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PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE TEACHING
FROM A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL IN BRAZIL

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perspectives of language teachers on language and language teaching at a democratic school in São Paulo, Brazil. The commentary of the one former English teacher is central to the analysis, complemented by interviews with the Portuguese/Spanish teacher and four other teachers at the school. This study seeks to contribute to the field of critical language pedagogy and the language teaching ‘imaginary’ for progressive language teaching, especially of English. While critical language pedagogy scholars have encouraged the investigation or envisioning of schools outside of the traditional public school system, little work has been done in this area. Accordingly, the democratic school movement, which follows in the footsteps of earlier free school movements, has not been explored as a possible avenue of collaboration for critical language pedagogy. This study sought to discover the potential compatibility of critical language pedagogy and democratic education by interviewing teachers about their knowledge of critical pedagogy and their views on language and language teaching. The language teachers’ views were found to be compatible overall with critical language pedagogy, though neither of them was familiar with the term itself. Language ideologies, the national curricular parameters and the influence of commercial language schools were also explored.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a small two-story school in a building the size of a large old house with students from kindergarten to eighth grade running from room to room. Students are given the freedom to decide whether they want to come to class or not, though they are still bound by the school grounds, demarcated by walls and a locked front gate. The city is São Paulo: the biggest city in Brazil, one of the biggest cities in the world, and the city where Paulo Freire was once the Secretary of Education. The school is in one of the more affluent neighborhoods, near a large park, on a street with mixed residential and commercial zoning. Students at the school resolve conflicts with other students or teachers and decide other school matters in a public forum called *Assembleia* (*Assembly*) in which all members have a voice. Teachers organize and participate in local and global alternative education networks and events. They mentor students on term-long research projects on subjects including the US-Soviet Space Race, the twin paradox, sales tax, and love. *Der Jasager*, a leftist school opera, was performed for the final reception when all students present the results of their research. Recent class themes included Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, the Belo Monte Dam controversy and an image from the British graffiti artist and political activist known as Banksy brought in by one of the students. In music class, students had created their own musical notation system for their own sounds. This school calls itself a democratic school, part of a growing international movement of alternative schools engaging in practices that encourage student autonomy, self-directed learning, and democratic decision-making. Directly next-door to it is one of over a thousand commercial language schools in São Paulo¹.

In an increasingly interconnected world, foreign languages, especially English, are considered important and even necessary to professional and economic success. In countries that do not speak English as a *lingua franca*, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes are often

¹ A search for *escolas de idiomas* (*language schools*) in a national online directory service called Guia Mais that requires companies to register and pay a daily fee of about 80 cents showed 1152 language schools in a 50km (31 mile) radius in São Paulo.

required in public schools and a sought after offering at private commercial language schools. As English classes become more and more common, a growing body of scholars in the field are concerned with the ways that English teaching might inadvertently create or strengthen hegemonic ideologies and/or contribute to the political, economic and cultural influence of English-speaking countries like the United States and the United Kingdom (see Canagarajah, 2006; Crookes, 2010; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1990; Phillipson, 1992). These scholars take a critical stance and look for ways that teachers of English to speakers of other languages might recognize and grapple with these underlying power relationships.

Completely unrelated to this scholarship in critical language pedagogy and relatively undocumented is a growing number of schools internationally that call themselves democratic. They are part of a grassroots education movement which challenges the oppressive features of the modern institution of education and hopes to nurture critical thinking, autonomy and democratic administration practices. While critical language pedagogy scholars, such as Crookes, have given brief accounts of similar historical movements, little to no research has investigated the practices of these schools or their language teaching practices. How might a democratic school that is working to create responsible, critical and autonomous citizens address EFL and/or foreign language education? What are the beliefs that the teachers might hold about English and foreign language education? What could we learn from these teachers that could help us envision EFL teaching that allows for more student autonomy, challenges existing paradigms and concerns itself with social justice? This thesis is the result of an exploratory study of teachers' views of language and language education at a democratic school in São Paulo.

My investigation began with a Skype interview with the father of one of the school's students for a class project on language testing in Brazil. At the end of the interview, I mentioned to him that I was interested in Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy. I had been introduced to Freire by a friend from the education department. He suggested that his school, Raízes, as it is called in this study, was engaged in educational innovations "beyond Freire," and invited me to study there the following summer. Since I had intermediate fluency in Portuguese and a long-standing interest in Brazil, I was motivated to take advantage of the opportunity and develop a knowledge base outside of the coursework of my master's program in order to design a pilot study.

As I prepared a research grant proposal to fund the trip, I discovered the field that had been unknown to me when I read Freire: critical *language* pedagogy. As briefly mentioned

above, this field focused on teaching language in a way that was both critical of societal power relationships and empowering for students. As a teacher of English to non-native speakers myself, I was very interested in how I could practically incorporate some of Freire's ideas into my teaching. I developed a proposal to observe language classes at the school and interview teachers about their understandings and beliefs around teaching, language, and language teaching.

Thus this project is emergent from my particular orientation towards teaching for social justice, my part-time occupation as a teacher of English to speakers of other languages (a 'Teaching Assistant,' but I teach my classes independently), my particular interest in Brazil and my chance invitation to visit a school there.

The heart of my data is the transcribed interviews I conducted with six teachers at Raízes over a one-month period in June 2012. The participants included are the former English teacher, the Portuguese and Spanish teacher, the Director, the humanities teacher, the science teacher and the music teacher. Interviewing the teachers, I gained an appreciation of the day-to-day activities of the school and the organization of language classes, as well as the teachers' teaching philosophies and their experiences around language classes and language teaching. This investigation, admittedly limited in scope, provides a preliminary sketch of the situation of language education at a school that is part of a growing international network of schools that call themselves democratic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

I would encourage critical language teachers to begin imagining their ideal school, then, as an entity manifesting alternative values and acting as a model institution with a mandate to assist critical (or radical) change in society.

--Graham Crookes, 2010

What are the possibilities for critical language education? Crookes (2010) highlights the failure of critical language pedagogy to go beyond the critique of current methods and articulate broader goals and visions for language teaching. Citing Sartre, he argues that our capacity to imagine alternatives is important to our ability to reconstitute the world: “I would suggest that the entire realm of ‘the imaginary’ has been colonized by the forces of globalization” (2010, p. 342). When class was the primary unit of analysis, he explains, a unitary utopian political system represented with an ‘-ism’ like *socialism* was the desired goal. Crookes suggests that moving away from specific ‘-ism’s and considering “local solutions rather than grand narratives” is more promising. As a more manageable task than imagining alternative social structures, he suggests looking to visions of alternative educational institutions: “I would encourage critical language teachers to begin imagining their ideal school, then, as an entity manifesting alternative values and acting as a model institution with a mandate to assist critical (or radical) change in society” (p. 343). It was with this idea of contributing the ‘the imaginary’ of critical language pedagogy that my research at the democratic school began. This investigation is rooted in the central concerns of language, power, the connection between the two, and what, if anything, critical pedagogy and democratic education might have to offer each other.

In this review, I develop a rationale for connecting two, usually disconnected visions for alternative education and suggest that each may have something to offer each other. First, I offer a brief introduction to critical pedagogy, critical language pedagogy, and a discussion of methodology. It should be noted that this review is necessarily incomplete, as there are too many methodologies and forms of progressive or radical education to document². Next, I try to help

² See Crookes 2013 for a more complete history of radical or critical pedagogy.

the reader to get a better sense of the connections between language and power by defining language ideology, discussing Bourdieu's work on language as a symbolic system, looking at linguistic hegemony specifically for English, and discussing previous research on EFL teachers' language ideologies in Brazil. After outlining a short history of the democratic education movement, I compare and contrast some aspects of critical pedagogy and democratic education. With this background, readers will be prepared to engage with my participants' perspectives on teaching, language, and language instruction.

Critical Pedagogy: Education is Inherently Political

The term *critical pedagogy* is often associated with the work of Freire, Giroux, Luke, Luke and Gore, McLaren, and Simon in the field of education (Norton & Toohey, 2004, p. 1). Generally, it seeks to draw attention to unequal economic and political relationships in society and the correspondingly flawed social visions that classroom practices promote (Norton & Toohey, 2004, p. 1). Critical pedagogy at its core reframes the practice of teaching from an apolitical professional endeavor to a moral and political act. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing unequal power relationships between student and teacher, and the ways in which classroom practices create and sustain unequal relationships between oppressed and oppressor groups in society at large. Paulo Freire, sometimes referred to as the "father of critical pedagogy" is famous for his critique of what he called the *banking model* of education: the idea that it is possible and effective to deposit knowledge into the heads of students who passively receive it. His alternative to the banking model was the dialogic, or problematizing, method. In this model, students' knowledge is considered to be of equal value to that of the teachers. Teachers build upon knowledge and issues that are important to students in their local context. In the introduction to Freire's *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Denis Goulet (2005) summarizes the process of problematizing in opposition to problem-solving:

Paulo Freire's central message is that one can know only to the extent that one "problematizes" the natural, cultural and historical reality in which s/he is immersed. Problematizing is the antithesis of the technocrat's "problem-solving" stance. In the latter approach, an expert takes some distance from reality, analyzes it into component parts, devises means for resolving difficulties in the most efficient way, and then dictates a strategy or policy. Such problem-solving, according to Freire, distorts the totality of

human experience by reducing it to those dimensions which are amenable to treatment as mere difficulties to be solved. But to “problematize” in his sense is to associate an entire populace to the task of codifying total reality into symbols which can generate critical consciousness and empower them to alter their relations with nature and social forces. (p. ix).

In this view, asking more questions is the path to move beyond surface appearances created by culture, and these realizations empower students to alter their situations.

Henry Giroux (2004), another prominent scholar in critical pedagogy, also distinguishes critical pedagogy from its technocratic counterpart by emphasizing the elements of politics and power:

...it is crucial to recognize that pedagogy has less to do with the language of technique and methodology than it does with issues of politics and power. Pedagogy is a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations and must be understood as a cultural politics that offers both a particular version and vision of civic life, the future, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment. (p. 33)

Giroux places critical pedagogy in direct opposition to neoliberal processes including the depoliticization of the citizenry and the privatization of education, with corresponding views of the citizen as a consumer and learning as training (p. 38). Rather than using the term *oppressor*, Giroux identifies the enemy in neoliberalism, which he describes with words from Aronowitz: “[neoliberalism] celebrate[s] the inevitability of economic laws in which the ethical ideal of intervening in the world gives way to the idea that we “have no choice but to adapt both our hopes and our abilities to the new global market” (as cited in Giroux, 2004, p. 31). In contrast, critical pedagogy is a moral and political practice “with a fierce sense of commitment to provide the conditions that enable students to become critical agents, capable of linking knowledge to social responsibility and learning to democratic social change.” (p. 41).

Critical *Language* Pedagogy: *Language* Education and *Language* are Inherently Political

Critical language pedagogy adds language to the power analysis, drawing attention to the fact that there are unequal power relationships among languages and the groups represented by their speakers. Both the unequal power relationships in society and the role of language figuring into those unequal power relationships are of importance. Critical language pedagogy is a field in

which teachers and education scholars take these two aspects into account. Pennycook (1990) argues that critical pedagogy refutes the commonly-held instrumentalist and positivist idea that language is an objective system that can be described by experts and transmitted by teachers. He describes his vision of the ideal language teacher as a transformative intellectual who takes a moral-political stance and identifies a utopian goal towards which to struggle (p. 308). He offers the critique that the field of language pedagogy does not actively engage with educational theory, fails to acknowledge the sociopolitical context, and fails to address fundamental questions about student empowerment (p. 304).

Norton and Toohey (2004) argue that critical pedagogy³ creates social change through language learning that is inherently local and non-universal and supports language learners. They highlight the importance of uncovering whose knowledge has been historically privileged and why, aiming to disrupt authority “so that teachers, researchers, teacher-educators, and students might assume agentive and active roles in “transforming the world” (p. 15)”. Finally, they underline the importance of viewing language as a medium through which identity is constructed, contesting the common ‘language as tool’ metaphor.

Thus we can develop a coherent vision of critical language pedagogy as an approach that takes a clear moral and philosophical stance on language teaching for social change that views the student and teacher as subject and is grounded in the perspective that language is never neutral. By examining knowledge and culture creation in the light of social structure and power, critical pedagogy hopes to empower students and teachers to address inequality and oppression. In sum, efforts to incorporate the “critical” into language teaching focus on the recognition of social, economic and political forces, or power that are inherent in language policy and teaching.

Critical Language Pedagogy in Brazil and the PCNs

The field that calls itself *critical language pedagogy* is relatively new, and developed outside of Brazil. Despite this fact, the PCNs (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais, or National Curricular Parameters, released in 1998) actually incorporate ideas from critical language pedagogy. The Foreign Language PCNs for roughly the same age group as middle school

³ They use the term *critical pedagogies* to highlight the fact that there is no single approach which is appropriate for all settings. I chose to use the term *critical pedagogy* so that it was clear I was referring to this particular body of literature.

students in the U.S. (5th-8th grade or *série*), which is the age group referred to as *Fundamental 2* at Raízes, provide background, guidelines and suggestions for language teachers on content and methodology. Included in the impressive bibliography of the document, are many prominent scholars directly associated with critical pedagogy including Stanley Aronowitz, Henry Giroux, Paulo Freire, and Peter McLaren, and prominent scholars associated with critical language pedagogy specifically including Alastair Pennycook, and Robert Phillipson, (Secretaria de Educação Fundamental, 1998, pp. 111-117). Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) argue that while this document reflects the orientations to critical language pedagogy of some Brazilian scholars specializing in language pedagogy, critical language pedagogy remains relatively unknown among Brazilian English teachers (p. 436-7).

Critical Language Pedagogy and Methodology

Methodology has historically been the primary focus and concern in language teaching. The word *pedagogy* in *critical pedagogy* also tends to imply that scholars in the field are interested in concrete ways of teaching, even while actively discouraging a universally applicable method. In this section, I will discuss the issue of methodology in connection to critical language pedagogy.

Since critical language pedagogy aims to incorporate an investigation of power in society in general, and also in the specific power of language, methodological issues are quite complex. In the language classroom, teaching that acknowledges the political nature of both education and language could manifest in an infinite number of ways. For example, teachers could work with societal issues of power the medium of the language being taught, or they could work with sociolinguistic content directly, discussing the power dynamics of specific languages or language varieties relevant to the students' lives through the medium of one or more languages or language varieties.

Auerbach and Wallerstein's (1987) textbook for working class immigrants in the US learning English is a rare example of a textbook that follows a Freirian problematizing methodology. Each chapter follows a different theme related to possible workplace inequality, discrimination and other challenges recent immigrants might face. In the *Guide to Problem-Posing* (p. 59), the procedure followed in each unit is outlined, which includes (a) using an

image or conversation to identify a problem; (b) discussing solutions; (c) finding resources; (d) taking action to work towards solving the problem; and (e) evaluating the actions. The primary audience for this book was American teachers teaching English to adult working-class immigrants, who were already literate in their native language. This is drastically different from the foreign language teaching context in a non-native English-speaking country such as Brazil.

Other examples of critical language teaching methodology in the literature are relatively sparse. Norton & Toohey (2004) offer a collection of articles on critical pedagogy, with some examples of classroom language teaching. In their volume, Morgan documents his development of a lesson on English modals for his students from Hong Kong to explore identity politics in Hong Kong and Quebec. Brito, Lim and Auerbach document their course in Cape Verdean Creole in a Boston high school. Norton and Vanderheyden explore the implications of certain literacy practices being more valid than others in a study of an elementary school class in Vancouver and their engagement with Archie comics. Starfield documents her work with PhD students on using electronic language databases called *corpora* to empower students by enhancing their strategic competence.

Crookes (2010) gives a broad overview of critical language pedagogy internationally, noting research on critical Japanese as a foreign language classes in the United States and critical EFL implementations in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Iran, Mongolia and Tajikistan in Asia and Chile. Citing Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) among others, he points out that critical language pedagogy in Brazil is relatively sparse despite being the birthplace of Freire. In terms of work in Brazil, Mattos (2012) documents a project that involved a critical analysis of advertisements and engagement with environmental issues in EFL instruction. Santos and Fabrício (2006) describe a project that engaged young English learners in Brazil in deconstructing gender.

There are other examples of critical language pedagogy methodology that go beyond the scope of the language classroom as a unit. Scholars such as Alim (2007) have developed pedagogical projects involving what he calls Black Language (BL), also commonly referred to as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), with African-American students in U.S. schools. There is also a large body of literature on teaching endangered languages (see Jaffe, 2011) and an even larger body of knowledge on bilingual education, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

While Pennycook (1990) does not articulate any particular methodological guidelines for critical language pedagogy, he urges language teachers and researchers to formulate guiding questions outside the realm of most work in second language acquisition and applied linguistics research such as the following:

1. Under what conditions can induction into a new language and culture be empowering?
2. How can one validate and explore students' own cultures and experiences through the second language?
3. How can one validate student voice when the means of expression of that voice may be limited?
4. How can one work with limited language and yet avoid trivializing content and learners?

Kumaravadivelu (2001) and others argue that critical pedagogy must go beyond methodological frameworks:

The greatest challenge the emerging postmethod pedagogy imposes on the professional community today is to rethink and recast its choice of the organizing principle for language learning, teaching, and teacher education. The concept of method has long been the preferred choice... That a rickety pedagogic pedestal constructed on the shifting sands of the concept of method has stood solidly for such a long time is a reflection more of its magic than of its merit. (p. 557)

Instead he suggests focusing on the parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility, which can be summarized briefly as being sensitive to local contexts, discouraging reliance on language expert knowledge “producers” and tapping into students’ sociopolitical consciousness. Norton and Toohey (2004) similarly argue that critical language pedagogy cannot be a unitary set of texts or beliefs and see “responsiveness to the particularities of the local as important in the equitable and democratic approaches they are trying to develop” (p. 2).

Freire and Methodology

The work of Paulo Freire is considered foundational to the field of critical pedagogy. The practice that his theory arose from was adult literacy teaching; Freire’s philosophy developed through his experiences in teaching impoverished Brazilian adults to read in their native

language of Portuguese. Thus, while his work involves language, it fits more neatly into the field of critical literacy than critical language pedagogy.

Despite the fact that Freire's literacy work and critical language pedagogy follow different trajectories, I found it useful to examine the teaching methods that Freire used in the context of my investigation for three reasons: (a) to understand how his practice drove his theory, as he himself argued was important; (b) to examine what aspects of his method were relevant to second language teaching, if any; and (c) to be able to understand and recognize his teaching methods.

The goals of Paulo Freire's adult literacy pedagogy were two-fold: to teach his students how to read and to help them develop their critical consciousness, or roughly, the realization that they were oppressed. The first goal of his culture circles was to empower the students to value their own culture and way of life:

[The illiterate] would discover that culture is just as much a clay doll made by artists who are his peers as it is the work of a great sculptor, a great painter, a great mystic, or a great philosopher; that culture is the poetry of lettered poets and also the poetry of his own popular songs - that culture is all human creation. (Freire, 1974/2005, p. 41)

This quote illustrates Freire's desire for his students to realize that their local culture had the same value as the culture associated with the upper classes.

Then, they would proceed to learn how to read with what he called *generative words* that were tied to the students' current political reality. He wanted to help them see the connection of literacy to their lives, and to know literacy to be something other than the memorization of the words of others. Here, Freire talks about his rationale for selecting vocabulary in his adult literacy programs:

For this reason I have always insisted that words used in organizing a literacy program come from what I call the "word universe" of people who are learning, expressing their actual language, their anxieties, fears, demands and dreams. Words should be laden with the meaning of the people's existential experience, and not of the teacher's experience. (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p.29)

Freire saw the choice of words that he used to teach as of the utmost importance. He believed that the words must be words that carried meaning and value for the people learning them.

Freire saw both the content and the teaching style of the traditional classroom as problematic and devoted his life to a teaching method based on mutual love, respect and dialogic interaction as a road to literacy and empowerment.

Understood as a praxis for empowering marginalized groups of adult urban or rural populations, Freirian pedagogy is at home. When the context is a language classroom in which the social class of students and the degree to which they may need English to follow the career paths they desire is much more varied, the transferability of this method of teaching is limited. It must be understood then, that although critical language pedagogy is associated with Freire, the specific methods that he used to teach adult native language literacy are not necessarily applied to critical language teaching classes or classrooms that call themselves critical.

Task-Based Language Teaching

While the focus of this investigation does not include Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), it is important to mention it at this point because it is a language teaching methodology rooted in progressive educational philosophies that has been widely discussed and implemented. TBLT has its origins in John Dewey's activities-based curriculum as applied to language teaching (Crookes, 2013, p. 80). In his article on critical language pedagogy that was referred to elsewhere in the paper, Crookes (2010) briefly mentions the likelihood that progressive language schools of the future are likely to have a 'critical task-based curriculum.'

So, what is a task? Ellis (2003) suggests that both second language pedagogy and second language acquisition research benefit from the organization of language teaching into tasks. Ellis defines a task by identifying its features: 1) it is a workplan, 2) it has a primary focus on meaning, 3) it involves real-world processes of language use, 4) it may involve listening, reading, speaking, writing or any combination, 5) it engages cognitive processes, and 6) it has a defined communicative outcome (pp. 9-10).

The most radical example of TBLT in terms of student autonomy, most similar to the approach used in democratic schools, is the 'process syllabus' developed by Breen and Candlin. Breen (1987) described a student-centered methodology that moves the focus of a language course from learning a language to metacognitive language learning processes, and suggests that the class both choose and evaluate the class activities (tasks). The teacher enters into dialogue

with their students by working with them to select tasks after initial awareness-raising activities concerning the learners' own purposes in learning the language, their background knowledge, their own preferred ways of working, their views on the 'best' uses to which the classroom can be put, and their interests, motivations, and attitudes in relation to learning the language (Breen, 1987, pp.40-41). This method allows for maximal student autonomy in a language course (as opposed to a school, for example), but does not address larger societal or structural power concerns⁴. While the process syllabus approach appears in many reviews of the history of TBLT, it does not have widespread popularity or use in the field of language teaching or critical language pedagogy.

Near the close to his book, Ellis (2003) devotes two pages to the relevance of critical pedagogy to TBLT (pp. 331-333). However, he seems to interpret critical pedagogy as cultural sensitivity, as is evident from the title of the section: 'The cultural relativity of task-based teaching.' First, he argues that TBLT, as an Anglo-American methodology, might not be culturally appropriate for other parts of the world, namely Asia.⁵ Second, that teachers would be wise to exercise sensitivity to the possible socio-political messages that lesson content may entail, or as he calls them 'cultural or contextual restraints.' These points do not encapsulate a broader, more comprehensive view of critical language pedagogy. All in all, though based in progressive educational philosophies, TBLT does not address societal inequality or socio-linguistic issues of power.

Sugata Mitra: Covert Critical Pedagogy?

Another alternative teaching methodology which has been related to both democratic education and critical pedagogy in addition to TBLT is the work of Sugata Mitra. Mitra, a professor of educational technology at Newcastle University, has become known to a wider public audience largely due to his popular TED talks. Mitra won the 2013 TED prize, with his video entitled *Build a School in the Cloud*, which had close to 2 million views at the time this was written. This prize awarded him with one million dollars to fund a learning lab in India

⁴ While TBLT does not explicitly address power, this does not exclude the possibility that the material could be designed to serve this purpose.

⁵ Although Ellis describes TBLT as an Anglo methodology, it is important to note that what Long & Crookes define as one of the precursors to TBLT, the procedural syllabus, was developed in India through the Bangalore project, 1979-1984 (Long & Crookes, 1992).

centered around Self-Organized Learning Environments (SOLEs), a model of learning that places students in small groups of three or four to learn collaboratively using one computer with a large monitor connected to the internet. Teachers, providing minimal support, serve as mediators, encouragers and question-posers. Within this model, the questions teachers ask are aimed at being particularly challenging to motivate the students and increase their satisfaction in finding the answer(s). This model is similar to the TBLT methodology described above and consistent with its emphasis on autonomy. Furthermore, it has been used specifically to teach English (Mitra, Tooley, Inamdar, & Dixon, 2003).

In a 2013 article, based on a longitudinal study of the use of SOLEs in the public school system, Dolan, Leat, Smith, Mitra, Todd and Wall explore the possibilities of SOLEs for transformative pedagogy, citing Giroux, among others. Dolan et al. (2003) start with the framework of educational innovation and its resistance to change, arguing that SOLEs are innovations in two ways: (1) a technological innovation and (2) an innovation in greater student autonomy. They see SOLEs as potentially challenging essentialist, individualist notions of education because they use a collectivist, collaborative approach to learning that makes traditional individual evaluation more difficult, and increases students' agency in their learning process.

However, Dolan et al. (2003) argue that if SOLEs are seen to be part of a transformative educational philosophy, they may be less likely to be adopted in mainstream schools. They suggest that combining a progressive child-centered model with the neoliberal paradigm of human capital is possible and suitable to present SOLEs to the world. In the statement below, Mitra combines the neoliberal vocabulary of the *workplace* with the progressive approach of critical questioning:

To prepare for the realities of the future workplace and the rapidly changing technological landscape, it is critical for educators to invite kids to get good at asking big questions that lead them on intellectual journeys to pursue answers, rather than only memorizing facts. (Mitra, 2013b, SOLE Toolkit, p. 2)

Mitra discusses his choice to call the SOLE a 'tool' in order to deliberately present them as neutral (p. 15).

Dolan et al. (2003) argue that what may be the most innovative or unsettling about SOLEs is that they force us to revise the role of the teacher. In this sense, the SOLE has more in

common with democratic education and more radical elements of TBLT than it has with critical pedagogy. And yet, by problematizing the mechanisms of transmission and teacher authority, SOLEs are at least somewhat compatible with Giroux's writings on critical pedagogy. They argue that by allowing teachers to avoid positioning themselves as contesting the curriculum, SOLEs may paradoxically offer more curricular justice by making it more feasibly adaptable: "What is particularly interesting about this case study is that the transformative impact of SOLEs appears to open up spaces for counter-hegemonic practice without this necessarily being experienced by teachers or students as in conflict with the dominant educational framework" (p. 16). In sum, Dolan et al. (2003) suggest a methodology for transformative education that is neo-liberal friendly. Here the potentially radical educator (with possibly no choice but to work in the system) is seen as an agent for change that will feel less in jeopardy of losing their job by adopting a methodology that is likely to be seen favorably even by a conservative administration.

This model of autonomous group learning using internet resources is based on many of the same premises and follows methods quite similar to those described by the Spanish teacher at the democratic school where I conducted my research.

Innovating Change

Markee (1997), whose work focuses on TBLT, highlights the challenges of promoting innovative language teaching within a bureaucratic system, linking some insights from business management theory and touching on many of the same issues as Dolan et al. (2003). His work is addressed to language teachers who desire curricular innovation, addressing the practical *who*, *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* of the challenges they may face in the design, implementation and maintenance of innovation within the system. He cites Rogers' (1983) five key factors that influence whether an innovative curricula is adopted, including the relative (personal) advantages, its compatibility with teachers' current practice, its complexity, capacity to be integrated piece by piece, (trialability) and its observability. He argues further that innovations that have a tangible form are more likely to be successful, citing the additional variables of form, explicitness, originality, adaptability and feasibility. According to this analysis, the fact that SOLEs are a highly tangible, clear, replicable method makes their adoption more likely to succeed. The factors of complexity and tangibility especially, might also be useful in explaining

why critical language pedagogy has been implemented rather rarely. In fact, Markee (1997) argues that the “problem-solving model,” which he links to critical pedagogy, and all other ideologically motivated pedagogies are approaches to innovation that are less likely to succeed.

Language Ideology

Critical language pedagogy emphasizes the connections between language and power. The concept of *language ideology*, meaning simply a belief or beliefs about language, will help us understand the relationship between language and power more deeply. The term is also used in the discussion of the results to highlight some of the themes that were identified in the interviews. Ahearn (2012) defines language ideologies as “the attitudes, opinions, beliefs, or theories that we all have about language” (p. 20). Language ideologies can be about all language in general, a particular language, particular structures, language use, or about people who use language in a particular way (p. 21). Ahearn outlines four features of language ideologies from Kroskrity (as cited in Ahearn, 2012, p. 22):

1. Language ideologies almost always serve the interests of a specific social or cultural group.
2. Language ideologies in any given society are best conceived of as multiple because all societies consist of many different divisions and subgroupings. There will therefore be many different ideas about language in any single community. Moreover, people can belong to many different social groups simultaneously and may therefore hold multiple (sometimes contradictory) language ideologies.
3. People may be more or less aware of their own or others’ language ideologies.
4. People’s language ideologies mediate between social structures and forms of talk. This bridging of micro-level speech and macro-level social structures is one of the most important contributions a study of language ideologies can make.

Language ideologies are an apt lens to use to analyze language and power, since beliefs about language can both reproduce and alter relationships of power. In linguistic anthropology this idea is referred to as practice theory, which stems from theories of social reproduction and transformation in the works of both Marx and Bourdieu: “At the core of what is known as “practice theory” is this seeming paradox: that language, culture, and society all apparently have a pre-existing reality but at the same time are very much the products of individual humans’ words and actions” (Ahearn, 2012, p. 23). This highlights both the constraints and the agency

that individual actors have in either re-creating or transforming linguistic, cultural and social practices.

The “Monoglot Standard”: Ideologies about What a Language Is

Ideas about what constitutes language itself also affect language teaching practices in significant ways. Woolard & Schieffelin (1994) discuss how the nationalist ideology that equates language and nation is a dominant model which structures state politics, affects the outcomes of ethnic struggles for nationhood and may even be at the foundation of modern linguistic theory itself. Combs, Gonzáles and Moll (2011) give an example of this with English in the United States, documenting the negative and lasting impact that this type of ideology can have. They show how the passage of Proposition 203 in Arizona mandating English-only (Structured English Immersion) instruction arose from anti-immigrant discourses that contradict research on language learning. Despite research demonstrating that allowing students to use their first language in the classroom is beneficial, these English-only policies have been codified into state law. Scholars such as Canagarajah (2006) and Jaffe (2011) have done studies to challenge this dominant hegemonic modernist language ideology, referring to it using Horner and Trimbur’s terms “one language/one nation” (as cited in Canagarajah, 2006) or Silverstein’s term, the “monoglot standard” (as cited in Jaffe, 2011). In a similar vein, Davidson (1994) discusses the effect of standardized tests to uphold a “single monolithic variety as their target,” and thus suppress linguistic variation (p. 383). As an alternative to the concept of a language as a bounded unit, Canagarajah, Jaffe and others instead propose a pluricentric linguistic repertoires approach that recognizes the fluidity and unboundedness of language. Canagarajah reminds teachers of their role in creating or reproducing language policy from the ground up: “every time teachers insist on a uniform variety of language or discourse, we are helping reproduce monolingualist ideologies and linguistic hierarchies” (2006, p. 587). Canagarajah (2011) documents his efforts to challenge this ‘monolingualist’ or ‘monoglot’ ideology in a university writing course that he taught.

Bourdieu on *Language and Symbolic Power*

Reviewing *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1977/1991), adds depth to the initial description of language ideologies above. Bourdieu views symbolic systems such as art and religion as instruments of power and classifies language as one of these symbolic systems. Precisely because symbolic systems are structured, they have the power to structure: “as instruments of knowledge and communication...[symbols] make it possible for there to be a *consensus* on the meaning of the social world, a consensus which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order” (p. 166). Language, as a symbolic system, has the power to construct a homogenous conception of the world, a logical integration, such that people are able to view ‘reality’ in the same way. He argues that it is the structured and structuring power of language which facilitates the capacity of the dominant class to impose a definition of the world onto the dominated. All symbolic productions, including language, facilitate real integration, fictitious integration and the legitimation of the established order: real integration because they provide a means of common ground to communicate and fake integration because the interests of the dominated class are not the same as the dominant interests. Dominant symbol systems simultaneously unite and divide: “...the culture which unifies (the medium of communication) is also the culture which separates (the instrument of distinction) and which legitimates distinctions by forcing all other cultures (designated as sub-cultures) to define themselves by their distance from the dominant culture” (p. 167). The power in the symbol systems lies in their ability to conceal “the function of division beneath the function of communication” (p. 167).

Bourdieu goes on to specify that ideologies, as symbolic instruments of power, owe their structure and most specific functions both to the functions they perform for the class or class fraction that they serve and the functions they perform for those who actually produce them within the logic of the field of production. This is to avoid a conspiracy theory approach, “a means of avoiding the brutal reduction of ideological products to the interests of the classes which they serve (...common in Marxist criticism) without succumbing to the idealist illusion which consists in treating ideological productions as self-sufficient, self-created totalities amenable to a pure and purely internal analysis (semiology)” (p. 169). The effects of symbolic power are the same as those that can result from force: the power to shape how people see and think. This power can only be used if it is misrecognized as arbitrary. Going further, symbolic

power does not result from the symbolic systems themselves (words, slogans, etc.) but the “belief in the legitimacy of words and of those who utter them” (p. 170).

Bourdieu argues that language itself, as a symbolic system, and its surrounding ideologies have the power to unite by imposing a logical integration, or a ‘reality.’ At the same time language divides by subordinating groups that do not conform. Symbolic power can only be effective if members and groups in society believe the power to be both legitimate and arbitrary i.e. not a result of imposition by force. Thus, when we discuss language ideologies, we invoke notions of domination and subordination via incorrect or overly simplified beliefs about language that are held to be simply common sense.

The Specific Case of the English Language and Power

Given that it is widely held that English is the most important and widespread international language and that it is the most studied second or foreign language in the world, it is important to discuss issues of English and power more fully. Phillipson (1992), Kachru (1986) and others have done extensive research into the hegemonic ideologies surrounding the English language and the powers they serve, corresponding to the first of Kroskrity’s features of language ideologies. Phillipson argues that “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (1992, p. 47). He quotes Galtung (1980) to support this notion: “If the Center always provides the teachers and the definition of what is worthy of being taught, and the Periphery always provides the learners, then there is a pattern of imperialism’ (cited in Phillipson, p. 57). He argues that English linguistic imperialism is a sub-type of linguisticism, defined as ‘ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language’ (p. 47). He identifies two main mechanisms through which English as the dominant language is legitimized in educational planning: ‘one in respect of language and culture (anglocentricity), the other in respect of pedagogy (professionalism)’ (p. 47).

Anglocentricity and professionalism legitimate English as the dominant language by rationalizing activities and beliefs, which contribute to the structural and cultural

inequalities between English and other languages. The professional discourse around ELT disconnects culture from structure by limiting the focus in language pedagogy to technical matters...to the exclusion of social, economic, and political matters... (p. 48)

Phillipson sites Calvet that language policy and planning are clearly anchored to the interests of the state (p. 105). He argues that linguists and applied linguists, who are involved in planning language education, are thereby making the rules, rather than merely observing them (p. 105). This notion that language teachers are “making the rules” fits in with the discussion of practice theory and the “monoglot standard,” discussed in the context of language ideologies in the previous section. Language professionals are enacting or recreating top-down state or institutional policies, at the same time that they are enacting or creating bottom-up policies in their respective classrooms and institutions.

Finally, Phillipson notes that imperialism is not a conspiracy theory, but one based on the idea that hegemony, “dominant ideas that we take for granted,” is driving cultural reproduction (p. 72). The dissemination of ideas is one of three ways that power is created and reinforced; the others being bargaining and force (Galtung as cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 283). English hegemonic discourse uses intrinsic, extrinsic and functional arguments referring respectively to what English *is*, *has*, and *does* to justify its position in the world (Galtung as cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 273).

In his analysis in the Norton/Toohey anthology, Luke (2004) identifies the contradictions of being Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOLs) that echo the concerns of Phillipson, namely that education is inherently an instrument of nation-building, “tacitly about the protection and production of its Culture (and, by implication, its preferred ethnicities and races, languages and codes)” (p. 24). He defines TESOL as “a pedagogical site and institution for educating the racial and linguistic Other” (Luke, 2003). He concludes that language teaching in its present state is “a technology for domesticating the Other into nation, whatever its scientific and humanist pretenses” (p. 28).

The strong connection between English and the power of nation-states, namely the United States and the United Kingdom, highlights the possibility that it may not possible for EFL

to be critical in the sense that, however critically or carefully, the spread of the language itself is hegemonic.⁶

Brazilian EFL Teachers, Critical Pedagogy and English Hegemony

One of the main sources of inspiration for this study was an article about English teachers in Brazil by Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999). This study interviewed 40 Brazilian English teachers, including six university professors, 12 teachers at private language schools, and 22 teachers at public elementary and secondary schools, to determine their familiarity with critical language pedagogy.⁷

The occasion for their investigation of teachers' knowledge of critical pedagogy was the then recent release of the foreign language teaching National Curricular Parameters, or *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCNs)*⁸, published in 1998, which incorporated ideas from critical language pedagogy. They specify that the field of critical language pedagogy developed outside of Brazil in the 1990's and was then taken up by some Brazilian scholars of English, rather than having followed a direct progression from Freire's literacy work within Brazil. There were two sections of the interview instrument: three questions and then two passages⁹ to respond to. The three questions asked what approach teachers used to teach English, if they had heard of the term *critical pedagogy (pedagogia crítica)*, how they saw themselves as English teachers politically, and how they thought others saw them.

Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) argued that critical ELT as articulated by Pennycook was little known in Brazil. They found that Brazilian teachers of English were generally unaware of the term *critical pedagogy* and subscribed to an *Integrative Discourse (ID)* of English as a natural, neutral and beneficial language that enables one to gain access to global relationships, employment and information. While they use the term *discourse (Integrative Discourse (ID))* and

⁶ Graddol (2006) complicates this picture of English tied to the hegemony of the nation-state, arguing that a global English is developing which is not tied to any one country or countries. He predicts that the "cultural baggage" of the native speaker may increasingly be a liability rather than an asset (p. 114).

⁷ They note that the 22 teachers they interviewed at the elementary and secondary schools have a degree in English, and that these are the minority of English teachers in Brazil, most of whom work part time. A degree in English is required to be a full-time English teacher in the public schools. They did not note whether the 12 private language school teachers had a degree in English.

⁸ These will be discussed again in more detail in chapter 4.

⁹ The two passages were a quote from Gardner and Lambert about integrative and instrumental motivation and a quote from Pennycook about critical pedagogy.

Empowering Discourse (ED)), they are discussing what this study refers to respectively as hegemonic and non-hegemonic language ideologies. In the conclusion of their piece, Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) call for the need for the creation of a counter-discourse. In the article, they provide a list of what English teachers *must* do:

1. doubt and be critical of the dominant discourse that represents the internationalization of English as good and as a passport to the first world;
2. consider the relationship of their work to the spread of the language, critically evaluating the implications of their practice in the production and reproduction of social inequalities;
3. question whether they are contributing to the perpetuation of domination (p. 439)

The article takes a clear ideological stance in favor of critical pedagogy, arguing that those who speak through the hegemonic ideology “shield themselves behind the putative neutrality of English as the planetary language” (p. 446). Use of the phrase “shield themselves” indicates that the authors believe that those English teachers who do not incorporate discussions of language and power into their teaching practices are hiding from the truth and their duties. They see these teachers’ subscription to hegemonic ideologies as possibly tied to teachers’ wider political beliefs and the historical intellectual split between Portuguese teachers who favored the “French school” of discourse analysis¹⁰ and English teachers who favored the “Anglo-Saxon” communicative approach¹¹, as their quote about intellectual conflict in the 1980s indicates:

Teachers of English stayed on the sidelines...and were labeled by their colleagues (teachers of literature, Portuguese, and history) as alienated, acritical, apolitical, reactionary, right-wing stooges of U.S. imperialism. Among politicized intellectuals, English teachers were suspected of having sold their souls to the devil. (Cox & De Assis-Peterson, 1999, p. 436-7)

Using Pêcheux's (1988) distinction between good and bad subjects, they found that the majority of participants were “good subjects”, reflecting “the universal subject of the dominant neoliberal ideology and discourse,” rather than contesting hegemonic ideologies (p. 447).

¹⁰ This approach to discourse analysis draws on the work of Foucault, who is French.

¹¹ There is some irony if it is true that English teachers’ adherence to the communicative approach is a source of oppression for students when we consider its origins in social justice concerns. The communicative approach to language teaching arose out of the scholarship of Dell Hymes (1972), who devoted his life’s work to looking at how linguistic ignorance in the classroom negatively affected the educational outcomes of students who spoke stigmatized variants of English, especially African-American Vernacular English.

Democratic Education

Raízes, the school where I did my research for this study, calls itself a democratic school. The term *democratic* in this context indexes a fairly recent movement by that name that traces its roots back several hundreds of years and has gone by various names such as the free school, modern school, or deschooling movement. While there are many different definitions and interpretations of *democratic education*, in this paper, it will apply to schools that self-identify as democratic schools in connection to the movement described below.

In his overview article on critical language pedagogy, Crookes' (2010) gives an overview of historical traditions of radical pedagogy not generally recognized or acknowledged. He does not use the term *democratic education* or discuss the contemporary movement, but he gives an abbreviated history of its earlier lineage, what he calls “various anti-authoritarian, non-Marxist inspired developments in alternative education” (p. 335).¹² He specifically mentions Ferrer's New Schools, and free schools, identifying A.S. Neill's Summerhill as the most famous school from the free school line. These “anti-authoritarian non-Marxist” schools, which exercise direct democracy, are striking for their “extreme emphasis on individual autonomy and choice” (Crookes, 2010, p. 335).

Central to the movement of schools that self-identify as democratic, is an annual conference called the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC). Several of the teachers at the school in São Paulo where I conducted my research were organizers of the IDEC held in 2007 in São Paulo. The first IDEC was organized by the educator Yaacov Hecht in Israel in 1993. Each year a school or institution in a different part of the world volunteers to host the conference. The IDEC, going into its twenty-first year at the time this was written, does not represent one static organization or group of organizations and each conference may have a slightly different emphasis, as decided by its organizers. The IDEC Facebook page at the time of writing had 2,520 likes.

The Alternative Educational Resource Organization (AERO), founded and led by Jerry Mintz, is another organization that is involved in the democratic education movement. This is a non-profit organization headquartered in New York that specializes in democratic education, but

¹² Crookes discusses many other traditions, including critical pedagogy in his overview; here, I only refer to the section relevant to the democratic education movement.

whose member schools also include, according to the website, Montessori, Waldorf (Steiner), Public Choice and At-Risk, Homeschool, Open, Charter, Free, Sudbury, Holistic, Virtual, Magnet, Early Childhood, Reggio Emilia, Indigo, Krishnamurti, Quaker, Libertarian, Independent, Progressive, Community, Cooperative, and Unschooling schools. While this is a surprisingly diverse array of schools, the stated common goal among them is to support and advance student-driven, learner-centered education. AERO seeks to do this by providing resources, an online bookstore, hosting online courses on founding schools, consulting, and hosting an annual conference. The website provides maps of alternative schools around the globe, with a dedicated map for schools that call themselves democratic.

The website of the most recent IDEC, which I attended in Boulder, Colorado last year, argues that democratic education is not capable of being strictly defined because the movement incorporates many different types of schools, philosophies of learning, practices, policies and visions; however their values tie them together (IDEC 2013, 2013). The website articulates the goals of democratic education to “empower young people to be autonomous, responsible members of their community and the larger world.” The following passage incorporates the Freirian metaphor of ‘empty vessels’:

Democratic education incorporates the principles of a healthy democracy: young people have an active role in shaping their own learning, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. They are participants and citizens, each with unique gifts, not empty vessels or products on an assembly line.

In his book *Democratic Education*, Yaacov Hecht, the founder of the first IDEC mentioned above, describes the schools that he has founded and consulted for, as well as his philosophy of education. He emphasizes the importance of creating space for self-exploration and appreciation for the uniqueness of each person in his vision of democratic education:

First we must create an educational system which enables every citizen of the future to "herald" his existence through his unique creativity. The second condition is the propagation of the understanding that one's unique creativity does not end with "I". "The other" is also gifted with unique capabilities and there is a mutual interdependence among all the people in the world (Hecht, 2010, p. 365).

This quote highlights the themes of autonomy and responsibility to the community. In other sections of his book, he discusses the democratic participation of students in school decisions.

Two of the participants in my study traced the origins of democratic education back to Tolstoy. The school that Tolstoy built on his own estate in Russia, Yasnaya Polyana, is credited by some as being one of the earliest schools that exhibits the principles of the contemporary movement: student autonomy and participation in decision-making.

Another writer who is a resource for the democratic education movement is John Holt (1976/2004), a well-known educator, author and activist whose book is included in the AERO bookstore:

Next to the right to life itself, the most fundamental of all human rights is the right to control our own minds and thoughts... Whoever takes that right away from us, as the educators do, attacks the very center of our being and does us a most profound and lasting injury. He tells us, in effect, that we cannot be trusted even to think, that for all our lives we must depend on others to tell us the meaning of our world and our lives, and that any meaning we may make for ourselves, out of our own experience, has no value. Education, with its supporting system of compulsory and competitive schooling, all its carrots and sticks, its grades, diplomas, and credentials, now seems to me perhaps the most authoritarian and dangerous of all the social inventions of mankind. It is the deepest foundation of the modern world and world-wide slave state, in which most people feel themselves to be nothing but producers, consumers, spectators, and “fans,” driven more and more, in all parts of their lives, by greed, envy, and fear. My concern is not to improve “education” but to do away with it, to end the ugly and antihuman business of people-shaping and let people shape themselves. (p. 4)

Holt attacks the public compulsory school system for leading us to fundamentally mistrust ourselves and the meanings that we might make of our world. His quote, while not representative of all in this rather loosely associated movement of schools, highlights the centrality of the critique of the traditional public school that is central in this line of thought.

Pedagogy of Liberation or a Liberation from Pedagogy?

A particular article, which was recommended to me by a teacher at Raíces and was included in an edited book at the AERO bookstore at IDEC 2013, is also of significance for this research. It engages with and critiques the work of Paulo Freire, by contrasting it with ideas central to the democratic education movement: the oppressive nature of institutional schooling itself. This piece set up democratic education and Freire’s critical pedagogy in opposition to each other. In *From a Pedagogy of Liberation to Liberation from Pedagogy* (2005), Esteva, Prakash

and Stuchul assert that while Freire's intentions were clearly positive, his project of liberating the oppressed was still a colonial project in the end. They argue that this is because he stayed within the ideological framework of the oppressor, maintained and deepened the division between the oppressor and the oppressed, and perpetuated the false assumption that the oppressed needed saving via liberated educators. From this standpoint, claiming to be enlightened via a claimed universal truth that disadvantaged groups did not have access to and needed to have bestowed upon them injured the very groups he hoped to serve. While the capitalist system was being called into question and examined, the oppressed populations were not seen as capable of creating change in their communities without outside assistance.

This is a critique of Freire that is echoed by Starfield (2004) in the critical language pedagogy literature, a critique that she attributes to feminist and post-structural pedagogies in the early 1990s:

Critical pedagogy and the notion of empowerment, in particular, were variously critiqued as being constructions of rationalist and paternalistic Enlightenment discourses in which socially powerful, radical teacher-educators (frequently male) conceived of themselves as "liberating" oppressed students through the transmission of power...to their up-until-then disempowered students. (p. 140)

Esteva, Prakash and Stuchul use the framework of Dion-Buffalo and Mohawk (as cited in Esteva, Prakash & Stuchul, 2005, p. 25) to explain how Freire, while opposing the system, still remained in the system, and thus complicit. The framework outlines three options for colonized peoples: 1) to become good subjects, 2) to become bad subjects, or 3) to become non-subjects "acting and thinking in ways far removed from those of the modern West."¹³ They state: "By reducing his definition of himself, of his own being, to the terms of the oppressor, even for the sake of resisting or opposing him, he cannot become a non-subject" (Esteva et al., 2005, p. 25). They give examples of leaders like Gandhi and Wendell Berry, whose success, according to their analysis, lies in their achieved non-subjecthood. Rather than conscientizing, empowering or educating for liberation, they led by example (Esteva et al., 2005, p. 27-8). Instead of seeing others' awareness as something created by them, they argue, leaders like Gandhi radically changed their lifestyles in order to recover and regenerate vernacular worlds. In doing so, they inspired others to do the same. In sum, the essay asks us to consider the oppressive nature of the

¹³ This is similar to Pêcheux's (1988) distinction between good and bad subjects in Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999), with the major exception that there is no non-subject category.

modern institution of “education” itself, a line of thought central to democratic education, and to question whether an imposed education, even with the best of intentions, can be liberating.

Democratic education and critical pedagogy are both concerned with the oppressive nature of schooling. Democratic education focuses on the oppression of young children in compulsory public schooling and students’ rights to self-determination while critical pedagogy traditionally focuses on class-based oppression¹⁴ and social transformation. Democratic educators would argue that true learning does not occur when content is imposed and decontextualized. Critical pedagogy draws attention to unequal power relationships, especially class relations, in society. Freire believed that acquiring knowledge of this class oppression, termed *conscientization*, would lead to social transformation and a peaceful liberation of both the oppressed and oppressors. He saw dialogic critical classroom interaction as a possible route to liberation. One of the questions that democratic education raises for critical pedagogy is whether it is possible to avoid the banking model of education when teaching within an institution that is part of a larger institutional framework. Both democratic education and critical pedagogy are radical progressive educational philosophies that attempt to rectify unequal power relationships.

Interestingly, in his call for a critical pedagogy towards democratization, Giroux (2004) outlines many principles that are well aligned with the democratic education movement. Arguing that educators have the responsibility to revive democratic political culture, he suggests they join with groups outside the sphere of public and higher education in order to “create a national movement that links the defense of non-commodified education with a broader struggle to deepen the imperatives of democratic public life” (p. 40). In another section of his article however, he describes private schools as commercial enterprises. This leaves a private school for the public good like Raíces without a place in the conceptual framework, complicating the simple division between public and private and challenging us to seek new paradigms.

Crookes (2010) identifies one of the divisions between libertarian or anarchist education and Marxist education (corresponding roughly to democratic education and critical pedagogy) as the willingness of the latter to work within the state sector (p. 337). This echoes the comments in an article by Ron Miller (2004), which was posted on the AERO website summarizing various forms of alternative education including critical pedagogy:

¹⁴ This has been extended to racial, gender-based and other forms of oppression.

Proponents of critical pedagogy tend to be strong supporters of the public school ideal (though they certainly want to change the actual conditions in most schools) and generally view privatization of education as being elitist or a retreat from social responsibility. So homeschoolers and independent alternative educators generally do not find many enthusiastic allies among this group. Yet critical pedagogy represents an important segment of the alternative education map, for it raises basic questions about the very purpose of education. (p. 5)

This section has sought to compare some salient aspects of critical pedagogy and democratic education in an effort to understand each more deeply. The critique raised by proponents of the democratic education movement that it is challenging, if not impossible, to change the system from within the system is highly compelling; on the other hand, the concerns with social justice that motivate proponents of critical pedagogy to stay within the public school system to create widespread change are similarly compelling.

Literature Review: Concluding Remarks

Starting with the idea of the ‘social imaginary’ this review started by examining critical pedagogy, critical language pedagogy, methodology in critical language pedagogy, Task-Based Language Teaching, SOLEs and innovation. Then I covered language, power and language ideologies, looking specifically at English as a hegemonic language. This led to a discussion of a study that looked specifically at EFL teachers’ language ideologies in the Brazilian context. Finally, I outlined basic principles in the democratic education movement, a few key organizations within that movement, and discussed some similarities and differences between the democratic education movement and critical pedagogy.

It is with this background that I hope the reader can engage with the question that is central to this study: *How do language teachers in the democratic school movement in Brazil approach language education?* My investigation hopes to capture the nuances of these progressive language teachers’ beliefs about education, their personal experiences learning (and teaching) language, and their ideologies about language and language teaching. By answering this question, I hope to gain insight into *how these perspectives can be understood in the wider framework of critical language pedagogy*. In this next chapter, I discuss the methodology I used for the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

That is, as we treat the other as a human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we try to learn about the other.
--*Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, 1994*

Methodology and Method

The goal of this study was to understand the phenomenon under investigation, language teaching, from the participants' perspectives (an 'emic' perspective), using a qualitative research methodology. I wanted to learn how their understandings relate to macro societal discourses about language and also whether their described philosophies and practices conformed to or challenged these understandings. One of the basic assumptions of qualitative research is that there is no one transcendent truth, but interpretations of reality that are useful in understanding the human condition (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Rather than aiming to quantify, count or measure opinions or variables, then, it is necessary to attempt to enter the participants' universe, determining what is meaningful to them and why.

This study uses the open-ended structured interview format as the primary method, asking questions in order, but allowing and encouraging substantial diversion from the questions as the teachers became interested in sharing about other topics. The open-ended structured interview format provides a compromise in allowing participants freedom to shape their responses but also ensuring that we touched upon key themes.

From the perspective of the traditional structured interview, answering respondents' questions and allowing personal feelings to influence oneself are "capital offenses" but, according to Malinowski and Spradley, disclosing some aspects of one's self is part of the very essence of the unstructured interview (as cited in Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 366). In fact, there is some empirical evidence to suggest that some self-disclosure is useful in gaining the trust of the people being interviewed and thus obtaining more useful data. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter argues, our treatment of the people we research as human beings requires that we too

disclose ourselves as human beings. Oakley (1981) argues that there is “no intimacy without reciprocity” (as cited in Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 370). While I believe that the benefits outweighed the risks, it is important to note the drawbacks to disclosing opinion: the possibility that I would inadvertently influence the respondents. For example, since some teachers knew that I was interested in Paulo Freire, they might have chosen to talk about him more than they would have otherwise. This is taken into account as much as possible in the analysis.

Site and Participants

The primary sources of data for this qualitative study are interviews with teachers at a private democratic school in São Paulo, Brazil. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, I call the school Raízes, pronounced [ha.'i:.zis]. The school had around twenty students at the time of the interviews and was located in a middle to upper-class urban area with mixed zoning (commercial and residential).

I conducted interviews in June 2012 with six teachers, including the director, humanities teacher, science teacher (and a graduate student in physics education), former English teacher, Portuguese/Spanish teacher and the music teacher. The teachers were all Brazilians in their mid to late twenties or early thirties, including two female and four male teachers.

I found the site by a lucky coincidence when I interviewed a Japanese-Brazilian for a language testing life history class project. The friend of a friend who I arranged to speak with was a parent of a student at Raízes. During the Skype interview, he brought up the school and its innovative ideas about education. I accepted his invitation to study at the school, gaining the approval of the director before coming to the site and asking the other teachers to participate once I arrived in Brazil.

I was interested in progressive language teaching and Freire’s influence on education as the Secretary of Education in São Paulo. Since the parent had specifically mentioned the incorporation of Freirian ideas at the school, I thought it would be an interesting site to study language teaching. In other words, the school was chosen for its uniqueness and the potentially interesting perspectives of the teachers rather than for its averageness.

Role of Researcher

Since this study did not include participant-observation with adequate field notes, this project cannot qualify as an ethnography in any way, shape or form. However, I looked to the field of critical ethnography and the concept of ‘positionality’ to reflect on my own biases and to help me in evaluating possible pitfalls in representations of the participants in the study. In *Critical Ethnography*, Madison argues that critical ethnography critiques the notions of both objectivity and subjectivity (2012, p. 9). We humans cannot simply extract ourselves from our belief systems because our very being is formed in a community of belonging that shapes our perspective, classifications, philosophy and notions of what could and should be in untold ways (Madison, 2012, p. 9). As Madison (2012) summarizes, “belonging precedes being’ and the locations and relationships that make up our experience define our being and our perceptual world (p. 9). Since neutrality is an impossibility, we, as researchers, “take ethical responsibility for our own subjectivity and political perspective, resisting the trap of gratuitous self-centeredness or of presenting an interpretation as though it has no “self,” as though it is not accountable for its consequences and effects” (Madison, 2012, p. 9). This is what is meant by *positionality*.

As a non-native Portuguese speaker, an American and a researcher, I was an outsider in an environment where students and teachers spent many hours every day together. During my one-month stay, I took the role of observer almost all of the time, except for one brief lesson I co-taught on making chocolate chip cookies. I dressed rather informally (usually jeans and a sweater) so that I blended in with the casual dress of the other teachers and students. Being roughly the same age as the teachers also made my presence less conspicuous. In my conversations with teachers, I positioned myself as a graduate student and fellow progressive educator interested in Paulo Freire and language teaching. I tried to approach the interviews as a conversation between fellow progressive educators, treating the interview at times like a collective brainstorming. In that sense, I did not try to hide my views or perspectives, although I didn’t purposely state them. Since I knew from the outset that the teachers were interested in social justice and other progressive issues, I believe this helped to build rapport. I described my project as exploratory, not knowing what I would find and wanting to learn from them. I also

believe that my genuine questions and answers gave the interviews a more natural quality, again helping me to build rapport.

Positioning myself as a fellow collaborator and developing a somewhat personal relationship with the teachers, inspired some feelings of loyalty to the school and teachers. This meant that it was a potential challenge to balance concerns over the feelings of the participants or the well-being of the school with my desire to report the results as accurately as possible if any of my findings were negative. Although my findings were not negative, I found that I could honor the relationship of trust with the participants and report my findings accurately by refraining from evaluation and situating the participants' answers within a larger context.

In this project, I was often asking the teachers to talk about topics that they had not necessarily formulated an opinion on before. Here I highlight this fact so that the reader may keep in mind that the teachers' comments were not statements prepared in advance.

Data Collection

I started conducting interviews in sessions of about 60 minutes each after approximately one week of observations whenever the teachers had time available¹⁵. All interviews were conducted in Portuguese. I used a set of prepared questions that were subdivided into three categories: teaching philosophy (including items about critical pedagogy and democratic education), National Curricular Parameters, English in the curricula, and a fourth special set of questions for the English teacher.¹⁶ Shortly before I arrived at Raízes, they canceled their English class and replaced it with a Spanish class.¹⁷ The final set of questions about English was revised ad hoc to pertain to Spanish when I interviewed the Spanish teacher.

During the research period of June 2012, I also observed classes, meetings and day-to-day interactions. Two types of meetings that are particularly characteristic of democratic schools, *Assembleia (Assembly)* and *Planejamento Coletivo (Collective Planning)*, were recorded on video and audio respectively. Due to poor sound quality, it was not possible to transcribe these. I also attended a school field trip to the local planetarium, two evenings of final research

¹⁵ I conducted interviews on June 11th, 12th, 18th, 19th, 21st, 22nd, and 29th, 2012.

¹⁶ See Appendix A.

¹⁷ Graddol (2006) documents the increasing economic importance of Spanish in Latin America and the United States, noting that Brazil passed a law in 2005 requiring all (public) secondary schools in the country to offer Spanish as an alternative to English (p. 63).

presentations, an evening school play and music performance, and a school festival. While language classes were fewer than I had hoped, I was able to observe one Spanish class and one Portuguese class, and co-taught an English cooking class that the former English teacher planned. Since the younger children did not have Portuguese or foreign language classes, my analysis of the school focuses on the older cohort of middle school-aged students, called *Fundamental 2* in Brazil. I had the opportunity to observe the final self-evaluation process for several classes, since it was the end of the semester. On June 12th and 19th, 2012, I attended the final two classes of a four-month course in democratic education held at Raízes which, to my knowledge, is the first and only democratic education course in São Paulo. In my final week, I briefly visited three other alternative schools in São Paulo. Unfortunately, given that I was not trained in ethnographic methods before I conducted my study, my field notes are inadequate to use as data and thus classroom and event observations will not be discussed in the thesis.

When I was not observing classes or meetings, I explored the bookshelf in the teachers' office and read two of the books: *Democratic Education* by Yaacov Hecht and *The School that I Always Dreamed of but Never Imagined Could Exist (A Escola com que sempre sonhei sem imaginar que pudesse existir)* by Rubem Alves. Finally, I was able to collect digital documentation of school policy and join the closed Facebook group for the school.

Two other opportunities have contributed to my understanding, while they are not officially a part of my data set. During the spring semester of 2013, I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with the same interview instrument I used in Brazil with several Brazilian English teachers from the public school system who were visiting the United States from various cities in Brazil to study English. A couple of months later in August 2013, I had the opportunity to attend a five-day International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) in Boulder, Colorado. Given that this was a conference that the director of the school had helped plan and host in 2007, this helped me understand the democratic education movement and the school philosophy more deeply. While these two experiences are not included in the data set and occurred after the data collection period, they are worth mentioning since they served to broaden and deepen my understanding.

Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed in Portuguese and translated, or transcribed directly into English upon return to the United States. The printed interview transcripts were highlighted for relevant quotes. Then, I extracted the excerpts from the digital versions of the interviews, compiling them into one Word document. These quotes were sorted by theme and I wrote and presented a preliminary paper of the results in Fall 2012. Following this first stage analysis, I wrote 6-8 page summaries of each of the interviews¹⁸ and sorted these by theme. After taking a course with a section on language ideologies, I reread the language teacher interviews looking specifically for language ideologies and added relevant research to the literature review. Since language teaching is the focus of this investigation, I kept the narratives of the language teachers roughly intact. These are included in chapters 5 and 6 with the pieces that related to other themes extracted. Headings in each chapter reflect both the themes of the interview questions and emergent themes (unplanned themes that emerged from the data).

All participant names and school names (Raízes and another school that was mentioned several times that I call Descoberta) are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants, although they did not request anonymity. I chose to use the terms *teacher* and *participant* to reflect the teachers' status as equals.

¹⁸ The interview with the music teacher was the exception to this process. I kept the interview in Portuguese and translated selected segments.

CHAPTER 4

THE SCHOOL

After a brief description of the school, this section provides the participants' perspectives on their lives before they arrived at Raízes, the school philosophy and general organization, national policies relevant to the school, inspirational thinkers, teaching philosophies, and the connections between democratic education and Freire. The chapter closes by discussing participants' familiarity with the term *critical pedagogy*. Language-related commentary from the interviews will not appear in this chapter, but be set aside until chapter 5 and 6. In each section, the individuals' answers will be in the same order for ease of navigation. Sophia and Samuel, the director and humanities teacher respectively, talked more about the school's perspective than their personal perspective; thus they will be first, followed by the music teacher Joaquim and the science teacher Antonio, and ending with the language teachers Juliana and Miguel. When a teacher's comments are omitted, it indicates that they did not comment substantially on that topic.

Raízes is a small private school in São Paulo with connections to the democratic education movement as described in chapter 2. At the time of my visit, there were between fifteen and twenty students. In Brazil, students begin to study a foreign language in their fifth year of school. Founded in late 2008, Raízes opened its doors to middle school-aged students (called *Fundamental 2* in Brazil) in 2009. In 2012, they extended their programming to include elementary school-aged students (*Fundamental 1*). Thus when I arrived, they had been working with the older middle school-aged students for about three years and were ending their first term with the younger students. In Brazil, there are two semesters from January to June and from August to December, separated by a break in the month of July. My June visit was thus during the final month of the first semester. The school day began at 11AM and ended at 6 or 6:10PM. The foreign language class was only provided for the older *Fundamental 2* students, which took place on Mondays after snack time for 50 minutes either before or after art class depending on the rotation. Foreign language and art were allocated less time in the schedule than the other subjects, including Portuguese, science, math, the humanities, theater, physical education (P.E.),

music, video game programming, and the other activities. See Appendix B for the complete *Fundamental 2* schedule.

Raízes is governed by the four principles of *democracy, diversity, liberty with responsibility, and sustainability*. The school provides space for students to be actively involved in school-wide curricular decisions and conflict resolution through weekly meetings called *Planejamento Coletivo (Collective Planning)* and *Assembleia (Assembly)*, as well as the opportunity to engage in their own research project each semester. *Fundamental 2* students decide their individual research topic at the beginning of the semester, work on it consistently each week, and present it in an event at the end of the semester. In addition, these individual topics are used to develop a semester-long theme to guide the *Fundamental 2* group's study across each subject-area. Students were permitted to choose not to attend a class if they worked on something else. If a student missed too many classes, as was the case when I visited, students and teachers would settle the matter in the *Assembleia (Assembly)*.

The Participants

The story of the school begins with the story of **the director, Sophia** who was 28 at the time of the interviews. She had originally discovered democratic education in a course on democratic education. This course was originally offered as part of the training for future teachers of the first democratic school in the city: Descoberta.¹⁹ She worked as a teacher at Descoberta for three years, becoming familiar with the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) and its network. She and a group of teachers from the school split off, founded the Raízes Institute, and hosted the IDEC conference in 2007. After working at a local alternative elementary school for one year, the teachers started developing plans for a middle school, which would partner with that elementary school so that they could offer education for the higher grades. Raízes opened to students in 2009. When the partnership with the elementary school came to an end in 2011, Raízes added the lower grades.

At the time of the interview, **Samuel, the humanities teacher**, was 28. He had a master's degree in teacher training and his wife also worked at the school.

¹⁹ This course was still being held while I was there, but had become associated with Raízes and was held on the Raízes school grounds.

Joaquim, the music teacher who also taught humanities, had a degree in social sciences from a prestigious local university but his involvement with music began when he was very young. He grew up in a poorer area of São Paulo and sang in a hip-hop group that traveled a lot. He said that many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were very interested in teaching hip-hop and they needed someone to teach. His connection to both the university and the hip-hop community made him a sought after speaker and teacher for presentations and workshops. When he graduated, he continued to teach music in informal settings and expanded his repertoire to include traditional Brazilian popular culture. He started teaching at Raízes in August 2011, his first permanent teaching job with a formal school.

At the time of the interview, **the science teacher Antonio** was 32 years old. He talked about his relatively late entry into university, working until he was 25 and then starting an undergraduate program in science, specifically physics, education. After he completed his bachelor's degree, he started a master's program, which he was enrolled in when I met him. His first encounter with democratic education was in 2007 when he taught astronomy at a local public school which incorporated elements of democratic education. During a trip to Portugal in 2009, he remembered that there was a democratic school nearby and sent an email asking if he could visit. He ended up visiting that school once a month for about three months and was currently working on a thesis that involved his observations there. After his extended exposure to democratic education in these two schools, he realized that there was an international network of democratic schools organized through the International Conference on Democratic Education (IDEC). While he was still in Portugal, he did an internet search and applied for teaching positions at the two democratic schools in São Paulo that were listed: Raízes and Descoberta. Raízes responded, asked him for an interview, and he was hired shortly after his return from Portugal. He brought up his own experience in the public school system as one characterized by a lack of participation and transience, changing schools ten times before graduating from high school; this type of school in which students had the right to participate truly resonated with him.

Juliana, the former English teacher, held the position of field trip coordinator and teacher. At the time of the interview, she was 34 years old, with a degree in Psychology, and 15 years of experience teaching English in both alternative and commercial private schools.

Miguel, the Portuguese and Spanish teacher, was 33 at the time of the interview. He had left his job in finance to pursue a degree in Portuguese, with which he could engage his

passion for history and teaching. He worked on the degree for four years from 2003-2007. His first teaching job was a volunteer position in 2002 as a computer teacher. He was a computer teacher at another larger NGO and then at another democratic school, Descoberta in São Paulo, where he stayed, working his way up the teacher hierarchy for four years. From 2010-11 he taught in the public school system, then he spent one year as a salesperson for educational books before returning to Descoberta and also joining the staff of Raízes. At the time of the interview, he was teaching Portuguese at both Descoberta and Raízes, Spanish at Raízes, and Spanish to various managers at a company in São Paulo.

The School Philosophy

Sophia summarized the school's teaching philosophy as holistic and humanist, based on the lineage of democratic pedagogy. Students develop autonomy as a result of playing a larger role in decisions about their own learning, and a sense of responsibility due to their participation in the decision-making of the school. Key to this philosophy is the premise that each child has a unique interest (many outside of the narrow realm of school subjects) that serves as their gateway to learning and personal growth. From the viewpoint of the school, students learn about the logic that society is structured in and develop into citizens who can fully own their acts and the consequences of those acts.

Samuel described the way the school worked in more detail. He talked about how the children were involved in processes of making rules and determining the curriculum: key features of democratic education. When I asked him how he defined democratic education, he answered by describing two principles of the school: *liberty with responsibility* and *diversity* (the other two that are listed on the school website are *democracy* and *sustainability*, as mentioned above). He focused his explanation on diversity, using the perspective of traditional schools as a foil:

So democratic education understands a person as – diverse, diversified and that a school can't standardize, which is what the traditional school does. That is one class for everyone, one test for everyone. Everyone of the same age. You have to learn the same thing... This is why we have a classroom with different ages, and we don't have one test, to prove their knowledge because we consider that everyone has their path, their time, their learning. This diversity should be respected.

Highlighting the easy access to information possible with the internet in recent years as one rationale, he described the research focus of the school:

It's the idea that the traditional school focuses on the professor as a transmitter of information and here we try to make the students protagonists just as much as the teachers in the building of new knowledge.

In this quote, reminiscent of Freire's critique of the traditional system, he described the school's role of helping students build knowledge rather than assimilate information, replacing the teacher with the student in the role of the protagonist. He explained that students work through research projects with the help of a teacher-advisor about something that they are genuinely interested in. The students' positive affective relationship to the topic, he argued, was key in their motivation to acquire research skills and a critical understanding. He explained that these individual research projects ideas are shared in a meeting with teachers and students, in which teachers identify common strands among student interests. The students and teachers establish a collective research project together, what they call an educational *trilha* (*trail*). Rather than focusing on differences in subject content, Samuel highlighted the differences in approaches to research that each teacher brings from their field. He highlighted the fact that teachers, as well as students, explore this *trilha* together, learning as they go. This, he explained, is an emergent curriculum, a democratic approach to curriculum: teachers and students are seen as equals in the collective research pursuit. Students work on their individual research project and on the collective research project in parallel.

Samuel described the process of deciding the *trilha* with the group for the current semester. He and a fellow teacher-tutor had students write their research interests on post-its and stuck them on the board. They collectively arrived at the recurring themes of technology and heroes. With these two themes, students formulated the *trilha* question "Who invents the heroes?"

Samuel talked about how the students think about what they might want to research over the break preceding the semester. By the end of the first month, the *trilha* has been decided. In the interim while the *trilha* is being decided, teachers bring a theme to the group that they think will be engaging for students. That semester teachers had brought up the United Nations Rio+20 conference and sustainability issues. Discussions about human rights and prisons around the

Rio+20 conference had transitioned smoothly to the technology theme, in that prisons were a form of social technology for control. In examining political prisoners, and those who had been mistreated by police, questions emerged related to the hero theme: are the prisoners or the police the heroes, and in what context?

Samuel also elaborated on the idea that a genuine interest in a subject is absolutely necessary for true learning. He described his own and his friends' experience of memorizing facts that they were not interested in for a test and passing, only to notice that as adults, they didn't remember any of those things. He asked why schools put such an emphasis on great quantities of facts, if adults would not want to or be able to remember everything that they had studied. At the school, he explained, they focus on what is significant to students so that they will really learn. On the way, they acquire research skills that will empower them to find any information they want throughout their lives.

I asked what materials the teachers used to teach. Samuel said that the school does not use textbooks. They work with texts, books, music, movies, internet resources and sometimes worksheets with questions or exercises created by the teachers. He elaborated on the importance of the projector, which was used to display texts, movies and images that could be analyzed and discussed as a group. One example he gave was the use of projected images of people around the world to discuss identity. Finally, he highlighted the importance of dialog:

So the class is – rather than being expository – the teachers put what they want to give to the students and it's dialoged, discussed, debated. This is the main way of the classes here. There's always a debate, a discussion.

Later in a discussion of high school curricula, Samuel mentioned that there was not as much flexibility with regards to content in high schools in Brazil because students had to prepare for the college entrance exam called the *vestibular*. In this explanation he launched a critique:

And the vestibular is how they select the students...Not by the knowledge - by the content. So whoever has more content is more prepared to enter college. It doesn't make much sense but...It's a way they have to cut – summarily, [laugh] ahead, the majority of the population.

Here, he points out possible limitations of the inquiry-based approach at Raízes: memorization of content is needed to pass the college entrance exam that is a reality in the lives of Brazilian students.

The music teacher Joaquim explained his working definition of democratic education as a sort of potent power sharing discovery process:

Yeah, but it's an experience that ... where the two sides are very important indeed ... with equal weight for the student and the teacher... [I'm] trying to understand the powers of these two spaces, these two cycles, the student and teacher, and how these powers can become learning ... It's how you share these powerful experiences that are at play. That to me is a discovery, so ... democratic education, for me it's still a discovery, it's nothing closed or completely formulated.

He described the project that he had been working on with the students in his music class at Raízes that year, which was a discovery process for him and the students. Since some of the students had physical limitations and difficulties reading and memorizing, Joaquim had developed a project that used the students' own sounds as the source of a new musical notation system. Each student created a symbol for a sound that they made themselves, which he helped them reduce into a smaller, simplified version to use on a musical staff. The students' projects were then presented at the final reception for parents.

Antonio talked about how the emergent curriculum at Raízes was more challenging for teachers than the traditional system in which the content is defined before classes start. He talked about how when he arrives at the school to start the new semester, he does not have any idea what he will be teaching, requiring more studying and relearning on his part:

It's much harder. Because we have to – because you can't be ready with everything. You can't get there with a bunch of stuff in your head and dump it out. You have to be studying all the time, relearning things.

His reference to dumping out the contents of one's head is a critique of the traditional banking system of education, as is Samuel's critique of the focus on content in the national 'vestibular' college entrance exam. Both highlight the aim of Raízes to do just the opposite: stimulate meaningful, contextualized, dialog-based learning.

Juliana did not define democratic education specifically. Miguel defined democratic education, as a teaching-learning practice that breaks with the traditional and seeks respect for the student. After reflecting a little bit more he said, "So I think that I define this, democratic education, as respect for the student, their time, their space, in search of an autonomous being, with the maximum possible autonomy."

National Requirements and Guidelines

Although the school is private, they are still required by the Brazilian legislature to offer core subjects including Portuguese, math, natural sciences, humanities (history and geography), art, physical education and a foreign language for the upper grades. The school also used the National Curricular Parameters, or *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (PCNs), in the curricula decision-making process of the school. These were briefly mentioned in chapter 2 in the context of Brazil and critical pedagogy. The purpose of this document, produced by the Ministry of Education and Sports, was to define goals in order to help students face the contemporary world as a participatory citizen: reflective, autonomous, and aware of their rights and duties (Secretaria de Educação Fundamental, 1997). According to this introduction, the PCNs are intended to serve as a reference for teachers, respecting their individual approaches to teaching and the cultural plurality in Brazil; they are meant to be open, flexible and capable of being adapted to regional needs and contexts (Secretaria de Educação Fundamental, 1997). The teachers generally had favorable opinions of the PCNs, viewing them as well-constructed, but difficult for teachers to use.

Samuel offered an explanation as to the role of the PCNs at Raízes. He said that they were optional, but teachers at the school used them at the beginning of the semester in drawing up documents to outline how work on the educational *trilha* (trail) theme would align with the PCNs. After the *trilha* is selected, teachers write up a document explaining how the abilities described in the PCNs could be developed through the *trilha* theme. He explained that the PCNs have ideas for possible contexts and skill targets. He gave the example of the use of *A Brave New World* in Miguel's Portuguese class that semester. Even though the book was not in the Brazilian literature canon, students could use it to work on the PCN ability of reading and interpreting texts.

Samuel characterized the PCNs as "advanced." He explained that they were based on the idea, the Freirian idea, that content matter should be customized to the local context. In Brazil, a country with linguistic, cultural and social diversity where teaching uniform content did not make sense, using textbooks produced in an urban context could only be problematically used in schools in the Amazonian countryside. The PCNs, he explained, having this idea in mind, give particular importance to skills in addition to content goals. Content, which can be customized to

fit regional differences, “is a way to work on an ability.” He gave an example from the humanities and history. If the PCN goal is to critically understand the process of the formation of the Brazilian identity, this might be explored in different ways in different regions. In São Paulo, students could study the industrialization of São Paulo, while in the Northeast, students might study the role of Luiz Gonzaga’s forró music in the lives of those living in the Northeastern countryside.

When I asked for Antonio’s opinion about the PCNs, he said that they were not bad - even good, but the problem was that almost no one used them. He felt that most teachers preferred the textbook because it was readymade with all of the necessary content, exercises and explanations. In contrast, the PCNs might describe a general target such as “investigation.” Teachers had to think more to use them. Teachers’ comments on the foreign language PCNs will be discussed separately in a later section.

Inspirational Thinkers

Sophia, the director, was the author of the school’s founding documents. When I asked her what thinkers she looked to for teaching, she talked about the ones that she referred to as she was constructing the proposal for the school, those who had founded schools themselves. These authors, she explained, are considered to be in the intellectual tradition of democratic education because they value student autonomy and call for a higher degree of student involvement through governing bodies called *assemblies*. She talked about Leo Tolstoy, A.S. Neill (of Summerhill), and Janusz Korczak, three thinkers who founded schools in Russia, England, and an orphanage in Poland respectively. She mentioned Ivan Illich, whose work is included in the democratic education course that the school hosted at that time. Chris Mercogliano, the founder of Albany Free School in New York, and Jose Pacheco, the founder of Escola da Ponte in Portugal were also important references. Incidentally, the school office had a copy of a book about Escola da Ponte written by a famous Brazilian author and scholar named Rubens Alves (incidentally, one of the founders of liberation theology) called *The School that I Always Dreamed of Without Imagining that it Could Exist (A Escola com que sempre sonhei sem imaginar que pudesse existir)*. Next, she mentioned Reggio Emilia, Fernando Hernandez, Philippe Perrenoud, and Lino de Macedo as authors that she referenced in respect to curricular organization. Constructionists

were also important: Piaget, Vygotsky, Wallon, and Emilia Ferreiro. Françoise Dolto was a scholar that she followed who wrote on how the affective relationship is key to the learning process. I asked her if she had learned of these authors in her university classes. She said that there were some professors who worked with constructionism but few if any that worked with democratic education, mentioning Elie Ghanem, Marcos Ferreira Santos and Lino de Macedo as scholars who talked about interesting related ideas. As she wrapped up her extensive list of scholarly references, she talked about the perspective of the school that pedagogical and administrative practices are closely linked, such that administrative practices must reinforce the pedagogical practices and vice versa.

When I asked Samuel, the humanities teacher, what educational thinkers were important to him or the school, he started by describing the lineage of democratic education that the school followed. He mentioned Leo Tolstoy first as an important precursor and then Janus Korczak, a doctor in Poland during World War II who founded an orphanage for Jewish children that was managed and governed by the children themselves. Then he brought up Yaacov Hecht, who founded many public democratic schools in Israel. He talked about the idea that Hecht emphasizes, that the type of knowledge that we learn in schools is just a small fraction of all of the types of and possibilities for all knowledge. Then he described the importance of A.S. Neill's Summerhill in helping Raízes determine the school rules and the daily practices of the school including *Assembleia*. Samuel liked the inclusive possibilities for these schools, which he saw as connecting with his Marxist beliefs, in that they moved beyond the capitalist framework and the class system.²⁰ After mentioning Paulo Freire as also compatible with socialist pedagogy, he brought up self-managed soviet schools that supported liberation and anarchy connected to unions,²¹ and finally, Francisco Ferrer and the Modern School²². While he did not have one author that he felt that he could cite extensively, he looked at all of these schools as an inspiration for using education as an instrument for transformation. He said that he did not believe that education or a good school could be transformative in and of itself per se, but rather that schools are influential in forming people and a society is composed of these people:

²⁰ This is interesting, since Summerhill and Marx are often considered ideologically incompatible.

²¹ Here he is likely referring to an anarcho-syndicalist perspective, but he does not give any more details.

²² Francisco Ferrer is credited by Crookes (2013) as popularizing what became known as the "Modern School" in the early 1900's: an anti-individualist, de-centralized, cooperative form of schooling for working people that emphasized coeducation, active learning, a scientific investigative approach, and the use of the physical environment as a learning context and source (p. 79).

So, I don't have one author that I can cite but it's all of this context of education like a tool, like an instrument of transformation – it's really interesting to me. I like this discussion. It's not education in itself. If people go to school, they are going to change the world, or if the school is good it will change the world. I don't believe in this. But, I believe that school forms people and people make the society. So, transforming the school, you can transform the way that people think. And then, they will question the society more and transform it into a society that is more human, more sensitive. This, I really believe. So I don't have an author, but they are really – it's more ideas than authors in this sense.

By transforming the school, people's ways of thinking could be transformed, leading people to question society and transform it into one that is more human. Here Samuel argued for the possibility that alternative schools like Raízes could transform society by helping students to think more critically.

Joaquim, the music teacher, said that he used Bourdieu most as a reference to reflect on education, as well as Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze. When he talked about the way he strived to relate the content of his music classes to his students' interests, he also mentioned Paulo Freire.

Antonio, the science teacher, identified Paulo Freire and Giroux as the thinkers he liked most in education, in addition to Gramsci, Mészáros, and Foucault. The conversation with Antonio was unique given that he was the only participant who was familiar with *critical pedagogy*, at least by that name. He believed in an emancipatory pedagogy that would empower students to understand the world as it really was and help to work towards a better one. In the context of democratic education, students' voice and participation within the school, empowered students to know how to participate in the larger society as citizens.

Juliana, the former English teacher, talked about being most influenced by the ideas of Freinet, Dewey²³ and constructionism. She also mentioned some Brazilian scholars in education who emphasized the importance of communication and contribution to the world:

It's these guys that work a lot with communication - producing something communicative for the world. Or, we are learning too to bring a little bit for the world. This relationship. This has a lot to do with teaching languages - it's for the other - not for me. I'm kind of against this idea of the academy inside four walls, and stuff like that.

²³ Both Freinet and Dewey are discussed by Crookes (2013) in respect to language teaching. Crookes writes that Freinet's system of student production of materials, control over their schedule, work in the community and communication across national borders was reintroduced by Cummins and Sayers to language teaching (pp. 79-80). Crookes (2013) credits Dewey's activities-based curriculum as the precursor for Task-Based Language Teaching, discussed in chapter 2.

With these comments she hinted at a commitment to social justice and alternative styles of teaching and learning.

When I asked Miguel, the Portuguese and Spanish teacher, about what thinkers served as his philosophical or teaching references, Miguel mentioned A. S. Neill and Tolstoy, who he described as radicals who wanted to more or less do away with the traditional school. He said that Paulo Freire was the thinker “who defended schools” that he liked most, more than others theorists like Piaget.

Individual Teaching Philosophies

Sophia, Samuel, and Joaquim did not describe an explicit teaching philosophy distinct from that of the school.

When I asked Antonio, the science teacher, about his teaching philosophy, he said that he did not have a well-formulated one, but he believed in giving students the liberty to decide if, when, how and what they want to learn. He believed in critical teaching that helped students to understand that everything was political in some sense, and helped them to perceive the system that they were living in and the forces that were acting upon them. Upon perceiving and understanding the system, students might then reach the critical point of understanding that the capitalist system did not work and might decide not to be a part of it, or to work towards another better model. Later in the interview, I asked him to clarify how teachers who wanted to be critical pedagogues could avoid accidentally using the banking method of depositing content into students’ heads, since the path to understanding might also involve some content knowledge. He said that the difference did not lie in the teachers’ intention to teach, but in the role of the student. He explained that in the traditional banking model, the student is a passive receptacle for decontextualized knowledge; in the critical pedagogy model, the teacher creates possibilities and makes space for the student to interact. At this point I explained my reason for asking: I felt that American teachers were often uncomfortable with the idea of bringing “politics” into the classroom and might see critical pedagogy as a violation in this respect. He said that if teachers’ intentions were to keep the dialog open, then this was not really a problem.

When I asked Juliana, the former English teacher, to describe her teaching philosophy, she talked about the principle of teaching-learning and the importance of having a purpose for

learning, saying that this could be achieved by starting with individual and group interests, especially through collaborative projects:

I think that teaching-learning is a thing... I think the philosophy in principle is this idea of “I learn to develop myself and develop the world in which I live.” People are in the world – a person, an animal, a building, it’s everything... So I think it’s a little bit of bringing this out... It’s not for nothing that we learn all these things... There’s a reason. You have to be clear to the learner too and... I think it starts quite a bit from the interests of the individual and group.

When I asked Juliana to elaborate on the teaching-learning principle, she talked about giving room for teachers to be imperfect and allowing them to reflect and learn from their mistakes. She also talked about it challenging the idea that the student is “a person without light” and explained that it is dialectic, cyclical approach. This last comment echoes the ideas of Freire, though she never specified the source.

Miguel, the Portuguese and Spanish teacher, made the analogy of a bridge. He talked about how his knowledge of any subject, especially Spanish, was limited when compared to the vastness of the totality of knowledge. Thus, he could not claim to “teach” so much as provide resources to spark students’ interests and provide a space for them to explore the topic:

I am only – I’m really just a bridge between one thing and another, but what I know is little all in all. For example... I’m not capable of teaching a foreign language because it’s not my language. What I know about this language, in the case of Spanish, is really very little. It’s not much; for example, think of Spanish in 20 countries that have it as a native language. What I know about it is really very little. So I don’t have this pretense of being a Spanish teacher. I don’t teach Spanish to anyone. I teach some things that I know about the Spanish language.

Miguel uses the example of Spanish to illustrate his point that he cannot possibly impart such a vast quantity of content to his students even if he wants to. Instead, he tries to spark their interest and encourage their pursuit of the topics themselves.

Connections between Freire and Democratic Education

After Sophia had brought up Paulo Freire in the context of constructionism, I asked if Freire and his work were connected to the democratic education movement. She answered that he was a reference, especially for education as a transformative practice, but that there was no

direct connection. At this point, she mentioned a text, which is discussed in chapter 2, called *From a Pedagogy of Liberation, to a Liberation from Pedagogy*, a piece invoking Ivan Illich's later work in a critique of Freirian liberation pedagogy. She talked about the centrality of the idea in Illich, who is considered to be a thinker relevant to democratic education, that education traps us in a market relationship when it is transformed from a good into a commodity. This causes students to lose their autonomy to think about their own education and their own paths. This argument against top-down uniform education, she argues, is compatible with Freire's ideas about starting from students' realities, interests, and contexts.

After Samuel had mentioned Freire in his list of thinkers in education, I asked for clarification as to the connection between Freire and democratic education, if there was one. He called them sister ideas because each philosophy, while distinct, raised similar questions. He told me that in the course on democratic education that the school offered, one class was about Freire because his theory and practice is considered important. He talked about Freire's critique of banking education, questioning the idea that teachers might be able to deposit knowledge into the heads of students.

I asked Samuel for clarification about the methodology in democratic education. Did they use any aspect of Freirian methodology alongside their democratic education model? His subsequent clarification that he did not study literacy education shed light on the fact that he saw Freirian methodology as applying only to the native language literacy context. He explained that it is not a phonics method of reading, memorizing sounds with letters, but a method that takes into account the social context, starting with what is directly related to students' lives. This was what they also did at Raíces, he pointed out, though they did not call it the Freirian method. He came back to the notion of sister ideas, ideas which both questioned the logic of a teacher as a bestower of knowledge:

If it doesn't make sense to them, they won't remember it afterwards...the teacher will say "He got a 10" – got an A – [on the] concept, grade. And [they] make them learn it. The next year, they've already forgotten it. Or when [the student] goes to college, he doesn't know it anymore. So you need to have a relationship with learning. Affective, significant...there has to be meaning to why you are learning. That's one of the things that Paulo Freire said. And we here also do this. They are sister ideas.

In other words, Samuel said that students may succeed in memorizing content for a short time in order to get a good grade in a course, but the decontextualized knowledge is sure to be forgotten.

In order to prevent this from happening, students need an affective, significant, meaningful relationship to learning: an idea that democratic education and Freire share.

Antonio, the science teacher, referenced Freire when he was explaining the fact that the classes at Raízes were not held in a traditional format:

Here, for example, at Raízes, we have classes, but almost never a traditional class. A traditional class would be that expository class. When the teacher goes to the front and he talks and everyone there just stays listening. That would be, according to Paulo Freire, banking education. Are you familiar with that?

Later, when I asked Antonio to elaborate on the connection between democratic education and Freire, he talked about voice and participation in decision-making inside the school as preparing students to actively participate in politics outside the school:

[In Brazil] you have to vote at 17 or 18. So [the student]'s never decided anything in his own life, but he gets out of school and he's required to decide. I think he doesn't know how to decide. He doesn't know how to choose a governor. He doesn't know how to choose a city council member. He doesn't know because he's never chosen anything. And in this model of education in which you have participation all the time, you start to know already how to better choose things. I imagine that this would be true.

When students realize that they have a voice inside the school, he argued, they come to realize that they have a voice outside of the school as well. This is in stark contrast, he explained, to the traditional school system in which students do not get any training in participating in a democracy, but are then expected to be informed voters.

Overreliance on Terminology?: The Case of *Critical Pedagogy*

In chapter 2, I discussed an article by Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) which found that Brazilian teachers of English were generally unaware of *critical pedagogy*. The interview instrument in that study used teachers' familiarity with the term *critical pedagogy* and their comments on two passages, including one representing critical pedagogy²⁴, to reach their

²⁴ The following is a direct quote from *Passage 2* in the Appendix of Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999, p. 452): "In broad terms, then, one might say that a critical pedagogy of English in the world is an attempt to enable students to write (speak, read, listen) back. The notion of voice, therefore, is not one that implies any language use, the empty babble of communicative language class, but rather must be tied to a vision of the creation and transformation of possibilities (cf. Simon, 1987). The voices that we

conclusion. Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) argued that because English teachers were not familiar with the term *critical pedagogy* or the work of Pennycook, they subscribed to dominant neoliberal ideologies of English as a natural, neutral and beneficial language (p. 447). While their evidence confirms that the teachers they interviewed had a lack of familiarity with the specific body of literature called critical language pedagogy, this lack of familiarity cannot be seen to point towards a particular political orientation or a lack of criticality.

When I asked Sophia, the director, to define *critical pedagogy*, she confessed that she did not know what it was and had not encountered it on her path to founding the school. She hypothesized that it was connected to Paulo Freire and opposed the banking model of education:

I'll be perfectly honest: I don't know! On the path that we've taken here... we didn't get to study [critical pedagogy] as a movement ... but what jumps out to me, thinking now, [is that] it must be a movement of studying education in a transformational way, a bit of the perspective of Paulo Freire, of not being a banking education – that's the term that he uses for an education that forms a conscious citizen. Critical in this sense. But I'm not going to risk theorizing about it because honestly, I haven't had the chance to read an article [that uses this term]. I don't know.

While she said that she did not know, her guess was impressively accurate. As is evident from various sections in her interview, she was familiar with Freire. For example, she talked about how Freire helped disseminate constructionist ideas, especially those of Emilia Ferreiro, during his office as Secretary of Education of São Paulo (1989-1992). Thus, her knowledge of the term was unrelated to her knowledge of or opinion on Freire.

It was a similar case with Samuel, the humanities teacher, who said that *critical pedagogy* probably referred to those who critique traditional schools. He mentioned that he knew of the field of critical sociology, but not critical pedagogy, and said that he did not associate the term with any particular thinker or thinkers. Despite this lack of familiarity, he discussed Freire at length at several points during the interview. Miguel and Joaquim also mentioned Freire during the course of the interview and, like Samuel, said that they were not familiar with the term.

Antonio, the science teacher, was the only one of the teachers that was familiar with the term, and he was very familiar. His response was definitive: "Critical pedagogy? Um, it appears

are seeking to help students to find and to create are insurgent voices, that speak in opposition to the local and global discourses that limit and produce the possibilities that frame our students' lives" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 311).

as much in Paulo Freire as in Giroux...yeah.” He had just told me that the thinkers he liked most in education were Freire and Giroux, so in that sense, he felt that it was a given.

When I asked Juliana, the former English teacher, if she had heard of critical pedagogy, her answer was simply, “No, maybe I know it by another name.” Juliana did not mention Freire in the interview.

This section problematizes the use of the term *critical pedagogy* in research in Brazil that might be trying to link participants’ knowledge of critical pedagogy and their political orientations. This small study shows how teachers might refer to Freire (in fact, the school website includes a prominent quote from Freire on the homepage²⁵) and/or have progressive beliefs about education and yet still not be familiar with the term. Clearly, since this study only includes one English teacher, it offers no generalizable evidence, but it certainly suggests that congruent concepts might go by other names in Brazil. In the next section, I will examine excerpts from participants’ interviews specifically related to English and English teaching to explore whether the critical orientation of the school extended to the domain of English.

²⁵ The quote is “Respect for the autonomy and the dignity of every person is an ethical imperative and not a favor that we may or may not grant to one another” (“O respeito à autonomia e à dignidade de cada um é um imperativo ético e não um favor que podemos ou não conceder uns aos outros”).

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING ENGLISH

This chapter starts with a discussion of the context of English education at Raízes, discussing how they made decisions about which language to offer and how the commercial language schools exacerbated the varied English proficiencies of the students. Following are comments from the director about her experiences with English classes at the various schools where she had worked, and from Samuel about the English classes he had observed at Raízes. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the interview with Juliana, the former English teacher. After a synopsis of Juliana's teaching experience, I discuss her views on the foreign language PCNs, American cultural hegemony, Spanish language policy, and language ideologies. The terms *hegemony* and *ideologies* are ones that she did not use, but I use them in the analysis to connect her comments to the larger discussion outlined in the literature review.

Deciding what Language to Offer

The decisions to offer English and then Spanish at Raízes were primarily logistical ones. Below are summaries of the narratives that the teachers Sophia, Samuel and Juliana shared about the decision of which language to offer.

When I asked Sophia, the director, how the school made the decisions about which language to offer, she explained that in Brazil, all schools must offer a foreign language starting from the fifth grade. They chose to offer English simply because it was the most common language to offer. She also mentioned later that the government has placed more emphasis on the importance of learning Spanish in recent years.

Samuel also described the policy that schools were required to offer a foreign language for middle school aged-students. He explained that the language that was considered the most important in Brazil was English, so the majority of schools choose to offer it, as they had. However, parents who had the means were sending their kids to private language schools outside of regular school hours because English was considered to be so important to their children's futures. Since some of the students at Raízes were attending these private classes and some had

never studied English outside the school, the levels of the students were drastically different. The difference in proficiencies had led to a quandary in which the class was always too easy for some and too difficult for others, and the students ended up not enjoying it. Since offering English was not mandatory, they had opted to try teaching Spanish, since “it’s also a very important language of neighboring countries and a language spoken a lot throughout the world too.” The new Portuguese teacher had also studied Spanish, so it was easy to change without major restructuring. Furthermore, since none of the students had studied Spanish before, all were at the same ability level.

When I asked Juliana about how they had originally decided to offer English at the school, she said that it was because English was “the most important language in the world,” but clarified that she was “for” both languages. The decision to change to Spanish was not political, but pragmatic because the new Portuguese teacher also taught Spanish:

[The] Spanish [teacher] was a teacher who came on board this year, so we said okay “let’s have Spanish.” It wasn’t thought out politically like that...but it’s an option within the Parameters [PCNs]. We could decide.

She identified a challenge that she had faced while teaching English; student attitudes towards learning English at Raízes were drastically different. While roughly half of the students were very averse to learning English (“half of them are like ‘whoh, no English for the love of God, no English!’”), many others liked studying English.

In their comments, the teachers described English as the default choice for a mandatory foreign language offering. Samuel argued that the parents’ belief in the importance of English to their children’s futures was the reason some of the students were taking private English classes at commercial language schools and the cause of their proficiency differences. Juliana highlighted some students’ strong negative emotions towards learning English without hypothesizing as to why. The change from English to Spanish was also described as a pragmatic one: Spanish was an option, the new Portuguese teacher taught Spanish, none of the students had studied Spanish and were thus at the same level, and the students’ varying English proficiencies had made the English class more difficult to teach.

The Powerful Influence of Commercial Language Schools

One aspect that I found particularly interesting and surprising was how many times commercial language schools came up in the interviews. The fact that many students were studying English afterschool had made English language class planning more challenging. The former English teacher had also been informally trained through her experiences teaching in commercial language schools, though her experience included teaching English at private bilingual and constructionist schools as well. Following are summaries of the director, humanities and former English teachers' comments on the influence of commercial language schools.

Sophia explained that in Brazil, everyone is used to taking private English classes. This in fact was exactly what had caused the school to decide not to offer English: students at the school had very different levels of proficiency, given their varying enrollment in private English courses outside of school.

When I asked Samuel where the students studied outside the school, he said that two of the students studied at the commercial language school directly next door. He saw the poor English instruction in public schools coupled with the high demand for English language skills on the job market as key factors in the booming industry for commercial language school chains. He argued that parents who could afford it, including his own, invested in private English classes for their children offered by commercial language school chains. He talked about the traditional method that was used in these schools: a textbook, a "little tape," model conversations, rules and exercises. In fact, he supposed that all of the teachers at their school had taken and might even be continuing to take these classes because it was something "fundamental for professional life."

Juliana also talked about how students' families considered private English classes critical to their child's education, prioritizing it even over sports. She shared her opinion that Brazilian students should be able to learn English without having to go to these commercial franchise schools because they have 15 years of formal public schooling; but, the public schools are less than optimal.

These comments suggest that commercial language schools have a major role in shaping discourse about language education and affecting logistical class operations, even within

progressive schools. Samuel and Juliana identified the poor quality of English instruction in the public schools as partially to blame for the popularity of commercial language schools.

The Struggle to Integrate English: A Perspective from Sophia

In this section, the experiences of the director Sophia with English language instruction at the various progressive schools where she had taught previously are paraphrased in roughly the same order as she originally shared them. She described the difficulty they had had at Raízes in integrating the English class into the *trilha* (group research question). In her work with children, she felt that language teaching was most effective when it served an immediate function for the students.

Sophia talked about the collective frustration of the teachers at Raízes that had caused them to question the compatibility of English language classes and the project-based structure of the school. While the other subjects could be easily integrated into the common research question the school used to organize their work across disciplines, she had started to feel that it might possibly be easier to handle language separately through the study of the culture of the countries of the speakers, or some other way. To arrive at this conclusion, she had drawn on her knowledge of the foreign language PCNs and their emphasis on the importance of acquiring a familiarity with the culture more than the ability to speak, an ability to relate or have a relationship with the language. She talked about how the teachers at Raízes tried to think in terms of what function the foreign language had, a perspective that she argued tied in with the children's perspectives. In her experience at Descoberta, there was a practice of having one foreigner live at the school who was consulting or observing. In that context, learning English had a function for the students: to communicate with the English-speaking foreigner. She described this situation as one that made language learning dynamic and natural, with the clear and immediate goal of communicating. Since there was no resident foreigner at Raízes, they were still working on how best to operationalize this functional approach. She talked about how they had just acquired some board games in English and that maybe this could serve as motivation for the students to learn English.

I asked Sophia how they had taught English at Descoberta, the school where they had had a foreigner in residency. She said that the school had had a partnership with an outside English

language school that had “a whole method of language acquisition” and came regularly to give classes with a variety of books and readings.

When I commented that it was interesting that the school would choose to hire outside English teachers, she talked about the possible importance of dividing students into levels to teach language. She talked about how commercial language schools divided students into proficiency levels, while at their small school, all students were in one class together. The challenges that they had had in teaching a mixed-level group led them to believe that maybe separation by level was more appropriate for language-learning and that language classes might not fit in as well with the perspective of working on a cross-disciplinary project. She talked about the possibility that language learning and math were similar in that they could be too disconnected from the multi-disciplinary research questions that the school had pursued like “Who invents heroes?” or “What drove the man of the twentieth century?”

At this point, I brought up Illich’s categorization of language learning as a skill. Sophia explained his notion that language learning is the acquisition of a skill, something less reflexive and less often discussed and debated than other subjects. From this perspective, she explained, the skill of reading is a prerequisite for deeper reflections. I mentioned that Freire taught native language literacy and she explained that Freire and Ferreiro’s approach to literacy differed from that of Illich. Ferreiro critiqued the notion of reading as decoding and argued for a critical relationship with the language, a relationship involving thinking about the language, relating with the language, and critique. However, she went on, language has important functions in everyday life that depended on this decoding, like reading or making shopping lists. Here Sophia grappled with the unresolved tensions between two perspectives: that language is simply a skill and that literacy is not simply a matter of decoding, but involves a critical relationship with the language.

Sophia’s commentary shows how the material realities of schools might shape perspectives on language teaching. The presence of a native English speaker who does not speak Portuguese at Descoberta, the acquisition of English board games at Raízes, students’ attendance at commercial language schools, and the system of bringing in an outside language teacher at Descoberta all factored into her reflections on how best to organize language education at Raízes. Her final comments about Illich, Freire and Ferreiro demonstrate her careful reflection and knowledge of critical approaches to literacy. Her comment including the phrase “a whole

method of language acquisition” and her hunch that language teaching might not fit well into the integrated emergent curricula echo the former English teacher Juliana’s comments later in this chapter that “in this system, you need a methodology.”

English Instruction at Raíces: Thoughts from Samuel

This section contains descriptions and thoughts from Samuel of an English class and a student’s independent project on rock music that included English. Both the class and the independent study took place at Raíces.

When I asked Samuel how English and/or Spanish worked in the context of *trilhas* at Raíces, he described how the *trilha* from the previous semester developed around war, and how English fit into that:

This semester we didn’t have English, but last semester we had it. And the *trilha* – the theme that was there the most was war. They wanted to study war, and looking at all the individual research projects, we saw that the majority of them happened in the 20th century or were a direct result of the 20th century. And since the main theme was war, we thought together with them of a *trilha* that we called “What moved the human being of the 20th century?” So we studied wars a lot. And in English for example, the teacher brought the Bob Marley song “War.” And starting from that we discussed, in English, the same theme that we were studying in the other classes. But she brought a song, and then the students reflected on the music, had a conversation in English about this, and after they did worksheets with exercises. They tried to reflect about this. I don’t know if this is a good example. It’s an example with English, specifically.

In this passage, Samuel, talked about how they were able to use the collective research project theme relating to war in an English class, in which they engaged in the same style of critical discussion that they used in the other classes, but in English.

The lyrics of the Bob Marley song “War,” released in 1976, are about war, racism, oppression and human rights. It is also notable that this song uses a variety of English that is non-standard with the phrase “me say war” instead of “I say war” repeating throughout the song. These are observations that Samuel did not mention.

After Samuel had talked about the PCNs and the importance of learning the culture and “the whys” of a language, rather than just the structure of the language, I asked how the students would proceed to learn the structural elements if they so desired. He clarified that he was not a

language teacher so he was not really sure, but suggested that the more general process of investigation that students can follow when they are interested in something could apply to language too. Giving the example of a song, he talked about encouraging students to look up “the who, what, where, and when,” as well as the cultural context that may have influenced the song’s creation. In this case, English language study was secondary to the students’ interest. He gave the specific example of a student who had studied English and American history because of his interest in American rock music:

So there was a student last semester whose research project was on rock and roll. He wanted to know the history of rock. And indirectly, he had to study the context of the United States in the 20th century a little bit. So he wasn’t studying the language, but since he really liked rock and American and British bands, he was in direct contact with the language. Even though he might not have understood the translation of the music, he ended up researching the context the music was created in...How did rock and roll start? There was a social context that produced it and he ended up – more than just understanding what the songs meant – [researching] why the music was created in that place, who the actors were, who the people involved were, the political context and stuff... Maybe that’s a good example. It’s not directly connected to the language but the goal of his research [involved] English. Even though he didn’t do research on English per se, the bands that he chose to study were American.

The student’s investigation into the history of rock and roll led him to come into contact with English and American cultural history.

In this section, Samuel shared two examples of English language study at Raíces, including the discussion of an English song about social justice and an independent student research project on American rock music, which involved critical themes and autonomy respectively.

Juliana: English Teaching History

When I asked Juliana to give me some background information about herself and her teaching experience, she started the interview by telling me that her reason for entry into English teaching was pragmatic – not passionate. She joked that she started teaching English as a last resort, and it continued to be one, but that ironically it was what she had the most experience doing. She had always worked at private schools (either alternative schools or language school

franchises) because, as she explained, one must have a degree in language and an English teaching certification to teach in the public schools.

When she first started teaching English, she was starting a bachelor's degree in psychology and needed a job to pay for college. Her school schedule had only left small blocks of time to work, so she needed something that would be flexible. Since she had been an exchange student her senior year in high school in an English-speaking country, she had applied to a couple of English teaching jobs in the classified ads of the newspaper. One company hired her right away and she began teaching English part-time. When she began, she was really surprised at how easy the book made it to teach. The textbook had the warm-up, the tapes, all the materials, the answers, and the method. This experience led to her tutoring students privately and then, in her second year in college, to a job at a progressive private school as a preschool English teacher.

In this position, she planned classes with another teacher (but taught separately) and integrated the English curriculum with units in other classes at the school. She said that the method the school used was constructionist, which she explained briefly as entailing working through projects, limiting the number of corrections, and avoiding lecturing and rote exercises.

She described this job with far greater enthusiasm than she had had when she described other teaching experiences, which led me to believe that it was really the highlight of her English teaching experience:

It was really great – building various projects. It was with a lot of passion - me and the other person too. I taught the morning classes and the other teacher gave the afternoon class. We planned together but taught separately. It was really great.

When I asked for an example of a project, she talked about the way the classes had been conducted in Portuguese while playing in English, with the goal of giving the students a positive first experience with the language. She gave the examples of one unit in which students made illustrated rhyme books and another unit on Greek gods in which the 5-6 year-olds researched the gods and played games like memory, matching the names of the gods with key words like *trident*.

She mentioned a particular policy that they had used with the students: once the class had learned a vocabulary word in English, they always had to use the English word, even though the

rest of the sentence was in Portuguese. Laughing as she described “what would look like chaos from the outside,” she gave two sentences as an example:

Meu **name** é Juliana. (*My name is Juliana.*)
Me passa o lapis **blue**. (*Give me the blue pen.*)

In the examples above, *name* and *blue* appear in the sentences in English instead of their Portuguese counterparts *nome* and *azul*. The adjective *blue* comes after the noun in the second sentence, following Portuguese word order instead of English word order, in which the adjective would be placed before the noun. In the above cases, the students would have learned the English words *name* and *blue*, and were allowed—even mandated—to use them even although they had not learned how to construct the complete English sentences. This is an example of *code-switching*, using Gumperz’s definition as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems” (as cited in Zentella, 2005).

Juliana’s description of the English classes in the public schools and commercial language schools was much less animated. She explained that students use a textbook that has a character who appears throughout, with simple dialogs and phrases. Students start with the present simple verb tense, and teachers teach grammar explicitly with metalinguistic terms like *subject* and *verb*.

When I inquired about her general opinion about English teaching, she explained her frustration with the field, especially students’ lack of progress even after years of study. She contrasted the lack of progress at commercial language schools to the rapid language acquisition she had seen at bilingual schools and questioned the “logic of the blackboard.” She felt that as an educator, it was compromising her integrity and sense of self to keep working at language franchise chains that promised fast results:

I don’t believe in this method of teaching. I work in education and I can’t keep on lying to myself.

She had resolved to stop working for these types of schools, but at one point she began teaching at one again as a last resort. Her professional acquaintance with the director and an interest in democratic schools had led her to teach English again at Raízes despite her intention to leave the field: “I was talking about getting away from English teaching, but it’s following me.”

I probed further into why she disliked aspects of the field, asking if there were any bad experiences that she had had that had turned her away from teaching English. She talked about working in some “terrible” schools that made her question the idea of being able to teach English in a short amount of time. This made her critical of both the schools and herself. She questioned their methods *and* her abilities because she did not know immediately of a better way:

I ended up feeling a little bit incompetent. I was between thinking “oh I don’t believe in this method,” and at the same time, I think I also don’t know how to teach. I’m not current with the current methods of the classes so that I could be capable of teaching a child how to speak English.

When she said that she was not “current with the current methods,” she was referring to the fact that she had never studied language teaching formally, and thus felt under-qualified to teach English. She emphasized that she did not believe in the system that the language schools used but she also did not feel competent to teach because she supposed that there must be other better methodologies that would help the students learn more effectively which she did not know. This led her to the belief that “in this system, you need a methodology.” She joked that the universities must know a magic method that “makes people learn.”

Prior to explaining her struggles with teaching English she talked about how she liked teaching English more in a freer setting with the ability to use content that the students were interested in, as she had done when she taught private classes for graduate students.

I really like languages. I’m interested in cultures and different texts and... I like this. When I can give English classes in a freer setting, I enjoy myself more...using other materials. I like it more.

She added that she was familiar with dialects and cultures from three different areas of Brazil. Since she liked languages, people had always told her that English was vital for getting a job. She said that English *was* important for travel, but had not been necessary for the kind of work she did.

When I asked whether her students had ever questioned the relevance of studying English, she said that she did not have any specific examples. When she was teaching English at Raízes, she said that she always tried to start with talking about the relevance of the language:

I start an English class thinking about this a little bit. Looking at the map. Which are the countries that speak? Why is English important? ...trying to build together with them the importance.

At the end of the interview, she shared her own experience with English classes growing up. She said that she went to one of the bigger British language school franchises *Cultura Inglesa* (*English Culture*), which was jokingly referred to as *Tortura Inglesa* (*English Torture*). She and the other students had disliked memorizing the dialogs and being asked to repeat sounds like [v] over and over:

...it was always known as *Tortura Inglesa* (*English Torture*) [laugh]...I know dialogs that I remember even today...[laugh] Everyday we had to go around the circle and repeat “v, v, v, v, v” in a game. And everyone was feeling kind of ridiculous repeating “v, v” [laugh]

She commented that the methods of the schools were probably getting better, but she had not yet resolved the problem of the “basic-basic”. In other words, she had not found a way to teach beginning conversational English classes that felt rewarding for her so she had, at least temporarily, left the field.

Juliana: On the Foreign Language PCNs

As discussed in chapter 2, the foreign language PCNs for *Fundamental 2* are an official government document that offers suggestions to teachers on language teaching. Given that the bibliography of this document contains many thinkers in critical pedagogy and critical language pedagogy, it is especially interesting to know how the language teachers’ felt about them. Juliana originally brought up the PCNs on her own when I was talking about the connection between language and culture. She suggested that I look them up, highlighting the way in which they focused on culture over language acquisition:

But it’s interesting how they put it – it’s not that students should learn to speak English. It’s not... The main focus is cul- respecting diversity, recognizing that other cultures exist and respecting diversity. It’s much more cultural – the way that you look at others’ culture than really learning how to speak that language.

When I asked her what she thought about this she responded:

I don't know, I think it's interesting. I think there's no way to learn a language without learning about the culture. There's no way. It's the way that the people from the culture express themselves. But that's basically it.

Directly after this comment, she expressed her critique of an imbalanced focus on American culture at the bilingual school where she had worked, but stressed that it was both interesting and important to learn about other cultures. Later I brought up the cultural focus of the PCNs again, asking how teachers might reconcile a decreased focus on linguistic competency and an immersion approach. At this point, Juliana relates her positive feelings about the PCNs:

Yeah, I think that the PCNs don't obligate the school – the Brazilian PCNs are really open – I think they're beautiful, the PCNs. [laugh] When you read them, what you are going to teach, it's really open. It's not written there – “teach grammar.” But in the English ones - in truth it's not English - it's foreign language - they have a focus on learning about cultures...all...the importance of learning a foreign language—what is it? It's got a little bit of this idea of the world. “It's important to speak a foreign language...” ...to travel, to come into contact with other worlds, to read about other worlds...but they end up just staying in this realm of contact. They don't obligate the school to teach the students to really speak.

Here Juliana talked about the beauty of the PCNs, their emphasis on contact with other worlds and openness in allowing the school the flexibility to teach something other than grammar or conversational English. When I asked if and/or how she used them, she answered:

How do I use them? It's almost impossible not to teach a language without using them. [laugh] They are pretty basic. They're clear.

Juliana shared that the PCNs accurately highlighted the inseparability of language and culture. She also appreciated the flexibility that they gave teachers to go beyond traditional language teaching methods. Her last comment that it was difficult *not* to use them might indicate that she appreciates the PCNs for their flexibility and general goals but does not necessarily use them to structure specific lesson plans or ideas. Her comments in the next section elaborate on her critique of bilingual schools mentioned above and highlight the potential problem of excessive American cultural influence.

Juliana: American Cultural Hegemony

Juliana also talked about her prior experience as a teacher of young children, aged one to six, at a private bilingual school. One of the school's language policies had been that the teachers always had to speak English to the students unless it was a particularly serious issue, such as a discipline problem. She observed a dominating presence of American culture at this school, which she attributed to the huge variety of American teaching resources, mentioning flannel boards, books, and songs. The resources were "permeated" with American culture, which she said that she ended up having to teach as a result of the use of the resources. Some of the traditional American images she mentioned were of firemen, police officers and mailmen, as well as of yellow school buses, bears and teddy bears:

The United States has everything and a lot of everything. It's known. For us it's really striking. It's not that you guys have two brands of TVs - you have 20,000 brands of TVs... We don't have so many like this. We have everything, but it's not so much of everything. And you guys have a lot of resources. A lot of resources for teaching, education, pedagogy... It's impressive. There are those flannel boards, books, everything... it's really interesting... It's just that they come permeated with American culture... So you're not just teaching English but [you] end up teaching American culture. And I think - I don't know, the books always come with those traditional images of the fireman, police officer, the mailman, and we [Brazilians] don't teach this in preschool so much. [laughing] Or how about the school bus that's always yellow? So it comes really permeated... They have tons of songs in preschool. So, [those come] permeated with the culture. Or how about the culture of the bear? We don't have bears... [laughing] Even now, I don't understand Dr. Seuss. Why is Dr. Seuss so popular? He's really - it's so strange to me. I don't know why.

Later in the interview, she shared her feelings of unsettledness as a result of the dominance of American culture among the young children at the bilingual school:

It's that you end up staying in a culture really American and the kids are talking about princesses all the time and no one knows... There aren't princesses in Brazil - there never were any princesses... you talk about "our" popular culture but you end up talking about American popular culture. So my criticism is a little bit there.

In this passage, she questions the phenomenon of Brazilian children growing up talking about princesses and bears when these things were never a part of Brazilian culture. Later, she also mentioned the popularity of foreign English-speaking characters like Maisy (*Ninóca*) and Spot.

Through these comments, she critiques uncritical acculturation to hegemonic American culture and distinguishes it from learning about other cultures on a more limited scope according to the foreign language PCNs:

It's important to encounter the culture of another country to improve one's language. But my critique was just that the bilingual schools end up staying, tending towards just one side – more towards English. Since the kids already have Portuguese in their lives, the bilingual schools end up just teaching English. The culture keeps popping up.

These concerns about American culture speak to the work of Galtung cited in Phillipson (1992): the function of plentiful material resources in perpetuating and justifying cultural hegemony. In the literature review, it was discussed that English hegemonic discourse uses intrinsic, extrinsic and functional arguments referring respectively to what English *is*, *has*, and *does* to justify its position in the world (Galtung as cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 273). In this section, Juliana talked primarily about what English *has* – the extrinsic argument which is used to legitimate or spread hegemonic discourse, according to Galtung and Phillipson. What is interesting is that Juliana used this extrinsic argument to both justify and critique the dominance of American culture at the bilingual school. On the one hand, she said that using American teaching materials was a natural choice because American companies have an extensive selection. On the other hand, she challenged the idea that the use of these materials was neutral and critiqued the infiltration of culture that comes with their use. In *English Next* (2006), Graddol predicts that learners of English around the world will be increasingly younger and that the demand for locally relevant textbooks will be higher, but he does not address the use of other material resources and their potential influence on culture. This could be an interesting avenue for future study.

Juliana: On Spanish Language Policy

Juliana also showed her awareness of the role of politics in language policy when she discussed the Spanish foreign language option in Brazilian schools. When she was in school, English was the only foreign language option, but now, she said, due to the union with Latin America²⁶, Spanish had become a second option for students. Later in the interview she

²⁶ Here, she is very likely referring to the *Mercosur* economic and political alliance founded by Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay in March 1991 (BBC News, 2012).

mentioned this point again in the context of explaining how language learning was associated with the ability to establish relationships with a certain people or culture. She spoke about how Brazil's current policy was "let's be united with the rest of Latin America" because Brazilians knew a great deal about Europe and the U.S. but almost nothing about their fellow Latin American countries:

Brazil's policy of recognizing Latin America, of...saying "let's sustain ourselves here because the Northern Hemisphere dominates here so "we should try to sustain ourselves here," "let's grow together". So we have this policy and as a result, Spanish is an option for the mandatory language.

In the last section, we saw how Juliana was aware of the hegemonic American cultural presence in the schools. In this section, she shows her understanding that foreign language offerings in the schools are connected to political alliances and government policies. Her critical stance in these areas complicates the black and white picture that Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) paint of English teachers' lack of knowledge of critical pedagogy being equated with apoliticality and a lack of criticality.

Juliana: Hegemonic Language Ideologies?

As discussed in previous sections, Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) investigated English teachers' language ideologies, coming to the conclusion that the majority of English teachers they interviewed in Brazil subscribed to the dominant language ideology of English as a natural, neutral and beneficial language that enables one to gain access to global relationships, employment and information (which they term an *Integrative Discourse*). They argue that those who speak through the hegemonic ideology "shield themselves behind the putative neutrality of English as the planetary language" (p. 446) suggesting that those English teachers who do not incorporate discussions of language and power into their teaching practices are hiding from the truth and their duties. They see these teachers' subscription to hegemonic ideologies as possibly tied to these teachers' wider political beliefs, as their quote about "stooges of U.S. imperialism" in the literature review implies.

Just as the majority of the Raízes teachers' unfamiliarity with the term *critical pedagogy* complicated Cox and De Assis-Peterson's (1999) interpretations of teachers' supposed political

beliefs, Raízes teachers' comments complicated Cox and De Assis-Peterson's (1999) interpretations of teachers' language ideologies.

Since Juliana's background was in psychology, she likely had not studied language ideologies formally and never used the word *ideology* in the interview. Several comments from Juliana suggested that she subscribed, at least partially, to a hegemonic view of English as defined by Cox and De Assis-Peterson's (1999). She talked about the importance of English, without deconstructing the power relationships behind its importance:

I start an English class thinking about this a little bit. Looking at the map: "Which are the countries that speak?" "Why is English important?"...trying to build together with them the importance. I think this is something that no one denies. The importance.

Oh I think it's more because...it's the most important language in the world...but I think also – the same way that I am for English, I am for Spanish.

In these quotes, she talked about the importance of English to international communication and highlighted the dominance of English, though she added that Spanish was also an important language²⁷.

However, in the quote below, she complicated this same belief that English was important. While still not attributing the dominance of English to U.S. policies or power, she suggested that English was not as important as many believed it to be:

And people always said to me "ah because English is going to be important – you're going to use it, you're going to use it" And it's logical – I did use it tons - English in my life. But it wasn't to work. "No English is mandatory to work – if you don't speak you won't be able to get a job." It wasn't like this. It wasn't ever like this.

Here, she challenges the "common sense" language ideology that English is necessary for professional success in Brazil.

While it was not discussed at length in this paper, it is worthwhile to mention that all of the anecdotes that Juliana shared about teaching English, except the brief mention of tutoring university students, were of communicative language teaching (classes in which English is spoken and studied in a context of learning to communicate orally with others in that language). Her orientation to teaching English communicatively could possibly be based on a language teaching ideology that English should be taught communicatively. This is briefly discussed by

²⁷ Graddol (2006) documents the increasing economic importance of Spanish in Latin American and the United States.

Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) in chapter 2, who describe English teachers in Brazil as being influenced by the historically Anglo-dominated field of applied linguistics and its emphasis on communicative language teaching.

At this point we can ask, do these comments mean that Juliana had hegemonic ideologies about English? Did Juliana see English as a natural, neutral and beneficial language which enabled access to global relationships, employment and information? She did not have the vocabulary of language ideology or critical language pedagogy, but her critiques of the dominance of American culture via English language learning materials in bilingual schools and inaccurate common sense knowledge about the necessity of English in professional life were critiques of language ideologies. She said that English was an important international language, but is this subscription to a language ideology? Was her practice of focusing on teaching spoken English rather than written English evidence of an examined or unexamined language teaching ideology? The short interview with Juliana cannot answer these questions conclusively; however, I felt that Juliana demonstrated a sophisticated understanding that was indeed critical of many of the hegemonic effects of English.

Juliana: The Monoglot Language Ideology and Code-Switching

In the previous section, I discussed hegemonic language ideologies and hegemonic culture as described by Cox and De Assis-Peterson's (1999) and applied it to Juliana's comments in the interview. In this section, I discuss the 'monoglot' language ideology and the language teaching ideology as to the necessity of a method.

While Juliana felt strongly that the commercial language school method was not ideal, she was at a loss as to what method to use instead. Her joke that the university linguistic departments must know a magic method was at once a confession of her lack of formal study of language teaching and her belief that universities might have an ideal method of language teaching that she did not know about. *Magic* is the same word that Kumaravadivelu (2001) uses in the passage cited in chapter 2 when he contends that the strength of method as an organizing principle for language learning is "a reflection more of its magic than of its merit" (p. 557). Juliana felt the need for a specific method for language teaching, even at a progressive school in which other subjects were not seen to need a methodology. This language teaching ideology of

the necessity of method is likely connected to ‘top-down’ ideas about language teaching and her own experience teaching within the language school method system. However, as she notes, it is also a result of her lived experience of feeling that her tool set and knowledge is less than adequate at times, even when she teaches in a setting that allows for greater freedom.

In stark contrast, her narrative of her experiences team teaching at a progressive school towards the beginning of her career was markedly positive. One of her favorite lessons involved *code-switching*, or, in this case, using English words in Portuguese sentences, in a spoken context²⁸. Canagarajah (2011) refers to “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system,” as *translanguaging* (p. 401), and highlights the desire of contemporary educators to help students develop the communicative strategies that multilinguals use in a classroom setting. As Juliana recalls the language-switching classroom scene, it is evident that it is a fond memory and a classroom language policy that was enjoyed by both teacher and student evidenced by her frequent laughing and uses of the words “really liked” and “fun.” However, she indicates her self-consciousness that this practice does not conform to an accepted one that she knows of by using the words, “chaos,” “mixed-up” and “mess.” What is striking is that even while this pluralistic approach using code-switching was a pleasant and memorable part of her teaching experience, she did not seem to consider it a legitimate method or option later in her career at Raízes. I argue that although her code-switching classroom policy could be considered a method and was in fact a clear and documentable approach, it did not fit into her ‘monoglot’ ideology of language, rendering it invisible when she was teaching in different settings. Even though she had a strong lived experience that this was a successful activity, her language teaching ‘imaginary’ did not think to, or see fit to, include it.

Examining the commentary from Juliana, we can highlight both the ‘top-down’ institutional constraints present in the commercial language schools, and the ‘top-down’ institutional freedoms provided in private progressive language schools. ‘Top down’ ‘monoglot’ ideologies about a language as a unitary and distinct whole and language teaching ideologies in which a “magic method” is needed to teach language can be seen coexisting with ‘bottom-up’ language policy practices challenging ‘top-down’ norms, such as the preschool code-switching class policy.

²⁸ This is called *codemeshing* in a written context (see Canagarajah, 2011).

This data suggests that language teachers such as Juliana with the room to experiment and collaborate could challenge monolingual language ideologies by shaping these isolated pluralist English practices into formal or informal policies. At the same time, the possible limitations of these ‘bottom-up’ innovations are evident in this teacher’s failure to consider her innovative language policy legitimate. This illustrates a paradoxical situation in which the ‘monoglot’ language ideology might be simultaneously accepted uncritically *and* challenged. Teasing apart teachers’ ‘bottom-up’ challenges to ‘top-down’ hegemonic language ideologies through more research or dialog regarding pluralistic language ideologies may be just the support that progressive language teachers need to follow their educator’s intuition in validating and expanding their own critical language pedagogies. This is consistent with Markee (1997) when he highlights the interdependence of theory and practice in innovation (p. 53).

Juliana: Compatibility with Critical Language Pedagogy

Juliana’s teaching philosophy and views on language were compatible with many aspects of critical language pedagogy but she did feel that teaching English integrated well with her beliefs. While she did not know the term *critical pedagogy*, her critical stance was evidenced in her comments throughout the interview, especially on American cultural hegemony in the bilingual school where she worked.

She challenged some hegemonic language ideologies and possibly subscribed to others. Her experiences attending and teaching at commercial language schools seemed to have had an influence on her understanding of what language teaching entailed and her dissatisfaction with the profession. It is quite possible that her experiences in the commercial language schools (and public school English classes that used similar methods) had a significant impact on shaping her imagination for what constituted legitimate language teaching. Commercial language schools also shaped the material circumstances of Raíces; partial student attendance at commercial language schools influenced the decision of the school to abandon English classes and take up Spanish.

That said, Juliana’s experiences teaching at other private schools also contributed to her ideas about language teaching. At the constructionist school, she had the freedom to experiment with code-switching, or translanguaging. Teaching at the bilingual school made her critical of the

strong American culture influence, but she was also impressed by the rapid English acquisition at the bilingual school as compared to the slow student progress she observed in public schools or commercial languages. This observation speaks to the astute observation of Sophia that a practical function for the language was key to students' learning.

In sum, I would argue that Juliana's views were compatible with critical language pedagogy but that Juliana could not translate her critical stance into a style of teaching at Raíces that was both compatible with her belief system and perceived to be effective in teaching spoken English. It was intriguing that Juliana was able to teach in a way that was more fulfilling for her at the constructionist private school, and yet did not transfer the code-switching methods she had used there to other settings.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHING SPANISH

This short chapter shares the experiences and commentary of Miguel, the Portuguese and Spanish teacher. After a brief synopsis of his teaching history and experiences, I discuss Miguel's perspective on the Portuguese and foreign language PCNs, the similarities between Miguel's teaching style and Sugata Mitra's SOLEs, and language ideologies in the context of his interview. The chapter closes with a summary of key findings, including a brief comparison of the experiences of Juliana and Miguel.

Miguel: Teaching History

After introducing his bridge philosophy, described in chapter 4, the Portuguese and Spanish teacher Miguel added that maximal autonomy was key to his approach as a teacher. He gave the example of withholding the answer to a student's question to give him or her space to discover the answer via an internet search. When a student in class asked him who Che Guevara was during the semester-long *trilha* "Who invents the heroes?" his response was, "Go see who he is because it could be that he is your hero; I know that he is a hero but I don't know why." He related the joy and empowerment that students experienced in discovering answers to these types of questions for themselves:

Suddenly he got super happy because he discovered why, and I hadn't said anything. So, it's this. I'm just a bridge and I'm just here to ensure something. I hardly bring anything; it's they who are going to find it. I bring a phrase, an idea, and they discover for themselves. This is the most interesting.

Here he mentioned the analogy of the bridge again and the importance of the teacher as a securer of space to study a particular topic.

At this point Miguel talked about working through a Spanish book with his adult students in another Spanish class he taught for managers at a company in São Paulo. The book contained a short text for each day of the year on a variety of subjects about a variety of places not limited to the Spanish-speaking world. He said that he spoke a mixture of Spanish and Portuguese with

the students, depending on their level. He talked about how students working with texts such as those in the book he used derive meaning from context and store facts unnoticed without him having to talk about the grammar explicitly.

Miguel closed our interview with another narrative about a manager student of his who struggled with verbal articulation in his native language of Portuguese, but managed to complete a composition that Miguel had assigned with few reference materials and no tutoring. He talked about how his role was to secure a space for Spanish and provoke the students' interest. When students such as this one succeeded by working more independently and out of a genuine interest, it gave both teacher and student a deeper satisfaction. He felt that this gave students an opportunity to enhance their confidence:

This is the deal with autonomy, right?! It's that you construct, notice that you constructed, that you did well alone with little help [and think] "I am capable." This is cool.

He argues later that working independently is more of a challenge, but that the students will really benefit from the satisfaction of discovery and gain increased confidence.

In his Spanish class that semester at Raízes, he had been working through each of the twenty Spanish-speaking countries with his students in alphabetical order. For each country, he had found a literary text, song, or newspaper article to share with the class. The classes followed a format of reading, doing internet research for more information and discussing. That is to say that spoken Spanish was not particularly emphasized:

So it was much more this – reading and discussion. Not requiring them to say "Spanish teacher." Spanish - not even I spoke it a lot of the time. It was more focused on reading and always noticing the differences [between Spanish and Portuguese] too. So I really don't have a certain model.

In this quote, he separates himself from the communicative language teaching model in a sense, by specifying that he does not require students to use Spanish or speak it consistently in class. In his view, it is most important that the students are comfortable, curious and engaged.

When I asked what he would do if a student wanted to study spoken Spanish more aggressively, he said that he could bring in some traditional resources like a verb conjugation chart and work with them on it. He added that he told his students that the route of individual exploration is more rewarding and interesting, but longer and more difficult.

Finally, he talked about leading students to believe that they can master Spanish by studying with him is misleading and potentially damaging to students:

I have a title of teacher and such, but I don't have this [Spanish] fluency. I've only traveled to three countries. I stayed at the most 15 days in each one, I'm not a native and I don't have this fluency. It's false. They are not going to be able to [have it]. Only [studying] with me, they are not going to be able to [have it]. They'll have to watch tons of stuff. They'll have to listen to tons of stuff. They'll have to search for people to speak with. They'll have to travel. Right? So, I can't do it.

Here he refers to the enormous sustained effort that it takes to learn a language and the fact that even he, who has made many of the efforts he mentioned and has obtained a certification to teach, is not fluent. It is interesting that Juliana also sees the huge challenges in teaching language, but whereas she places the blame on herself for not knowing an appropriate method, Miguel places the blame on the enormous task of language learning itself.

When I asked Miguel about the format of his university Spanish courses, he said that they were very “structural,” similar to the courses in the commercial language schools. He said that the teachers there were good and there was some discussion of literature, but literature and the written language were not the focus of his program. He mentioned that his own interest was more in literature, possibly explaining his preference for making texts central in the Spanish classes that he taught. Though I did not ask, it is possible that his orientation to texts comes from the university classes he took in Portuguese, a field that Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) argue has been more influenced historically by (written) discourse analysis and critical theory.

Since Miguel had mentioned commercial language schools, I asked him what he thought of that type of teaching. He responded with the following:

What is it like there? Look, I think that any school – these language schools, they are really commercial. They are interested in students that will pay, in the person who will pay. I think that they aren't really interested in reflective teaching and such. The discourse is: they have a social-interactionist practice. They give names and such, but at the root it's not the interest...because...the school needs to have people to make money. So I don't trust much.

He saw the profit motive as a significant barrier to quality education at commercial language schools.

Miguel: On the Portuguese and Foreign Language PCNs

Miguel said that he had read all of the Portuguese PCNs and only some of the foreign language PCNs. Like Juliana, he had a favorable attitude towards them and thought they were interesting, rich, well-constructed, flexible, open for personal reflections and contained elements of democracy:

In my case, I look only at the part about languages – they have a lot of stuff about democracy. They're really flexible. They're open for many personal reflections, it's how I can see – they're not just a law, they make a recipe: do this or that. They're really open for reflection, and they're really well-constructed... I think they have a concept of language and of interaction between languages and the concepts of language that I think that I agree with... I don't use them as a big reference. I used them here at Raízes to construct the (semester) plan, but much more to understand language.

He had read the PCNs and used them for writing a planning document at the beginning of the semester, but did not refer to them regularly. However, he thought that they were not necessarily being thoughtfully appropriated by the majority of teachers in Brazil and became a simple obligation in some cases.

Miguel and Mitra: Similarities

Miguel's narrative of allowing his student to discover why Che Guevara was considered a hero is strikingly similar to Sugata Mitra's SOLE method, described in chapter 2, in which students in small teams research answers to relatively difficult questions. Here, I take the liberty of juxtaposing Miguel's narrative about Che Guevara with one from a teacher who worked extensively with SOLEs:

We taught the Vikings once and we hadn't really touched on religion and I was thinking I haven't got much time and we gave them the question 'What did the Vikings believe about God?' and they went off and came back with the most amazing information ever. Stuff that I didn't know at all and they ended up having this really big debate. They found out that the Vikings weren't necessarily fierce fighters by their nature but they had to be because they believed that if they didn't fight and didn't show that they were aggressive and manly that they wouldn't go to heaven, they wouldn't have an afterlife. So the children were starting to say things like 'well maybe people didn't really want to but they had to because they had this really strong belief that if they didn't fight for their cause to take over land that they wouldn't have an afterlife, so maybe a lot of them weren't really

like that but they just had to pretend to be'. And I was thinking how on earth would I ever have been able to do a lesson to 8-year-olds about that massive issue in an hour? There is just no way! But they're the kind of jewels that they come back with and then a whole discussion started about religion – should you do everything that a religion tells you to do even if you don't believe in it yourself but your parents do. And they were talking about the school because it's a church school and so are there any things that they learn in school that they didn't agree with. As a teacher I would never in a million years have planned a lesson about all of that. It would never have crossed my mind! It made them look back over the whole topic as well. (Dolan et al., 2003, p. 6-7)

This teacher talked about how rewarding it was for students to engage with research questions themselves and how both student and teacher enjoyed the results of their investigation that much more, echoing Miguel's comments. The similarity between the two approaches shows the potential for democratic education, at least in instances such as these, to qualify as a form of critical pedagogy. This assertion is grounded in the fact that SOLEs were discussed as possibly being a form of critical pedagogy because they problematize the mechanisms of transmission and teacher authority (Dolan et al., 2003). If many practices in democratic education could be considered critical pedagogy, does critical pedagogy need to be narrowed or more clearly defined in a way that would make it easier to understand what it is, how it might be used, and how it might be distinguished from other teaching philosophies? Or, is it unremarkable that educational philosophies may overlap?

Miguel: Language Ideologies

In the interview, Miguel shared the fact that his students “always” questioned the relevance of Spanish and linked the value of languages to their utility in the commercial sphere. He said that students valorized English over Spanish, giving examples of student complaints like, “Oh, Spanish is really boring – it isn't good for anything,” “I prefer English because English is...” and “Everyone speaks English.” Then, he talked about how the students said that Chinese was valued more highly than Spanish because of its ability to earn them more money in the future. He regularly tried to challenge these fundamental assumptions they made by discussing the context of the language in a manner similar to the one that Juliana described. He talked about how many countries officially spoke Spanish in and outside of Latin America, and the historical reasons why Spanish and Portuguese were similar. He also worked with them to dig deeper into

what particular uses English, Spanish or other languages might have for them and why. Just because they studied English for many years, he said as an example, it didn't mean that they would use it. Though Miguel did not use the word *ideology*, he was sharing his strategy for countering students' language ideologies about the value of Spanish and English. Students were transferring the commercial value of the language on the job market to the language's intrinsic value. As discussed above, he tried to challenge the students' assumptions about languages by brainstorming with them about specific uses of language in specific contexts.

In chapter 2 and chapter 5, I discussed the 'monoglot' language ideology: the idea that a unified, bounded language exists separate from other languages. Miguel shows his background in sociolinguistics when he deconstructs the 'monoglot' ideology of a unitary language in his own words:

And language transforms too. Think about Portuguese. For example, I know how to speak Brazilian Portuguese, from São Paulo from the twentieth/twenty-first century that is currently undergoing transformation. How am I going to teach Spanish? Spanish from where? From Spain, from Argentina, from Chile, from Peru, from Mexico, from the border...What Spanish is this?

In another part of the interview, he shared that he was reading a book with his students at Descoberta called *A Língua de Eulália (Eulália's Language)* by a sociolinguist Dr. Marcos Bagno (a book written to combat linguistic prejudice available online in PDF format). He said that this was a book that he had read as a part of his university coursework.

Miguel: Compatibility with Critical Language Pedagogy

While Miguel did not know the term *critical pedagogy*, he engaged in critical questioning with his students and was capable of deconstructing language ideologies in a sophisticated manner. He challenged the 'monoglot' language ideology by highlighting language variants across space and time and their ties to nation-states. Miguel challenged students' assumptions that English would always be more useful than Spanish by highlighting specific situations and possibilities. He even challenged the idea that the vast array of knowledge encompassed in "a language" could be learned or taught by one teacher in a limited time.

Finally, Miguel's teaching philosophy and the example he gave of a student researching Che Guevara during a Spanish class was strikingly similar to the narrative of a teacher using a

SOLE in (Dolan et al., 2003), showing promise and raising interesting questions for the connections between democratic education and critical language pedagogy.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

At the close of the literature review in chapter 2, I posed two central questions: *How do language teachers in the democratic school movement in Brazil approach language education?* and *How can these perspectives be understood in the wider framework of critical language pedagogy?* The first paragraph briefly answers the first question, while the following five paragraphs discuss teachers' perspectives in the context of critical language pedagogy.

At Raízes, there were interesting differences between the English and Spanish teachers' perspectives. Miguel, who came from a Portuguese and Spanish linguistics background, focused his lessons on written Spanish while Juliana, who came with teaching experiences primarily in commercial language schools, focused her lessons on spoken English.²⁹ Miguel's described teaching method for Spanish was an autonomous approach quite similar to the SOLE teaching method (see Dolan et al., 2003). Juliana, who did not major in English or linguistics in college, had taught at commercial private language schools, as mentioned above, as well as other private schools, including bilingual schools. She described using mostly a communicative approach, with one of her most experimental and fulfilling teaching experiences involving code-switching in English and Portuguese with preschool students at a constructionist private school. While Miguel desired to continue teaching Spanish, Juliana preferred to bring her English teaching career to a close and teach other subjects. One clear feature which united the two teachers' stated methods was their belief in not using a textbook or teaching explicit grammar. In general, the school did not have a fixed way of approaching language teaching and language teachers approached language education somewhat idiosyncratically.

Neither language teacher was familiar with the term *critical pedagogy* but both had critical beliefs and engaged or had engaged in critical classroom practices. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the nuances of terms in particular locales. It is important to understand that the language teachers in this study were familiar with and positively disposed to

²⁹ The difference in perspectives between Juliana and Miguel fits roughly with the division that Cox and De Assis-Peterson (1999) identified between the communicative approach for teaching English originating in the English-speaking world and the "French school" discourse analysis approach for teaching Portuguese. However, since Juliana did not have a degree in English, we could not assume that this difference was a result of differences in university curriculum.

Freire, held critical beliefs about language and were engaged in critical language teaching practices without knowing the term *critical pedagogy*.

As I stated in chapter 5, I would argue that Juliana's views were compatible with critical language pedagogy, but that Juliana could not translate her critical stance into a style of teaching at Raíces that was both compatible with her belief system and met her standards of effectiveness in teaching spoken English. Despite her years of experience with commercial language schools and the particular view of language teaching that is dominant in that context, her critical stance was evidenced in comments throughout the interview, especially on the lack of necessity of English for many careers and on American cultural hegemony in the bilingual school where she worked. While her prior experimentation with code-switching seemed like an interesting option for future classes, she referred to it only as an enjoyable past event. This spoke to me of the importance of theory in giving teachers the confidence and context to experiment with different practices. If for example, Juliana had known that some university researchers were interested in new paradigms for teaching language that involved code-switching and translanguaging, she may have reused or further developed her innovative code-switching classroom policy.

As stated in chapter 6, Miguel described engaging in critical questioning with his students and demonstrated his ability to deconstruct hegemonic language ideologies including the 'monoglot' language ideology, students' assumptions that English would necessarily be more useful than Spanish, and the commonly held belief that the totality of a language could be taught in a class that meets briefly once a week.

In chapter 2, I defined *critical language pedagogy* as an approach that takes a clear moral and philosophical stance on language teaching for social change. Viewing the student and teacher as subject, *critical language pedagogy* is grounded in the perspective that language is never neutral and draws attention to the fact that there are unequal power relationships among languages and the groups represented by their speakers. Raíces teachers certainly saw students and teachers as subjects, since this is a key tenet of democratic education as defined by the democratic education movement. Social change is also inherent to the mission of the school, whose principles are *democracy, diversity, liberty with responsibility* and *sustainability*. As outlined above, both language teachers took a critical stance towards languages as related to issues of power, but they never discussed the hegemony of the English language and they never described teaching students about language and power. If we compare teachers' accounts of their

lessons to examples in the literature of critical language pedagogy like the critical analysis of advertisements and engagement with environmental issues in EFL instruction (Mattos, 2012), or the deconstruction of gender in EFL instruction (Santos and Fabrício, 2006), then this school by the very nature of the content would be engaged in critical language pedagogy. Two fitting examples from Raízes are the English lesson on Bob Marley's *War* song which was concerned with racism and social justice and used a non-standard variety of English, and the student-led research on Che Guevara in Spanish, both of which were engaged in meaningful critical content and language teaching. On the other hand, if we think of critical language pedagogy as teaching that overtly discusses issues of language and power, such as raising high school students' awareness of linguistic principles and language-based discrimination (Alim, 2007), Raízes teachers' narratives of their teaching would not seem to fit.

The results of this exploratory study suggest that subcategories of critical language pedagogy(ies) might be created for critical content on the one hand and explicit linguistic content on the other. Clearly there could be a great many more categories, but the difference between these two was central to my own discovery process in defining and analyzing critical language pedagogy. The fact that some narratives of lessons seem to "qualify" as being critical language pedagogy in the sense that they are similar to lessons documented in the literature suggests that schools that consider themselves a part of the democratic education movement might be an excellent site for collaboration on critical language pedagogy projects. The critical stance of the teachers and their perspectives and approaches to language teaching indicate that a critical language teaching approach would be at home in this setting.

Outside of Both the Public School System and Commercial Language Schools

At one point in the interview, the science teacher and only participant who knew the term *critical pedagogy*, Antonio, talked about the possibility of using critical pedagogy for a class within the traditional system. The research question for his thesis was, "Can science teaching generate emancipation...in the sense of Paulo Freire that the person is liberated from the system?" I shared that this was much the same research question I had been exploring in regards to language teaching. He explained his hypothesis and the rationale for it:

So the hypothesis that I have is that alone, science teaching can't do this. In other words, you need the whole structure of a school, the pedagogical structure to do this. So my answer to this is that only science teaching, only English, only math, doesn't generate emancipation. It's my opinion. So there's no use just doing this with one subject at a traditional school. It needs to be the whole school. I think... So, I've already taught in a traditional school. Last year I was at a state school, a public school. And I did, in my classes, a different practice. I didn't give tests, I worked with self-evaluation. I worked with research that they set up. But it was just in my subject – in the other subjects they kept having tests; they kept having obligations; they didn't have the right to choose in the other subjects. So it didn't really work that well. It was just one class that was like that.

If Antonio's predictions are true, they are sobering for critical language teachers who hope to create emancipation, liberation or lasting change within a larger traditional system. Clearly there is no simple answer to this question, and the answer also depends on the degree of change that teachers wish to effect. Regardless, Antonio's research question brings us back to Crookes' quote at the beginning of chapter 2, encouraging critical language teachers to imagine an ideal school with a mandate for radical societal change. Imagining a critical *language* school, standing alone or in partnership with democratic schools like Raíces, seems to have some potential to alleviate many of the challenges that critical language pedagogy now faces.

If larger societal issues of power and politics are to be taught in language classes, then critical language pedagogy seeks to teach much more than language. Teaching more than language – at times contesting some of the very assumptions that bring students into language classrooms and language schools – means that critical language pedagogy often seeks to challenge the very system it is working in. If critical language teaching were to take its cue from Freire's culture circles, then it might take place outside of a traditional school environment and be integrated with politics in its very organization. In other words, as I researched and talked with teachers at the school, I began to wonder to what extent teachers can offer up a challenge within a larger school structure that does not support such beliefs. Conversely, working from an independent school structure that actively supports social justice concerns and critical thought would seem to be an attractive environment for critical language pedagogy, despite historical divisions between Marxist and non-Marxist approaches to alternative education. There is room for bottom-up subversive language policy even in the strictest of teaching environments, but Antonio, like Crookes (2010, 2013), sees potential for critical pedagogy in independent community schools.

In addition to the potential of independent schools, there is a potential that has been identified for critical language pedagogy in a focus on democratic learning. In his recent book *Critical ELT in Action*, Crookes (2013) highlights a possible path for critical language pedagogy: to work to realize truer democracies than those currently in place throughout the world. He quotes Mouffe in Castle:

We had therefore abandoned the idea of a need for a radical break with the previous society – the idea of revolution. We began to understand our politics as the radicalisation of ideas and values which were already present, although unfulfilled in liberal capitalism. I think there is nothing more radical than liberty and equality for all. The problem was that these ideas were not put into practice in the societies that claimed to follow them. What a left-wing project should do is to try to force those societies to really put those ideas into practice. (2013, p. 208)

Raízes, an urban community school that is part of a larger social movement seeking the radical fulfillment of democratic values, embodies this quest for a truer democracy.

Interviews with Raízes teachers have highlighted the innovations that a progressive school can realize with language teaching, but also its limitations. Language ideologies that promote the vision of language as a monolithic whole and ideas about what constitutes sound language teaching present some challenges. The marketization of foreign language education in Brazil presented additional issues at this school by exacerbating the gap in skill level between those with and those without the means to afford long-term private English language instruction, as well as possibly influencing teachers' notions of what English language teaching could or should look like. Logistical struggles in integrating language education, perceived economic outcomes tied to the acquisition of particular languages (especially English), lack of exposure to critical sociolinguistic bodies of literature and teachers' own experiences of traditional forms of language education were other hurdles these language teachers and this school faced in working with language classes.

In addition to many other factors, this study has highlighted the fact that political will, sociolinguistic expertise (at the very least to support teachers' intuitions and give them more confidence to experiment), and a practical strategy for the implementation of day-to-day instruction all play important roles in supporting possibilities for critical language pedagogy.

The construct of critical language pedagogy in its current state offers more critique than solution, and does not yet offer much in the way of a practical approach to teaching language.

Perhaps, in addition to possible subcategories of critical content (on issues like race, class and gender) and linguistic content, a sub-category of this literature might be created and devoted specifically to a collection of methodological practices from various sources. Online community databases of lesson plans and research could be one possible solution to developing more robust models of critical language pedagogy in action. Scholars and teachers interested in observing and innovating critical classroom language teaching and learning practices would likely find ready collaborations with democratic schools such as this one. Despite the theoretical differences between the democratic education movement's vision of liberation from pedagogy and critical pedagogy's vision of an education for liberation, their mutual desire for social change seems promising.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS³⁰

Teaching Philosophy

Please describe your teaching philosophy to me.

How does your teaching philosophy coincide (or not) with Raízes' teaching philosophy?

What educational thinkers or educational philosophers do you read or look to for inspiration (if any)?

The term critical pedagogy is often used in teacher education classes to help teachers become better educators. How would you define this term? Describe what you did in your class when you implemented it. If you haven't implemented it, what prevented you from doing so?

According to the website of Raízes, the term democracy is one of its four core principles. Please describe your perspective on this principle.

How would you define democratic education?

If you have ever implemented democratic education in your classroom, please describe what you did in your class when you implemented it.

If you haven't implemented democratic education, please describe what prevented you from doing so.

National Curricular Parameters

In 1998, the Secretary of Elementary Education published National Curricular Parameters. How would you describe their place (if any) in preparing curricula at Raízes?

English in the Curricula

English is³¹ one of the subjects taught at Raízes. Describe the decision of the school to include English in the curriculum (if known).

Describe the benefits (if any) that exist in including English in the curricula here.

Describe tensions or challenges (if any) that exist in integrating English into the curricula here.

³⁰ These questions were administered in Portuguese.

³¹ *Is* was changed to *was* when I learned that the English class had been canceled.

Special Questions for English Teacher:

Why did you decide to become an English teacher?

How has English influenced (or not influenced) your life?

How do you imagine that students will use English (or not) in the future?

Describe to me a situation when a student came to you frustrated about the relevancy of English.
How did you handle it?

What are the challenges you have faced teaching English here or at other schools?

Describe to me a typical day in your English class.

Describe to me one of your favorite classes where teaching English was rewarding for you?

In what ways have you adjusted your teaching philosophy due to the influence of this school?

APPENDIX B

FUNDAMENTAL 2 SCHEDULE

First Semester, 2012

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday		Friday
11-11:50	Workshops		Computer Game Program ming	Music	Workshops	P.E.		Workshops
11:50-12:40						P.E.	Introduction to Sports	
12:45-1:30	Lunch							
1:30-2:20	Assembly	P.E.		Collective Planning	Fieldtrip/ Preparation	Forum/ Tutoring		
2:20-3:10	Portuguese	Science	Research			Humanities		
3:10-4:00								
4-4:30	Snack							
4:30-5:20	Foreign Language	Art	Theater	Study and Enrichment Groups	Fieldtrip/ Activities	Math		
5:20-6:10	Art	Foreign Language		Study and Enrichment Groups				