our bloody friend! We shouldn't leave him behind like this! Come on, Hubert, won't hurt to look for him! - Said Jeremy, Henry's best friend.

-Actually it will, a lot! Can't you see we're in the middle of a war here?! we might get trapped or captured or who knows what else! Well, if you're really going out there, you'll have to do it on your own, or if you want, I can talk some sense to Lieutenant, see if he could come to assist you… - said Hubert.

-Don't you dare, Hubert! If you say anything about me going after him to anyone, I'll take you to Hitler myself!!

Jeremy Fitzgerald was one of the most talented soldiers a general could recruit. Just like Henry, he was brave and had courage to spare. Unfortunately, he

was Henry's only friend, but their bond was so strong they depended on each other to have a successful effect in battle.

So then Jeremy returned to the jungle where Henry had ran away a couple of hours ago, looking incessantly for his lost friend. In fact, eventually, Jeremy found Henry's pearl necklace: a priceless heirloom that he would always carry around, no matter what. He said it reminded him of his home in Glasgow, southern Scotland. The necklace was close to a wide muddy river, but Jeremy was clueless about where he was. It was in that moment that it come to Jeremy something fishy had just happened to Henry and so he took the necklace with him and ran straight to his main camp, since it was getting dark, and his absence would be noticed.

Back in camp, Jeremy had an idea: he asked for permission to Lt. Smith to have access to Henry's locker key, the Lieutenant said he was very occupied and was not to be bothered again, but quickly gave him the key and told him to go mind his business. When Jeremy unlocked the container, he found most of Henry's most valuable items, including his most efficient weapon and his military coat. He then began to find the situation very strange and puzzling, but that was a fairly strong proof that Henry was here at one point. He thought.

- So he is still alive! -He thought to himself.

Jeremy felt happy for a moment, but immediately felt very angry, and suddenly very intriguing questions started to raise, "Why would he do such a thing in the middle of battle, when so many soldiers could've used his help?" or "If he had something on his mind, why didn't he tell him?". So, Jeremy decided to go look for answers.

He left camp in the middle of the night and was heading east, always coasting the river. It was his second night out. It was night, but you could easily see the twilight starting to merge. Jeremy was tired and getting a bit hopeless about Henry, assuming the worst had happened. Suddenly, something moves far in the dark. At first, Jeremy stays on guard, but the will of finding his friend makes him charge recklessly towards the movement. When he gets closer, he could not believe his eyes, his heart was full with joy and gratitude, as well as Henry. The two friends, once again, managed to stick together. Even though they were both happy to see

each other, Jeremy quickly noticed that Henry was severely injured. He holds Henry, whose voice and strength were fading away, and before fainting Jeremy assures Jeremy they would get back to camp as fast as possible and he would be properly taken care of.

When Henry woke up, his vision was a bit blurry, but right next to him, asleep, was Jeremy. Henry hums as loud as he can, Jeremy wakes up and they hug each other firmly. Then, Henry starts to speak, trying to tell his friend what happened. Jeremy quickly gestures he should not speak and say:

-know what you have done for this nation, in fact, everyone in England knows, you make this country proud, you make me proud. You managed to pass through the Germans security disguised as one of their own and blew all the German´s main central. More than that, you survived to tell the story, we found your plane crashed on the forest, it´s really a miracle you are alive. Lt. Smith urges to pay tribute to you in front of the whole army. You did what hundreds couldn´t do. Jeremy then, with a smile on his face says:

-Now, eat your lunch because you got a long day ahead of you.

The door opens, and bringing his food there were his wife and children, who jumped on him and kissed him to death, leaving him breathless with joy.

THE END!

STARELLA

A long time ago, in a Galaxy far away. A Jedi warrior called Cinderella was in a mission in Nabb, a desert planet. After she concluded her mission, Cinderella went to the Jedi temple in Coruscant, capital of the republic.

In Coruscant, Cinderella realized that she lost her lightsaber, Jedi's weapon, in her last mission in Nabb. She was worried because a Jedi can't lose his lightsaber. Immediately, Cinderella returns to Nabb to search her weapon.

Cinderella didn't find her saber, but a old man dressing dark clothes appears and he say that he can help her. The Jedi warrior followed him.

The old man led her to a bouty hunter called Hang Lou and told him to help her. Hang was known to charge expensive for his work.

Cinderella and Hang Lou was searching for the lightsaber when the bounty hunter saw the weapon on the top of a hill of bodies created by the war.

Hang got the saber and he hid it in his cape, Lou didn't tell Cinderella about that.

After one day of searching, The Jedi warrior thought that the saber was lost forever.

When they returned to the capital of Nabb, Cinderella saw the old man. She paid the bounty hunter for his attempt and got out over there, but she followed Lou.

Cinderella saw Hang talking with the mysterious man, and she saw Lou giving the lightsaber to that man.

The Jedi warrior used her Jedi powers to pull her weapon of the hand of the old man.

She attacked Lou first, Cinderella crossed Hang's neck with the saber and he fell dead.

The old man turned on his red lightsaber, so Cinderella realized that that man was Syfo Diaz, a sith known to collect Jedis' lightsabers.

A fight started between Cinderella and Syfo. Thatat battle lasted for hours, in the end, Cinderella cut off his hands with the stolen weapon.

Cinderella arrested Syfo in Coruscant and she give back all lightsaber that was stolen by Syfo Diaz.

11APPENDIX E – Transcripts from classroom interactions

Excerpt 1: Brainstorming elements of fairytales
01 T:So, can you tell me any typical element of fairytales that came to your mind?
02 S1: There is <u>always</u> a prince and a princess
03 S2: There is a castle, beautiful dresses…
04 T: Very good! What else?
05 S3: Usually there is a witch, or someone really bad.
06 S4: And <u>magic</u>!
07 T: Very good! Can you think of any other characteristic of fairytales?
08 ((students remain silent))
09 T: They also teach us a moral lesson in the end, right?
10 Ss: Yes.
11 T: Do you remember any of these lessons from a fairy tale?
12 S1: Good always wins.
13 T: Good example. That's true! In fairy tales, the hero always defeats the villain.

Excerpt 2: Understanding fairy tales as conventionalized storylines
14 T: So, did you notice many differences from the versions you know?
15 S2: My god! They were <u>really</u> violent!
16 T: Can you give any example of this violence?
17 S3: In Snow White. Her stepmother was like... punished
18 T: That's true. She was punished to death. And why do you think these stories
19 have changed so much?
20 S3: Maybe they had to adapt, you know, for kids.
21 T: So, do you think in the past fairytales were not for kids?
22 S3: Yeah… I don't know.
23 T: You're right! Fairytales were based on really old stories, you know,
24 folklore… They were not specifically created for children in their origins.
25 What else called your attention in these stories?
26 S4: João e Maria, Hansel and Gretel, right? ((asking for confirmation)) The story
27 was based on true facts, when parents abandoned their kids in the forest.
28 T: Good point! So, many of the fictional things we read in fairytales can be
29 related to something that really existed in the past.
30 T: And what about moral lessons? What do you think these fairytales were
31 teaching?
32 S7: That if we do something bad, something bad comes too
32 T: Sure yes! The idea of justice. What else?
34 S2: hmmm don't know.

Excerpt 3: Helping learners to develop analytical frameworks
34 T: Okay! Based on the stories you've just read, do you all agree that these
35 versions could be compared to what we believe to be Cinderella?
36 Ss: Yes!
37 T: Okay. So, first let's listen to the group who read The Story of the Black Cow.
38 What are the elements in this story that connect it to the idea of Cinderella?
39 S1: The stepmother
40 S2: Talking animals

41 S3: They get married
42 S4: And also she finds his hair.
43 T: Exactly! Which refers to the idea of a lost element.
44 T: Who is the main character in this tale?
45 S4: It's a boy.
46 S5:Yeah… and this changes a lot of things.
47 T: Like what?
48 S5: I don't know exactly…
49 T:((Laughing)) It's okay. We're going to talk about that in a few minutes.
50 T: What about you guys who read the story of Rhodopis?
51 S5: There were animals and relationship with animals, but I don't think they talk
52 in this story.
53 T: Oh that's true! In Rhodopis' story we don't have talking animals! But I guess
54 she had a good relationship with animals, right?
55 S5: Yeah! She had only animals as friends, actually.
56 T: Exactly! Maybe this gives us the idea of a carrying and innocent person…
57 S5: Yeah… I think so…
58 T: And what about the representation of Yeh-Shen? What are the elements that
59 connect this story to the typical idea of Cinderella?
60 S6: There's a lot of things like the slippers…
61 S2: There is the stepmother.
62 S3: There is a bad stepmother ((laugh)) that treats her badly and humm…
63 S7: There's a wedding and she becomes rich.
64 T: Yes! So, there is this idea of social mobility which is only achieved through
65 marriages. And I guess it's the same in all your stories, right?
66 S2: Yeah! It's not a story about a girl who studied and suddenly "Oh! I have a
67 job now!" ((everybody laughs)).
68 T: Exactly! And also there's a slipper, right?
69 Ss: Yes!
70 T: Just like the one in Cinderella?
71 Ss: No.
72 S2: It's a golden slipper.
73 T: Which is a typical idea of China, right? Gold and excessive amount of colors.
74 S1: Yeah! And there are some cultural elements like the goldfish. ((reading from
75 the cellphone)) "the goldfish is a symbol for wealth, because its first character
76 "jin" means gold and its second character "yu"means "jade". It's like a pun!
77 S2: Gente, gente! And the kingfisher is a metaphor for the most showy forms of
78 female beauty ((reading from her cellphone)).
79 S3: Oh yeah. It makes all sense
80 T: How interesting! Thank you for sharing this information. So, probably you
81 guys noticed a lot of cultural elements in your stories that give us this idea of
82 "Oh! this is Egypt, this is China, and this is the Himalaya", right? probably these
83 are stereotypes about those places, but they have an important role here, because
84 they foster our imagination to understand the characters in the story.
85 T: So, in the story of Cinderella there is a lost element, right? She leaves a
86 slipper behind and that's what connects her to the prince at the end. What about
87 your stories? What is the lost element in there? First, in the Black Cow.
88 S4: His hair. He is a golden boy and he has golden everything

89 ((Ss laugh))
90 T: What about Rhodopis?
91 S5: One of her shoes is taken by a Falcon and given to the Pharaoh. He thinks
92 it's a sign from Horus.
93 T: And here ((looking at Yeh-Shen group)) it was the golden slipper.

Excerpt 4: Exploring meanings through feelings
94 T: Now, I have a more subjective question. How do you feel about these tales?
95 What feelings emerged when you read them?
96 ((Ss remain silent))
97 T: It's difficult to answer this type of question right? Normally in school
98 teachers only ask our opinion, what we think about something.
99 ((Ss laugh and agree))
100 MS8: Well, I was just bothered. I mean, how in all Egypt there would be only
101 one girl whose foot would be the right one? Like, they would go to every girl
102 and she the would be the only one with the perfect size. Nonsense!
103 ((Ss laugh))
104 T: Yeah! That's true! Any other idea? ((laughing))
105 FS2: I felt angry because the prince, he stalks her when she goes home and he
106 saw her getting the slipper… So, he thought of putting her in jail and then he
107 looked at her face and thought she was beautiful.
108 FS7: Beauty matters
109 FS1: And the only thing that matters
110 T: And why do you think you felt angry because of that?
111 FS7: 'Cause it only happens with women, like, we have to be pretty and
112 perfect…
112 T: And this is really interesting because in the Story of The Black Cow, we have
113 a boy for the role of Cinderella. Do you think that boy is described the same way
114 Cinderella was as a woman? How was the boy described in the story?
115 FS2: He was represented just was a miserable boy who…
116 FS4: He was mistreated by his stepmother.
117 T: Exactly. And what about the princess he married by the end of the story?
118 FS2: It says that she was pretty, delicate…
119 T: So, we notice that all these adjectives about beauty and sensitivity, delicacy…
120 they are allrelated to women, not to boys.
121 FS2: Yeah… This is interesting.

Excerpt 5 – Analyzing Cinderella in the 1950's Disney movie
122 T: Can you set the scene for me? What was happening in the first movie segment?
123 S1: It was breakfast time and the family was wakening up. Cinderella was taking
124 care of everything, preparing coffee, and there was a cat trying to get a mouse.
125 T: Yeah! there is this adventurous story going on there, but here our focus is on
126 how Cinderella is represented in that segment. Right? And how do you see her?
127 FS2: Humble.
128 T: Yes! she was serving other people all the time in a very humble way, because
129 she was not contesting anything, right? What else?
130 FS3: Hmm… Patient.

131 T: And do you remember what elements from the movie segment made you
132 think that she was patient?
133 S4: When she says good morning to everyone, but nobody replies… or when
134 they ask her something and she answers "in a minute" ((imitating her)).
135 ((Everybody laughs))
136 T: What about her appearance?
137 FS2: Simple.
138 T: Yeah! Simple clothing…
139 FS3: But she was beautiful anyway. Even when she was cleaning the house! Her
140 hands are delicate. The hair is perfect. ((laughing))
141 FS2: And her clothes are perfectly clean. There's even a beautiful laço. How do
142 you say that? ((Asking the teacher))
143 It's <u>ribbon.</u>
144 T: And what about the second segment? when she was transformed into the
145 princess that we all know?
146 FS2: Oh she was grateful there.
147 S3: Stunning!
148 T: Yeah! Any other idea?
149 S4: He says she would be a "suitable mother" and "wife".
150 T: And why do you think he thought that?
151 S4: I don't know… maybe because she was "bela, recatada and do lar".
152 ((everybody laughs))
153 T: Was there any other aspect that called your attention?
154 FS5: The fact that the prince doesn't really have a character… He was kind of
155 generic, right?
156 T: What do you mean?
157 FS5: He was just a man… That's all the information we have.

Excerpt 6 – Analyzing Cinderella as an allegory
158 T: So in the first question, about how women were represented at that time. So,
159 what do you think about it?
160 MS1: They all look flawless.
161T: I think this a word to describe them, right? Their appearance looks perfect. But
162 which elements from the images give this idea of perfection?
163 MS1: The hairstyle, the beautiful dresses
164 MS2: The shoes!
165 T: Yes! In picture 1, she's wearing high heels.
166 T: What about her position in the advertisement? How are their bodies positioned
167 in the picture?
168 FS3: They are always on the floor!
169 T: Yes! Exactly! And do you think that means something?
170 FS3: They are always cleaning.
171 FS4: Always submissive.
172 MS2: They are all in their homes and they look ok with their situation.
173 FS3: They look happy.
174 ((laugh))
175 FS4: It's like they have no jobs… no paying jobs, you know… the house is their
176 lives, right?

177 T: Exactly! Very good point! Anyone else?
178 ((Nobody replies))

Excerpt 7 – Exposing cultural fault lines in the classroom
179 T: So, what about the second question? What do you <u>feel</u> when you see these
180 images?
181 FS3: I wrote here that I feel mad… you know, <u>angry</u> when I see this.
182 T: And why do you think you feel like this?
183 FS3: They were obligated to do it. They didn't have the liberty to choose this
184 life, you know… that's not natural… that's the way they were raised… like robots.
185 T: By natural, you mean that women were not naturally meant to occupy that
186 position? It's just a social discourse imposed on them?
187 FS3: Exactly. Yes.
188 T: What about you boys. What do you feel when you see these images?
189 MS5: I don't feel as bothered as I thought I would.
190 T: And why do you feel like that?
191 MS5: I don't know… Maybe because now it's different.
192 T: So you think this kind of thing is related to the past? It's over?
193 MS5: No, it's not over… But it changed a lot, I guess.
194 T: And how do you relate the stories of Cinderella you've read so far to
195 these images? Do you see anything in common?
196 MS1: Yeah! hmmm… they live to serve
197 T: Yeah! Good point! And what about her appearance?
198 MS1: They all look like Cinderella in the movie. It's crazy. Exactly the same.

Excerpt 8 – Talking about "Escola de princesas"
199 T: So, you were mentioning before that we've changed a lot from that time in
200 terms of gender equality, but take a look at this project called "Escola de
201 princesas". Have you ever heard of this?
202 FS3: Unfortunately, yes!
203 MS1: I wanted to go there and put fire on this place! ((laughing))
204 T: So, it's a kind of school that is based on certain moral principles, and they say
205 that all women can be trained to live like a princess… You know, they should be
206 fostered to be delicate, sensitive… So I'm just going to show some of the things
207 they offer in this school, and I want you to think about their idea of what is it to
208 be a princess.   ((teacher shows the website to the students)).
209 T: So, what came to your mind when you see this website?
210 MS1: All girls are white, blond and with blue eyes.
211 FS3: They are all straight!
212 T: Yeah! They are all waiting for a prince… and the idea of marrying a man is
213 very strong indeed. Good point. What else, guys?
214 FS3: Does this really exist? ((laughing))
215 T: What about the colors of the webpage?
216 FS3: Yeah! It's all pink! ((laughing))
217 T: Exactly! and what's the meaning of that?
218 FS3: It's really girlish… the cliché.
219 T: And how do you feel about the courses they offer? I heard when you said you
220 wanted to put schools like these on fire. Why?

221 FS3: Yeah! That's an absurd. Schools should do the opposite!
222 MS5: I wouldn't put my daughter in this school. I wouldn't let her grow like that.
223 I mean, the courses are not exactly a problem, but since they believe only girls are
224 supposed to learn that, then we have a problem.
225 FS3: Yeah! they should teach them how to be heroines, not princesses.
226 T: Totally agreed!
227 MS1: There is a shop in Santa Monica, and it's like, you know, the name…
228 "princess and heroes". Quer dizer, não tem nem a escolha. É princesa ou princesa.
229 T: Yes! Now, try to remember when you were kids. Did you have any reference
230 of heroes?
230 FS3: Max Steel ((laughing))
231 FS4: Super Man, Spider Man
232 T: And what about a heroine?
233 MS2: Only the drug.
234 ((everybody laughs))

Excerpt 9: Leading the activity
235 T: So, now I want to show you guys different kinds of Cinderella. Some
236 subversive representations of this character. I'm going to show you three
237 different representations: an image and two videos, then you'll choose the one
238 that most calls your attention. okay? Pay close attention to them. So, make sure
239 you observe the center, the background of the image or video. The elements that
240 connect and subvert the idea of Cinderella. Notice all the details.
241 Where she is, what she is doing…

Excerpt 10: Subverting representations of Cinderella
242 T: Okay! So, what about this first image? What are the elements that connect
243 this picture to the the typical idea of Cinderella?
244 S1: The blue dress.
245 T: She is exactly like the Disney version, right?
246 S1: Yeah! The hair… everything!
247 T: And what else? Do you see anything else that could be a reference to this
248 typical image of Cinderella?
249 S2: Maybe the word blue in the scenario?
250 T: Yeah! Very good! One more reference to the Disney version of the character.
251 And what about the elements that subvert the idea of Cinderella in this image?
252 S3: She's not happy!
253 T: Yes! She's not happy. And a happy ending is a typical element in fairytales.
254 How do you think she is feeling?
255 S2: Blue. She's feeling blue.
256 ((Everybody laughs))
257 T: And can you think of any possible reasons for her to feel like this?
258 MS4: The prince left her.
259 FS5: Or she (0.2) left the prince ((laughing)).
260 T: Yeah we never know what comes after the 'happily ever after', right?
261 ((everybody laughs)).

262 T: And what about the context?
263 MS4: It's a bar.
264 T: And what do think about Cinderella at a bar?
265 MS4: It's not the place, humm… it's not an appropriate place for her.
266 T: Why not?
267 MS4: It's like… she doesn't fit there ((laugh))
268 T: Exactly! Maybe that's the idea… to re-imagine Cinderella in many different
269 places, right? Do you think this representation is changing anything in relation to
270 the other stories of Cinderella?
271 FS5: Yes! She can be everywhere. Even a bar! ((laughing))
272 T: Okay! So, let's move to the other representations. First, the Converse®
273 advertisement. What called your attention in this video?
274 FS5: She was not in those feminine ((gestures with the hands)) places…
275 T: What do you mean by feminine places?
276 FS5: There was like a ballet room, a library. They tried to find her there, but she
277 was not there. She was in the detention room. Cinderella in the detention room.
278 T: Exactly! A very subversive place. People who are there probably did
279 something wrong. So, this Cinderella is not as innocent as the others, right?
280 FS5: Yeah! And she was like wearing an All Star in the school, in the party…
281 and having fun with the boys.
282 T: Totally different from the idea of the glass slipper.
283 ((students laguh))
284 T: Okay. What about the last representation? The one about Tinderella…
285 S6: This one was more… more real life than the second video.
286 T: More real life?
287 S6: Yeah! She was using the app.
288 S6: And maybe we don't have the happy end like in the second video.
289 Teacher: I see… well, it is a kind of happy ending, but maybe not a fairy-tale-
290 happy ending, right?
291 ((students laugh))
292 S7: And she's not like "oh! what happens to me now". She's in the app making
293 decisions and she's like… happy alone. She doesn't need a prince.
294 T: Very good point!

Excerpt 11: Reconstructing representations of Cinderella
295 T: So, during this week you guys faced the challenge to create your own
296 versions of Cinderella. Now, in this discussion, we're going to reflect on this
297 creative process. So, I want you to share with us details from your versions,
298 and everyone will be allowed to ask questions, ok?
299 T: All right, so what about you girls? ((pointing to the group)). What was your
300 idea?
301 S1: Okay. So, our story is going to talk about a woman who work in this huge
302 fabric, and her co-workers are… They are sad with their working condition, so
303 she's trying to make a revolution without men, because they don't need men
304 ((laugh)).
305 T: So, in your story, Cinderella works in a factory, and she is a revolutionary,
306 right?
307 S2: Yeah. She's the one fighting for the better working conditions.
308 T: And what are the elements that connect this story to the typical idea of

309 Cinderella?
310 S2: She is mistreated by her boss.
311 S1: She lost her parents.
312 T: Interesting context, girls. I guess this says a lot about the moment we're
313 living in Brazil right now. I mean, this clash of social classes and the social
314 movements we're having lately based on different ideological views.
315 T: Okay, what about you boys? ((pointing to another group))
316 S3: So, we decided to mix Star Wars and Cinderella, and then we created
317 "Starella" ((everybody laughs)). And in our story, Starella is a Jedi warrior
318 ((laughing)). She was in a mission to go another planet and she lost her
319 lightsaber and they needed to evacuate, so she comes back without her
320 weapon. So, in the story, she has to find a way to get her weapon back.
321 T: Amazing! I think it was very creative to play with parody. It's going to be
322 interesting to read this humorous version of Cinderella.
323 T: What about the elements that connect this version to the typical story of
324 Cinderella. Did you recognize any? ((directing the question to the whole
325 class))
326 S4: There is a lost element, which is the lightsaber.
327 S5: And when they have to evacuate… humm… it's like the midnight in the
328 original story.
329 T: Yes! Cinderella's curfew, right?
330 T: Okay, girls. What about your story? ((turning to another group))
331 S7: Our story is a about a damaged Cinderella.
332 T: What exactly you mean by damaged?
333 S7: She doesn't have a happy life, you know… just like the real Cinderella,
334 maybe… In our story, her mother is an alcoholic, and she loses her job. So,
335 Cinderella has to live with a lot of difficulties.
336 T: Interesting, so in your story you deconstructed the idea of a happy end?
337 S8: Well, actually the whole story is about living a sad life, but being happy
338 anyway, you know?
339 T: Interesting. Sounds like real life sometimes ((laughing))
340 S8: Exactly ((laughing))