Appropriate Pedagogy to Teach English: Contemporary Tendency Focusing on Non-Native

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Abstract

This paper is about the teaching of English. It takes into account the global role this language gains today, to reflect on how it should be taught. The main objective of it is to defend a current tendency concerning the teaching of English. In the pursuit of an appropriate pedagogy to teach English, I propose the focus on non-native speaker, since I undestand that English is a world language, spoken by a great number of people, from different cultures, what has recreated this language in many aspects. That is why this language should not be only taught based on the hegemonic cultures. The reflection proposed here is, especially, anchored on Freire´s (1996) ideas on education, mainly when he defends learner's autonomy. Thus, to teach English through an appropriate pedagogy, teachers should allow students to have ownership of it as well, but starting from a local perspective, avoiding, this way, bad feelings on the part of students.

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INTRODUCTION

To get into the appropriate pedagogy world for the teaching of English, it is necessary, first, to reflect upon some features of this language. Because of the indisputable global role the English language takes now, several studies have emerged in the last few years. Many of them bring relevant data on the rise of this language, outlining its historial trajectory, as old English, Middle English until the Modern English. (Graddol, 2000; 2004). There are some that highlight the trajectory of English as colonial, imperial and global language. (Graddol, 2000, Lacoste; Rajagopalan, 2005, Kumaravadivelu, 2005, Crystal, 2012). Others are more delimiters, such as the one of Kachru (1985), that, to explain the expansion, acquisition and the role of English, displays three circles, the inner, the outer and the expanding one.

Today, some terms have also been used to make reference to the English language: English as a global language, English as an international language, *World English*, *Englishes* and English as a língua franca. There are also the varieties *Inglish, Chinglish, Espanglish, Singlish*. These varieties reflect the spread of English around the world. Bhowmik (2015), about this, highlights that with the emergence of new varieties of English, the teaching of this language can not be based either on the British or American models only. Concerning this, Harmer (2007) says that upon concentrating the teaching of English, on the British and American varieties, it ignores the others, such as Australian English, Canadian English and Irish English. But this author remind us that even these varieties are irrelevant in a setting where the number of world Englishes also have the status of variety, mentioning English as a lingua franca as one with its own right. What, in fact, is happening is that English has broken off from its origins and it has been ressignified by a great number of speakers, giving origin to new Englishes. Thus, in several communication settings, English speakers are using more the varieties of English they know and they have employed several pragmatic strategies to communicate with other speakers of English. (Marlinda, 2014).

This points to the fact that English takes a global feature, because of its reinless expansion, reaching, virtually, all territories. For Crystal (2012), this global feature of English occurs because it has played a special role in many countries. But for Marlina (2014), English as an international language, as a paradigm, acknowledges the international functions of this language and its use in a variety of cultural and economic arena, where speakers of different linguacultures establish communication and they do not speak each other language.

In this line of thought, Mckay (2009) agrees that English as an international language is used by people of diverse cultures. Mackay's tenet aligns with the one of Jenkins (2006), because when the latter defines English as a lingua franca, she says it is about a common language used by people who do not share the same cultural background. This new language acquires features of certain social groups, with several linguistic innovation, in léxicon, grammar and in terms of phonology, different from the native version. (Jenkins, 2014).

Another term is "World English" (WE), used by Rajagopalan (2005) to make reference to the English language in an expanding process around the world. This author characterizes WE as a linguistic phenomenon that emerges from the contact of 2/3 non-native users. This linguistic contact does not happen based on the pattern of the hegemonic cultures, however, it emerges articulated with these speaker's identity and with the influence of their culture, mainly non-native.

The term *World Englishes* can be defined as the norm that includes all varieties of this language. (Farrel & Martin, 2009). The "s", added to English, signals the plurality of this language, that not being local any more, it turned into new versions, it has become the language of the world, that is why the word "world", as an adjective. This term was, in the truth, coined by Kachru, in early 1979, to evidence how the English language works in different settings in the world. In this sense is that for Kumaravadivelu (2005), English has, inevitably, given origin to a great number of local varieties and

these varieties have multiplied themselves to the point of pluralizing it as *World Englishes.* Bhowmik (2015) reflects about this, when he says that:

> The continuous spread of English worldwide has put it in a unique situation. For example, because of its spread over time, English has become more hybridized and diverse, phenomenon captured by the term World Englishes. (Bhowmik, 2015, p. 143).

Actually, the sociolinguistics of English has been more complex than the ones of other languages (Marlina, 2014), what has required more critical eyes on how to teach this language, thinking of practices that ensure its character of "world language" and that make possible the assumption of new learners/users.The aim of this paper is to reflect on a viable educational alternative for English brazilian students. I intend to deconstruct wrong notions that overestimate the mythical image of the native speaker, that feed, even today, the ELT[1] powerful industry, because although English non-native speakers outnumber the native ones, the latter still enjoys the privilege of being "native". (Bhowmik, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the character of world language that English takes in the contemporaneity. Although, there are people who do not take this fact into account, it affects deeply the pedagogy to teach and learn this language, if we have the commitment with our students, to teach them English for life. Regardless of the issues that leaded English to this status, it is necessary to think of alternatives that can support learners of this language, in order to favor the learning process, making possible that learners may use this language more autonomous.

The term "pedagogy" mentioned here should be understood as an approach that ensures the learning consolidation. However, in the specific case of learning/teaching English, this approach is defined according to the speakers of this language, mainly based on the old fashioned labels "native" and 'non-native". In fact, what exists are speakers of a language! Because of this, this paper signals, in someway, a brake of paradigms with these patterns. It is anchored is assumptions that also authorize new speakers of English to use it with ease, without being tied in patterns that inferiorize learners, what, many times, hinder them to go ahead and get progress as English users.

Thus, based on this linguistic reality, briefly outlined here, how does the teaching of English should happen nowadays? Before trying to answer this question, that is about the pedagogy of English, I want first to say something about the current pedagogy to teach English used in many settings, based, exclusively, on the native speaker. After, I reflect on a pedagogy, I think, it is appropriate for Brazilian learners, for example. I want to say as well, that my idea is to write about the appropriate pedagogy to teach English, but it is closely linked to Freire´s (1996) view of education.

Appropriate pedagogy for english brazilian learners

Before making comments on the appropriate pedagogy to teach English, I start saying some words on the *in*appropriate one. Traditionally, the pedagogy to teach English has been that one based on the native speaker. In my opinion, the problem here is with the exclusivility that embraces only the two hegemonic cultures. About that, Kumaravadivelu (2012a) highlights that, historically, the pedagogy to teach English has been dominated by the assumption that English bilingual users' goal is to conquer the native competence. Such practices have made possible to erase the identity of many learners, because in many contexts, institutions and teachers still believe in the native speaker's supremacy fallacy and his culture and adopt methodologies that subvert the attempt to maintain learner's identity and the exposure of his culture. Concerning this, Mota (2010) remind us that, in

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[1] English Language Teaching.

1970, there were pedagogical practices that engedered actions in the classrooms, aiming at memorizing the foreign culture values, what favored the development of a superiority atmosphere on the part of the native speaker. In practice, for example, this happened when learners were stimulated to change their names by a foreign one; to imitate characters of a book or movies, making them believe that they had a new (but false) identity. And, in this sense, it is necessary to be cautious not to allow that the teaching of a foreign language be solely a fiction universe, making learners abandon or erase their identities.

Mackay (2009) questions this (wrong) conception that the target pedagogy to teach English should (or must) be based on the native speaker's norms. In this sense, this author argues about reasons to reject the native speaker model as a pedagogical practice to teach English. She believes that this rejection should occur because the pragmatic nature of communication should be considered, that is to say, for her, English as a global language is used in several social settings, by many speakers of English legitimized. In this line of thought is that Kumaravadivelu (2012a) suggests an epistemic break of our indelible colonial dependence. He suggests a careful reconceptualization and organization of knowledge. Thus, it seems that Kumaravadivelu (2012a) proposes a descontinuity of the way English has been taught, since new guidelines have emerged in light of the role this language gains today.

In practical terms, Kumaravadivelu (2012a) puts in check the native speaker's competence as model to be reached. He also puts in evidence that the center based knowledge system, somehow, spreads issues such as native accent, native teachers, native speaker competence, methods from western universities, researches based on hegemonic cultures etc. Because of these issues, that still bring problems and impede the teaching/learning process, is that Kumaravadivelu (2012a) proposes to break our dependence with terminologies such as ESL, EFL, EAL, WE, ELF e EIL[2], so that we can undo the ties with the native speaker episteme. He also suggests to break our dependence of the compentence based on the hegemonic cultures and, that is why, it is necessary to spread the conception of the English language plurality and the understanding that this language is not property of a specific culture or community solely anymore (Baker, 2009).

Thus, if we truly agree with Kumaravadivelu (2012a), concerning the fact of breaking with these conceptions, especially regarding the terminologies that frame us in patterns, almost confinable, we have to admit that our generations can not stand anymore the adoption of inappropriate pedagogies to teach/learn English. Besides that, nobody should go on carrying the burden of having to try to equal to the native speaker, what has been a[n] (unreachable) goal of many institutions, without thinking of the consequences of this prerrogative for learners. Almost always these pedagogies put us in patterns, such as learners and speakers of English as a foreign language, who aim to reach the standard of speakers of English as a first language, or the English of the native speaker, or the English from the inner circle, that is, from the hegemonic cultures. Thus, it is clear that learners of a "foreign language", in Brazil, suffer, even without knowing it, a comparative exam. (Grigoletto, 2005). This brings out unpleasant consequences, when a serious inferiority feeling emerges on the part of the students. (Harmer, 2007). That is why Ramathan and Morgan (2009) draw the attention to inadequate pedagogies to teach English for speakers of other languages, that are in evidence, even today.

In this sense is that Matsuda (2009) warns as well to the fact that teaching English as an international language requires practices different from the traditional, that is to say ELT, that places

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[2] ESL – English as a second languag, EFL – English as a foreign language, EAL – English as a Asian language, WE – World English, ELF – English as a lingua franca e EIL – English as na international language.

English as the language of The United Kingdom or The United States. This approach is outdated and, for some experts, it might bring negative consequences for learners. Farrel and Martin (2009) point that this might happen because: 1. to insist in teaching the (supposed) standard English might devalue other varieties of English in the world, because it still persists this notion that any form of English different from this standard is inferior and 2. teaching the standard English might provoke discrimination, because some employers, for instance, might discriminate speakers of other varieties of English, which are not hegemonic.

Thus, it is clear, by the ideas raised thus far, that my thought about the appropriate pedagogy to teach English aligns with that one that may benefit the learner. The appropriate pedagogy to teach English in Brazil is the one that acknowledges the learners in their individualities, with their own brazilian identities. In another text (Anjos, 2019), I argue about which English variety one should teach in Brazil, in the future. I answered that it could be the Brazilian English version, since the wrong idea, that the only model considered pedagogically appropriate would be the standard English, does not find resonance among experts anymore. (Rajagopalan, 1999). In this sense, it is necessary to acknowledge the idiosyncratic form that brazilans speak English. And there is someone who does this, because in his own words:

> Brazilian Portuguese English, for example, I define as the kind of English I need to know about when I go to Brazil, otherwise I will be unable to converse efficiently with local people in English. It would be amazingly useful to have a glossary of the English language of Brazilian cultural references. (Crystal, 2010, p. 2).

Crystal (2005) believes that when a great number of people use English in a country, they end up developing their own English. This way, in several parts of the world, the English language receives a natural charge from the local context it is being used and the users' mother tongue ends up exerting influence in the syntatic and phonological organization as well. This happens because the new speakers opt to keep their identities, transfering, thus, features of their own mother tongue. (Jenkins, 2007). In this option, there is a natural language appropriation attitude. Based on that, we should make efforts to understand that the appropriate pedagogy to teach English should also be the appropriation pedagogy; the one that can prepare learners to be both local and global speakers, so that they can feel comfortable to use this language with national and international cultures, so that they can have control of this language as well. (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996).

METHODS
This paper presents some data of the research[3] I conducted with a group of undergraduate students, in Brazil. I define the methodology I used as of ethnographic stamp. As an ethnographic researcher, I tried to interpret the meaning of social experiences, analysing learners' evaluative reactions, in the English language classroom. I followed the line that to understand a culture, it is necessary to describe it, and that is what I did. I took note of students' attitudes and also interviewed them with the objective to find out their reactions behind their speeches. To do that, I based myself on Bortoni-Ricardo's (2009) inquiries, that researchers should answer: a) what is happening here?, b) what these actions stand for people who are involved with these actions and c) how these actions which have a

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[3] This research was properly protocoled at Plataforma Brasil, as the current academic formalities require, and it had approved opinion by the Ethic Committee, from the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), which number of certification is (CAAE) é 59915516.7.0000.5531. The proceedings adopted in this research obey the ethic criteria concerning research with human beings, according to the resolution CNS N° 466 de 2012.

place in a microcosm as the classrooom are related with dimensions of macrosocial nature in several levels, starting from the local system where the school in inserted, the city and the national community? For this purpose, it was used three instruments to collect the data: 1. Questionnaire, 2. Interview and 3. Fieldnotes. Thus, it is a qualitative study, developed under the light of Applied Linguistics, which tried to to find out some answers for questions that emerge from an epistemological curiosity.The research took place in one of the centers of the Recôncavo of Bahia Federal University and 91 (ninety-one) learners took part in it. Next, I briefly present some findings and my interpretation of them.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To be aligned with the objectives of this paper, in the next lines, I comment the findings based on some scholars. (Matsuda, 2009; Mackay, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2012, 2012a; Harmer, 2007). Let us start with Matsuda (2009), when he says that to teach English today requires (new) practices, different from the traditional ones. Old fashioned practices to teach English have a strong relation with demotivation to learn this language. About this Anjos, Scheyerl [in press] say it seems obvious that the teacher's methodological choices influence learning, because they might cause motivation or demotivation. The teaching/learning sources and methods ensure not only the studies continuity or waiver, but success or failure as well. As a proof of this, I share three statements, where it is clear that the teaching methodology, somehow, was causing demotivation.

> Question: Do you feel yourself motivated to learn English here at this university?
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> **A31:** *No. Because the university doesn't aim the teaching of English to embrace the deficiencies of all students, mainly those who didn't have contact with the language. The university "throw" the language as if all learners were fluent in it. Besides that, it teaches a **"mechanic", boring English**, the one which does not stimulate the learner to go deeper in the knowledge. When I studied the subject, at UFRB, I studied the verb to be the whole semester, what I studied my whole school life.*
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> **A39:** *No. I believe that the university does not use attractive **methods** so that learners can have access to English. Conversation practice and courses continuity are lacked.*
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> **A89:** *I don't feel myself motivated. During my academic life I took part in some courses offered by the university, but they didn't have a level parameter and I didn't get to follow the group, the **methodology** was not good and the tutor frightened who didn't have knowledge.*

A31's statements is relevant for this analysis, because though there are people who believe that this attitude ("I studied the verb to be the whole semester") is typical of the elementary education system, I can assure that it occurs in higher education as well. That is why it is necessary to rethink the teaching of English together with the university, its board, with professors and learners, in order to pursuit alternatives that may make viable the English language learning consolidation, with methods and approaches sensitive to the learners' reality, what may extinguish from this setting a high number of beliefs and negative attitudes. (Anjos & Scheyerl, [in press]) These last statements signal, somehow, Almeida Filho's (1993) coherence, on the fact that the inconsistency between the leaner's culture to learn and the teacher's culture to teach may cause resistance and demotivation to learn a new language.

Secondly, Mackay (2009) questions whether the pedagogy to teach English should be based on the native speaker´s norm. About this, many leaners still think they should learn to speak English just like an American, for example. However, as I mentioned, Kumaravadivelu (2012a) alerts on the need to break our colonial dependence, upon proposing the descontinuity of the way English has been taught, based on the hegemonic cultures exclusively. In this sense, it is of crucial importance

teachers' action, in order to make learner's aware on the fact that any English learner can speak English keeping his/her own identity, his/her sense of nationality. Next, I share some learners' statements, which show how learners changed their way of thinking about this issue:

> **A71**: *I think that we should not imitate [the native speaker], as we discussed in classroom. There are regional particularities. Languages are merged, they are influenced by many other languages, other people, but if we get to speak in a way that others can understand our message, I think it is essential. I think what matters is to establish communication. It is not a priority, in English, in my point of view, to speak English just like a native.*

> **A4**: *I thought like this, but later, when the teacher explained in classroom, that he knows a teacher who has a brazilian northeast accent, I got quite happy, because we "print" our own identity. It is about what teacher said on língua franca, to bring what is not only of them, but what is ours as well.*

> **A25**: *Actually, I thought like this before, in the beginning of the classes. I believed we had to get closer at most of the target language. But we learned and I understood it is not necessary. We can speak with a [brazilian] northeast accent, with our own particularities.*

As we could realize, there was an attitude change concerning the native accent, as the only model to be followed, taught and learned. Thus, it is evident, the need of linguistic educators ready to contribute with attitude changes, what, in many contexts, underestimate non-native speakers of English, influencing their motivation to learn this language.

Thirdly, Harmer (2007) mentions unpleasant consequences, such as inferiority feelings on the part of learners, because of a pedagogy based on the hegemonic cultures norms. In the research, I also asked the participants about their feelings when speaking English with other people. Next I share some of their answers:

> **A12:** *An illiterate in a language extremely used, which is part of our everyday life.*

> **A40:** *I feel myself inferior. But I know its importance!*

> **A52:** *I have a feeling of "**superiority**" of that person, I think he/she is a step ahead of me.*

In this sense, several foreign language learners feel themselves decreased in their self esteems, because they attend learning settings which spread the hegemonic cultures sovereignty in detriment of the learners, product of a macabre ideology, which makes students feel ashemed of their own linguitic condition (Rajagopalan, 2003).

However, the great majority of the participants did not see the native speaker as superior, because of the fact of being born in developed countries, quite different from what I found out in the data of my master's thesis (Anjos, 2013), when a great number of the participants showed to have overvaluing attitudes toward the native speaker, when they said the native speaker is superior, putting themselves in a inferiority position, giving support to the supremacy of the developed countries, which have English as their official language. And thus such overvaluing attitudes have put the native speaker in a pedestal, immune of any critic, idealized, the perfect model to be follwed, but that can never be reached.

Thus, I have said that an appropriate pedagogy to teach English should be that one which respects learners individuality and their national idiosyncrasies. In practical terms, about this, for instance, I have verified, in my classes, the emergence of sentences such as "I **have** 19" instead of "I **am** 19"; "I am married **with** Mary" instead of "I am married **to** Mary" as well as "she **work**" instead of "she work**s**". Look at my note:

Class 7, October 10 th, 2017, English Laboratory 1
The topic of the class today was 'talking about age', to teach them to talk about age, years and months. Firstly, I showed them some slides with this question: 'how old are you?' and some possible answers. Also, I showed them some brazilian people and asked them to guess their ages. They tried well. Next, I asked all of them 'how old are you?' I could realize that most of them used the verb 'to have' instead of 'to be', as an influence of our native language [portuguese], in which we use the verb to have to talk about age (eu tenho 19). [...]

This excerpt is an inequivocal proof of an idiosyncratic way of speaking English in Brazil. That is why I draw attention to the fact that teachers should take into account local and idiosyncratic issues to teach English. In this line of thought, Kumaravadivelu (2012b), in a post-method perspective, describes what he calls Particularity. It is about the fact that teachers should take into account features of the learners and the context of learning. For Kumaravadivelu (2012b), any pedagogic knowledge, to have local relevance, must emerge from daily teaching practices. An example of this is in the ethnographic note I did:

Class 1, May 10th, 2016, English Language Laboratory
The class started at 12. The topic was "talking about family". Initially, I showed them some slides with definitions of term 'family'. Next, I asked them some questions: *what is family for you? what are the types of family?, what are families for? And how can a person form a family?* Theses questions provoked a great reflection among the group, with different opinions on the conceptions of family. One of the students, for instance, said to be bisexual, and that she has not decided whether she will form a family with a man or a woman. Another learner said to be evangelical, and that family is only the union of a man and a woman. Later, I showed them images of different types of families, traditional, modern, nuclear etc. And thus we established a very interesting dialog. They talked about their families and what they thought about contemporary families formations. At last, I showed them a slide with the biggest family in the world: 'Ziona family', from India, with 181 members. The class went on quite interesting and it was finished with an activity about family to be revised in the next class.

Thus, to me, it was evident an atmosphere favourable to reflection, when learners got engaged in the learning process, expressing their opinions, from their own perspectives, resulting in positive attitudes toward learning English, because of a teaching/learning based on local and global perspectives. Next, I offer my final considerations on this reflection.

CONCLUSION

In many English teaching/learning context, a language approach, in a sociofunctional perspective is applied. However, quite distant from learner's reality, because many teachers still opt to "sell" exclusively images of beautiful and successful artists, from families without problems, harmoniously happy (Scheyerl, 2012) and they have forgotten to make a local approach. That is why Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) defend that the appropriate pedagogy to teach English should be a process of appropriation both local and global. And I think there should not be privilege, to avoid division of worlds.

I would like to emphasize what Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) defend, because when they say that language pedagogy should be based on a global thinking, but as a local practice, they, somewhat, touch in a fundamental tenet of the Freirian critical pedagogy. Relating their thought with a local reality to teach English, I realize the importance to focus on non-native, since critical pedagogy advocates that the classroom should be an arena to discuss social reality with learners, seeking to provoke an intimacy with their social experience (Freire, 1996).

But how can teachers conduct this task? To make that happen, teachers need to be familiar with what they propose to share with their students. Richards (2017) calls this of "teacher knowledge

teaching" and also "pedagogic content knowledge", what for him includes the knowledge of the subject the teacher will teach, the set of techniques it will be applied together with theories, beliefs, tenets, values and ideas, so that he/she can prepare learners for the world outside classroom. This can also be done through a foreign language, since we understand education is a form of intervention in the world. (Freire, 1996). Thus, we need to provide our students with the best tools we are able to.

However, readers can also ask: what does he mean whe he says "focusing on non-native"? As teachers, we should grasp the idea that English is not the same anymore! This way, the appropriate pedagogy to teach English should take into account the role of English in the world, but especially who are the learners, their origins, their local perspectives. I mean, as teachers, we need to humanize the teaching/learning process. But how? Being sensitive to our students. Listening to them. Supporting them, to make them progress. It means to teach English respecting the idiosyncratic way of this non-native speaks English, mainly. It is to understand that non-natives' mother tongue and their particular cultures will influence in the production and the communication through English, because their monther tongue grammatical and phonological structure probably will influence in the production of the new language. It is to accept these facts as creative contingent samples. So, with the focus on non-native, given the current status of English, the process will produce better outcomes. This is my hope!

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