

Culture and Language: Critical Interculturalism and Multiculturalism alongside with socio and emotional intelligences in language learning

Ícaro Franca Bastos

Tiradentes University, Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil

Manoela Barbosa Pinto

Tiradentes University, Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil

Simone Silveira Amorim

Tiradentes University, Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil

Tricia M. Kress

Molloy College, New York, USA

Abstract

This study presents language as a form of social expression through which feelings, ideas and thoughts are signified in a Culture. However, distinct groups belonging to the same society may define those factors in different ways, giving rise to a phenomenon called 'Multiculturality'. Therefore, thinking about this cultural diversity and taking into account the socio-emotional factors present in the Brazilian National Common Core (Base Nacional Comum Curricular/BNCC), this article aims to theoretically address critical interculturalism and multiculturalism alongside with socio and emotional intelligences in second language learning within the current perspective of Brazilian Education.

Keywords: *Socio-emotional skills, Critical Multiculturalism and Interculturalism, Cultural Identity.*

Introduction

This study presents language as a form of social expression through which feelings, ideas, and thoughts are signified in a Culture. In other words, it acts as a connecting factor between meaning and Culture, shaping the concept maps originated in consciousness through a set of signs, creating cultural codes that will be exchanged between people that belong to the same social group.

However, the creation of those meanings is subject to interpretations, feelings or values attributed to the object by the subject. For this reason, distinct groups belonging to the same society may define those factors in different ways, giving rise to a phenomenon called 'Multiculturalism'.

Given the growing cultural diversity of postmodern societies, Hall (2003) points out to the emergence of Multiculturalism as a set of “strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity” (Hall, 2003: 52), a tool of action that emerged in order to solve problems arising from multicultural societies. Among its aspects, critical multiculturalism stands out, since, from the point of view of Kubota (2004), this sociopolitical and the educational movement aims at a social transformation through the awakening of the critical awareness regarding the various forms of oppression and domination, taking the individual to seek social justice and equity among the members of society.

Within that same perspective, the Interculturalism also emerged as a political, social, and cultural strategy, whose intention, according to Walsh (2010) is “[...] to promote positive relationships between different cultural groups, to confront discrimination [...] and exclusion” (Walsh, 2010: 76), having in critical interculturalism a way to recognize that those differences are constructed through the power relations, where occur the production, and perpetuation of the regimes of truth. Also, according to the author, with this recognition, critical interculturalism aims to “change not only the relationships,

but also the structures, conditions and power arrangements that maintain inequality, inferiority, racialization and discrimination.” (Walsh, 2010: 77).

The power relation exercised by the collective over the individual is identified by Foucault (1984) as Disciplinary Power, whose main function is the regulation of society. This process takes place in disciplinary institutions that police individual behavior, such as schools, unions, prisons, etc. In order to do so, it uses discourse to support a regime of truth, that is, a situation or story becomes 'true' even if it has never been conclusively proved. For Foucault (1984), regimes of truth make society hostage to a single history. Therefore, this article presents multiculturalism and interculturalism as a way to overcome those regimes of truth and transform the discourse.

Taking all those socio-cultural changes into consideration, an innovation is indeed needed when it comes to the educational paradigm. It is paramount to bear in mind that the core of the pedagogical field is people, thus it is mandatory a more humanistic approach in order to achieve what should be the primary goal of education: the formation of the learners (Freire, 2001). So being aware of that expected impact, which human nature has on the educational process, it is up to progressive educators to make sure that one's full education is much more than just a matter of being taught a list of isolated and meaningless contents.

With that enlightened way of educating now in perspective, one singular aspect ought to be raised: there must be a relationship between theory and practice so that critical thinking is built. Educators should help learners understand what is being taught through a meaningful, concrete, and clear demonstration of it. Only by doing those learners will be able to fully comprehend the content taught and forge their critical reasoning about it. And it is indispensable to reinforce educators must remember that the development of knowledge is a unique

human experience, which demands a critical educative practice, as a “[...] form of intervention in the world” (Freire, 2001: 91).

Freire’s philosophy states the importance of building one’s consciousness through which one can fully understand the world dynamics, making it clear that

[...] consciousness and the world cannot be understood separately, in a dichotomized fashion, but rather must be seen in their contradictory relations. Not even consciousness is an arbitrary producer of the world or of objectivity, nor is it a pure reflection of the world [...] (Freire, 2018: 15).

To Freire, due to the unfinished state of human beings and their consequent consciousness of this “unfinishedness”, men and women’s search for knowledge lasts as long as they live – and Freire (2018) calls this process of knowledge-seeking “to be more”.

Education must encompass the freedom to think critically and creatively about every single life struggle, no matter which one. Freire (2018) states that there is no such thing as an unbiased education. There is always some ideology behind any educative process, due to the fact that any educational project is built by politicians, and every single one of these politicians represent a powerful portion of society and carry within themselves their own concepts, ideas and behaviors. So, understanding the political and the power struggles become key factor to live in a more balanced society.

For human beings to move in time and space in order to fulfill their vocation, in the realization of their destiny [...] it is necessary that they are permanently involved in the political domain, always redoing the social and economic structures in which power relations and ideologies are generated [...] The vocation to be more, as an

expression of human nature taking place in history, needs concrete conditions without which the vocation is distorted. Without the political struggle, which is the struggle for power, these necessary conditions are not created. And without the necessary conditions for freedom, without which humans are immobilized, becomes the privilege of the dominant minority when it should be their prerogative. (Freire, 2018: 14)

However, in order to successfully intervene in their social context, learners must not only make use of the intellectual skills but also be able to satisfactorily socialize, which is handling their social and emotional abilities. And teachers have an important role in this process as they are agents of changes, moving students to socialization.

Socialization is the process whereby individuals unconsciously and consciously learn to act, feel, and think [...] on behalf of human welfare outside their own, and in so doing experience intrinsic changes involving an increasing degree of social self-control, of social responsibility, and of personal enrichment and expansion. (Bogardus, 1924: 229).

When it comes to this personal growth linked to the subject's socialization, the Freirean perspective states the importance of curiosity when it divides it into two distinct but interconnected types: the naive and the epistemological ones. In one hand, the former curiosity is associated with the knowledge commonly perceived and acquired through experiences and observations of the world: better known as common sense. On the other hand, the latter is associated with the process of critically rethinking the knowledge which was previously obtained; and by doing so, one will come much closer to the real nature and cognoscibility of the object. So, in order to become a whole person, it is once again clear how feelings and emotions are essential to the educative process, given that they are an important part of people's experiences and their critical perceptions regarding them.

It is my conviction that the difference and the distance between ingenuity and critical thinking, between knowledge resulting from pure experience and that resulting from rigorous methodological procedure, do not constitute a rupture but a sort of further stage in the knowing process. This further stage, which is a continuity rather than a rupture, happens when ingenuous curiosity, while remaining curious, becomes capable of self-criticism. In criticizing itself, ingenuous curiosity becomes 'epistemological curiosity', as through greater methodological exactitude it appropriates the object of its knowing. (Freire, 1998: 37)

Having that in mind, educators are compelled to incorporate in their teaching and evaluations one's emotional and social intelligence, given that they are as much important in the process as the cognitive one. There has to be considered the fact that, in order to achieve the formation of the individual, an effective teaching preparation has to take in the recognition of emotions, sensibility, affectivity, and intuition (Freire, 2001) every step of the way, because once educators show their learners ways of dealing with their emotions and social obstacles, a sense of self-awareness is well developed hence giving learners a better chance to have a healthier and successful life (Goleman, 2019).

The Brazilian context of educational practices changed when, in 2016, the Federal Government decided to implement a more holistic based project, focusing on the previously mentioned maximization of the individual. This broader educational standard, which was called National Common Core (local acronym BNCC – *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*), brought to the pedagogical scenario the significance of the emotional, social and ethical abilities, those which should be developed throughout one's school life.

Therefore, thinking about the cultural diversity in countries like Brazil, and taking into account the social and emotional factors present in the BNCC, this article aims to theoretically address critical interculturalism and

multiculturalism alongside with socio and emotional intelligences in foreign language learning within the current perspective of Brazilian Education.

For this purpose, an exploratory, bibliographic research was carried out. To understand the relation between culture, language and identity, the cultural studies of Stuart Hall (1932-2014) were used as a theoretical framework, as this research intends to approach Multiculturalism and Interculturalism from a sociocultural and sociolinguistic point of view, that is, as strategies management of differences in a multicultural and multilingual society. In addition to Kubota (2004) and Walsh's (2003, 2010) research on critical interculturalism and multiculturalism, Freire's (2001) ideas regarding critical thinking and learner's autonomy, as well as Goleman's (1996) research on emotional intelligence.

Thus, this article will be divided into three sessions, where we will discuss, first, the relationship between Culture, language, and the production of meaning, as well as the influence of this process in the construction of cultural identity. Then, the importance of emotional intelligence and how it can be worked on to maximize individual learning will be addressed. And, finally, in order to understand the practicality of the Brazilian legislation, the social and emotional competences, as well as the cultural aspects present in the BNCC will be the object of our analysis.

Language, Culture and The Construction of Cultural Identity

Culture has been given several concepts over the years because its definition is quite complex and depends on how the topic is addressed. Thus, "Culture" can be a society's way of life, points of view shared by people, or even be defined by its social values, as well as divided into high culture and mass culture.

However, in this article, culture will be addressed through its relationship with language, from Hall's (2003) perspective on the theme, where the term “Culture” is used to describe a group of people or a society that similarly interprets the world and can, in this way, exchange and understand feelings, and thoughts, because the meaning they give to people and things is similar. These meanings, in turn, are produced and shared through language, which needs to be similar between the members of a Society. In other words, for a meaning to be produced and for communication to take place, language has to belong to the same conceptual code.

Therefore, language assumes the role of a connecting factor between meaning and culture, transforming the ideal into real, shaping the conceptual maps originated in consciousness, through a set of signs, creating cultural codes, which will be exchanged between people belonging to the same social group. That is why it is difficult to speak of language without associating it with culture, especially regarding language teaching because language is a form of cultural representation, identification of a people, where the meanings of a society are developed.

The meaning, in turn, is produced in the language through interpretations, feelings or values attributed to the object by the subject. In other words, it depends on the individual's view of the world. For example, a stone may be just a stone, or it may be a sculpture. Its meaning will depend on how the subject perceives the object. Thus, the subjects that are part of the same society may have different perspectives regarding a given factor. Such diversity transforms this group of people into a multicultural community.

For Hall (2003), this multiculturalism is justified in the subjectivity of the meaning, since the cultural significance is not produced from the equality of the

elements but based on the differences between them. Thus, when trying to signify the 'black' color, for example, the 'white' color is used to establish the difference between them. However, between one color and the other, there are several layers of gray, which makes the meaning multiple and fragmented, because each individual has a perception and different relationship with the object. Therefore, the characteristic that influences this multiplicity is the historicity of the meaning, because the conceptual codes are susceptible to change over time, just like social practices, since an object only gains meaning through the subject's contact with the other and the world around it.

It is through this premise that Hall (2006, 2003) justifies the construction of the identity of the subject - what he is and where he belongs to - through the production of meaning and its relation to difference. In turn, it arises from the association with the other. For this, the author attributes to the identity a discursive characteristic, because, for him, meaning resides in the discourse, which, according to Foucault (2007a), is formed by a set of rules and practices that produce forms of expression generated by meaning through language.

However, the discourse is not composed of a text or a pronouncement, as it is popularly believed, but rather a set of representations of thoughts, ideas or feelings that portray the way an individual relates to the world or serves as a reference for it, even by sound effects, writing, music, images or gestures. And it is through these forms of expression, according to Foucault (2007a), that the discourse builds the topic, determining how it will be approached and thus influencing how it will be put into practice and used to control a particular social group.

The difference, in this case, lies in the heterogeneity of the discourse, and in the result of its socio-historical characteristic, building the essence of the individual,

in other words, who he/she is. Thus, the identity, in the role of a discursive agent, establishes a power relationship with the difference in order to control these contrasts. For example, the Landless Workers' Movement has the discourse of the land occupation, which has become its identity. However, within this group of people, there is a multiplicity of motivations for the so-called occupations, which are the result of the differences among the individuals involved in that matter. Therefore, in this case, the identity of the group exercises its power over the individuality of the subject, creating a false idea of cultural homogeneity.

This power relation exerted by the collective over the individual is identified by Foucault (1984) as disciplinary power, whose main function is the regulation of society. This process develops in disciplinary institutions, policing individual behavior, like schools, unions, prisons, etc. Therefore, discourse is used to sustain a regime of truth. In other words, a certain "situation will become 'true' in terms of its real effects, even if in some absolute sense it has never been conclusively proven." (Hall, 2003: 89). For instance, it may or may not be true that children raised by single mothers later become delinquents and then, criminals. However, if everyone takes this possibility as a certainty and begins to persecute those families, there will be consequences for groups that have the same constitution. Therefore, according to Foucault (1984), truth regimes make society hostage of a single story.

Within this perspective, Hall (2006) defines those homogeneous identities as Cultural Identities, even if they are of a nation or social group, which work as a collective self, coexisting among many other selves, and has the ability to fix and establish a cultural belonging that overcome the differences that exist between individuals, since the subjects belonging to this group have memories of a common past, besides having the desire to live in community and perpetuate their cultural heritage. However, Hall (2003, 2006) states that that

homogeneous identity is a fallacy because, after the advent of globalization, with access to new media and technologies, those cultures encountered each other and merge, giving rise to new cultures, fragmenting, this way, the Cultural Identities.

Although there is this criticism about the Cultural Identities, the idea of homogeneity that arises from them brings out the feeling of belonging to a place or a group, either through legislation, language or social behaviors adopted in the country. For Hall (2006), a nation is not only a political entity, but also a system of representation that produces meaning through discourse supported by a regime of truth, which is based on stories, memories, and cultural heritage. Thus, through meaning and significant practices, built within the discourse, local cultural identities - national, regional or community - are developed.

Fairclough (2001, 1989), in turn, speaks of this relationship between language and power from two perspectives: the power of discourse, which is built on social structures and is transformed through its relationships; and the balance between powers present in the discourse. Thus, the author makes a direct link between discourse and social structures, since, for Fairclough (2001), discourse is a social action that can generate structural changes. So,

[...] discourse has effects upon social structures and contributes to the achievement of social continuity or social change. It is because the relationship between discourse and social structures is dialectical in this way that discourse assumes such importance in terms of power relationships and power struggle: control over orders of discourse by institutional and societal power-holders is one factor in the maintenance of their power. (Fairclough, 1989: 37)

However, Fairclough (2001) emphasizes that it is important to highlight that, although discourse plays a role in structuring society, it does not always reflect

social reality, just as social structures are not created from discursive practices. Still, the author states that institutions, such as family and school, that legitimize and allow a certain discourse to gain more importance than others, that is,

[...] if a discourse type so dominates an institution that dominated types are more or less entirely suppressed or contained, then it will cease to be seen as arbitrary (in the sense of being one among several possible ways of 'seeing' things) and will come to be seen as natural, and legitimate because it is simply the way of conducting oneself. (Fairclough, 1989: 91)

With the naturalization of discourse, ideologies arise which, depending on the power of the social group from which they originate from, give life to the common sense that permeates the structures of society. Therefore, according to Fairclough (1989), to occur a change in the truth regime generated by these discourses, there needs to be a change in the balance between the powers in society, starting with the transformation of the discursive practices propagated by the legitimizing institutions.

Looking at this discussion from an educational point of view, regarding language teaching, the aim is to maintain and reinforce the cultural identities of the group, while trying to break with the regimes of truth, helping students create awareness of his/her personal and collective identity through the difference among them. Therefore, from this perspective, there will be a discussion in the next sections about how educational tools, like Multiculturalism and Interculturalism, can be used, from a socio-emotional approach, to recognize the existence of cultural pluralities and promote a paradigm shift, establishing a positive relationship with other cultural groups.

Emotional Intelligence and Critical Thinking: Why They Can Matter More Than We Possibly Realize

The world is changing rapidly, and the ways through which individuals deal with their issues have also to be adjusted in order to accomplish better outcomes. Taking into consideration that the school is the first place where children are fully immersed in a social-based context, the educational process has to accommodate the demands of the contemporary world, and non-cognitive competencies – such as empathy (Goleman, 2017) – have to be taught so that learners get to understand the human dynamics, and consequently their role in society.

According to Goleman (2017), the youngsters are growing up and living in a completely different society, if compared to the last couple decades. Most children today have absolutely no idea what the world is like without the Internet. An increasing number of tech gadgets and all kinds of online platforms is crowding kids' lifestyle, thus leading them through a path full of more and more choices and distractions. Having this in mind, it's only logical that in order to help children navigate contemporary life, methods which would give them the necessary tools to engage and deal with this new social paradigm should be presented to them.

The school, due to its undeniable and indispensable role in society – considering it is filled with real and innate life dilemmas –, should not have its weightiness diminished in the face of this robust paradigm shift. The first step is to genuinely understand what a successful educative process is, and what all the implications of lacking a truly formative learner's development are. Perceiving it will help people notice that, more than ever, it is imperative that the competencies required to manage those predicaments are very well taught in schools, so that kids get to comprehend how to behave and address in

consonance with the unprecedented challenges they are being continuously exposed to (Goleman, 2017).

Ever since the term “social and emotional learning” (SEL) was first coined in the early 90s (Casel, 2019), educators, researchers and child advocates aimed at the establishment of a high-quality and evidence-based social and emotional educational development, which will lead to a brighter education. Factors such as understanding and managing emotions, setting and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing empathy for others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions, became mandatory in an integral scholarly procedure (Goleman, 2019).

Life is not made by unalterable pragmatisms but by diverse and sometimes difficult scenarios. So that one may know how to deal with such situations, one will have to have developed within themselves social and emotional skills - such as self-knowledge, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills –to better cope with those life angles. The 21st century social dynamic known by its flexibility when compared to the previously plastered social structures and behaviors, requires that

In this context, students and teachers have to develop competencies and skills in order to be personally flexible and able to act in contexts that have no clear set of boundaries or simple answers. Teacher and student must develop skills for the continuous resolution of problems in a flexible way, in a continuous process of adaptation to complex situations (Moraes, 2008: 57).

The role of a social and emotional education lies in the need of developing a set of skills which will maximize the child’s potential. By becoming such a person, the child will effectively lead their own way and know how to deal with the

most diverse situations. Ratifying the importance of an education that not only focus on cognitive abilities, Ramos (2019) states that the learner's autonomy is built

[...] through the development of skills that combine cognitive and socioemotional aspects, enabling students to train themselves for self-knowledge, collaboration, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, openness to the new and the responsibility in achieving their objectives. (Ramos, 2019: 73).

Investing in early childhood SEL development might nurture a much better future for mankind (Goleman and Senge, 2017). However, educators should realize that emotions and feelings are not obvious factors. Their all-embracing and underlying reasons, although they may seem conspicuous to adults, are definitely not self-evident to children (Goleman, 2017). Kids lack the necessary perception to accurately understand all sorts of information around them, and it is up to grownups to help the former acquire tools responsible for filtering what is beneficial for them and what is not.

The ability of being able to apprehend pertinent information rests on one's competence to focus attention on certain things rather than others. Attention, according to Goleman and Senge is “[...] is the essential skill for learning.” (Goleman and Senge, 2017: 11) since it is directed to where it is most needed and desired, ability known as cognitive control (Goleman and Senge, 2017). Once the learning process takes into account that an integral academic achievement has also to do with students becoming able to master their cognitive control, learners will consequently grasp relevant information from everything that is being taught to them, and as a consequence the learning process will become more relevant.

But when the topic ‘attention’ is discussed, it becomes absolutely important to highlight that not everyone interacts with the world around them the same way as the way people’s brains function and process information is different in many ways – and this difference is called neurodiversity. According to Hughes (2020) and Baumer and Frueh (2021), when it comes to this thinking diversity, there are two types of people: neurotypical and neurodivergent. The first describes people who interpret the world in the way that society might expect them to do so; the last describes individuals who experience any condition that impacts thinking skills (e.g., Autism, Dyspraxia and Dyslexia). This paper will no longer address these differences in learning processes, but the authors would like to point out this fact as one more reason to ratify the importance of an education development to take into consideration people’s differences in its construction and implementation at schools.

Coupled with attention, there are five other abilities taught in SEL: self-awareness, self-management, empathy, social skill and good decision making. Knowing what you feel and why (self-awareness), realizing what to do about those feelings (self-management), also apprehending what other people think and feel and understanding their point of view (empathy) and having social skills have been proven to be the common ingredients which were repeatedly taught in many programs which addressed the fight against problems like drugs, violence, poverty, bullying and school dropout rates (Goleman, 2019). According to Goleman (2019), those humanistic abilities become necessary to achieve a more realistic and meaningful education.

Emotional and social abilities are active ingredients to a holistic development of children and ought never be undervalued. Then, in order to place the merited importance on feelings and emotions regarding the scholarly practice, it’s indispensable that educators internalize the concept of a more critical instruction

as the key to an integral educative process, given that education has to be seen as something “much more than a question of training a student to be dexterous or competent” (Freire, 2001: 22). Teaching must always be about humanization, and teachers’ main role is to promote all the possible conditions to make it true.

In order to do so, modern education has to be conceived as a comprehensive process in which the learner will be more than cognitively coached (Freire, 2001). And one of the demands which those progressive educational currents raise is that a creative curiosity should be incorporated to the learner’s development. According to Freire (2001), “[...] the more critically one exercises one's ability for learning, the greater is one's ability for constructing and developing [...] epistemological curiosity.” (Freire, 2001: 32). In other words, that type of curiosity is built on the association among commonsense knowledge and a methodical and rigorous critical thinking.

Freire (2001) says that by the time people become epistemologically curious, its consequent analytical chains of thought will have a direct and decisive impact on the formers’ once naive conduct and then give way to an integral model of learning, which knowledge gets constructed taking into account the knowledge students already possess. Thus, learner’s passivity is not possible in progressive education since knowable objects actively communicate with subjects that know, and vice versa.

However, to achieve this critical consciousness, it is necessary more than an epistemic perspective that allows learners to abandon their ingenuity. A critical pedagogy also focuses on stimulating experiences of decision and commitment, due to the fact that the gnoseological freedom proposed by Freire (2001) is built on judgments and based on the responsibility that one has for their autonomy – which is the process of becoming oneself, of maturing, of coming to be (Freire,

2001). By then, one reaches their “[...] rights inherent in the very essence of the human condition.” (Freire, 2001: 71). By taking into consideration what has been said so far, it becomes a matter of great importance to discuss the roles of socioemotional abilities and multiculturalism in school curricula.

Critical Multiculturalism and Interculturalism: The Major Role of Socioemotional Skills

Multiculturalism is a polysemic term, as it has several meanings. According to Hall (2003), this word can be understood in two ways: cultural diversity or a set of strategies and sociocultural policies. In the first case, “multiculturalism” is a qualifying term that describes a sociocultural characteristic of a society “[...] in which different cultural communities coexist and try to build a common life while retaining something of their ‘original identity’.” (Hall, 2003: 52).

In the second case, Hall (2003) states that “Multiculturalism” is a noun that refers to the strategies and policies adopted by the State to solve problems caused by the multiculturalism of a postmodern society. In other words, after the revolution caused by globalization at the heart of socio-cultural relations, Cultural Identities, previously considered strong and homogeneous, gave their space to fragmented, transitory and, at times, contradictory identities, as the result of cultural plurality. For this reason, according to Hall (2003), Multiculturalism emerges as a set of strategies and management policies with the intention of promoting the recognition of diversity.

Both terms are interdependent of each other, because one is a function of the other. The “Multiculturalism”, according to Hall (2003), refers to the plurality of multicultural societies, which are not only heterogeneous and fragmented in themselves, but also among them, thus creating several types of multicultural

societies. Given this diversity, and to meet the needs of each of these types, the “Multiculturalism” is divided into several categories, according to the way it is approached by society. Hall (2003), for instance, divides it into six categories: Conservative, Liberal, Pluralist, Commercial, Co-corporate and Critical Multiculturalism.

Kubota (2004, p. 30-31) follows a similar classification, dividing Multiculturalism into three perspectives: conservative, liberal and critical. The Conversational Multiculturalism “[...] overtly defends Eurocentric modes of thinking and educational practices and attacks multiculturalism as a cause of social division.”. Therefore, what is perpetuated by this aspect of Multiculturalism is the subjugation of minority culture in favor of the dominant culture, motivated by a false sense of homogeneity and social equality. In turn, the Liberal Multiculturalism promotes “[...] tolerance, acceptance, and respect toward different cultures and culturally diverse people while supporting equality among them.”. However, this acceptance of differences is based on the idea that all people are equal as they all are human beings. Because of it, this perspective of Multiculturalism ends up leveling everyone based on the dominant culture, leaving aside important guidelines for the minority, like ethnicity, gender and social class.

The Critical Multiculturalism, on the other hand, focuses on “[...] demystifying hegemonic knowledge and dismantling a social, racial, and economic hierarchy, critical multicultural education involves all students, including those with racial and economic privileges.”, exposing the power relations that involve the production and perpetuation of the regimes of truth.

However, there are authors, such as Candau (2008), who avoid this type of classification, preferring to categorize Multiculturalism based on two types of

approach: descriptive and prescriptive. The descriptive approach sees multiculturalism as a consequence of plural and fragmented societies, which means that each one has its own multicultural configurations, that are closely linked to its historical, political and socio-cultural contexts. Thus, the multiculturalism of Brazilian society is different from the multiculturalism of European society, which also differs from the multiculturalism of American society. Therefore, within an educational context, the descriptive approach proposes that Multiculturalism can be used to describe and understand how the construction of the cultural aspects of each of these societies took place.

The prescriptive approach, on the other hand, sees Multiculturalism as a set of strategies whose objective is to act, intervene, and transform social dynamics. It is a project through which the State shapes and builds a multicultural society based on certain parameters. According to Candau (2008), it is from this perspective that the classification of Multiculturalism occurs, since each one corresponds to the type of multicultural society that is intended to be built. In this way, the author highlights three types of Multiculturalism: assimilationist, differential and interactive.

According to Candau (2008), these first two types are the most common in today's societies and are sometimes the cause of conflicting and strained relationships between individuals. This happens because, according to the author (Candau, 2008: 50-51), the Assimilationist Multiculturalism proposes a cultural homogenization for the maintenance of collective identity, thus establishing a “[...] project to build a common culture and, in its name, delegitimize dialects, knowledge, languages, beliefs, ‘different’ values belonging to subordinate groups, considered explicitly or implicitly inferior.”. The Differentialist Multiculturalism, despite promoting the recognition of differences between individuals, proposes the formation of homogeneous

cultural communities with its own organization, causing diverse Cultural Identities to emerge in society that, although they recognize their differences, are unable to communicate with each other, thus creating, according to Candau (2008), cultural apartheid.

The third type of Multiculturalism presented by the author (2008), the Interactive one, also known as Interculturalism, resembles the Critical Multiculturalism of Kubota (2004) and Hall (2003). It presents itself as a form of resistance, where the objective is to promote the recognition of differences through the development of critical thinking, “[...] an education to recognize the ‘other’, to encourage a dialogue between different social and cultural groups.” (Candau, 2008: 52). Thus, a trading education emerges, able to overcome the tensions caused by different cultural identities and to build a democratic, plural and humane society project based on dialogue, and critical thinking.

Based on this same premise, there is the Critical Interculturalism proposed by Walsh (2010), which is not limited to just fostering the relationship between social groups, practices or cultural thoughts, but assumes a decolonial bias, proposing a continuous questioning regarding racialization, subordination, and depreciation of groups on the margins of society, in addition to giving visibility to all the different ways of being, living and knowing, and seeking to understand and to dialogue regarding differences. Thus, when bringing these elements to education, what is developed is an educational tool based on the Critical Pedagogy, whose purpose is to train questioning human beings and deconstruct the system of truth produced in the homogeneity of Cultural Identities, making, through critical thinking, the subjects able to identify with their own culture, at the same time that they can identify the differences, the shades of gray that exist between them and the other individuals of that social group.

Therefore, when using Critical Multiculturalism and Interculturalism as pedagogical tools within a socioemotional approach, it is intended that, through the critical thinking produced, the subject be able to develop emotional and psychological skills, such as empathy and self-esteem.

So, taking into account that “[...] the exercise of curiosity convokes the imagination, the emotions, and the capacity to conjecture and to compare in tracing a profile of the object to be known as well as its *raison d’être* [...]” (Freire, 2001: 82), and that “[...] there is no true teaching preparation possible separated from a critical attitude that spurs ingenuous curiosity to become epistemological curiosity, together with a recognition of the value of emotions, sensibility, affectivity, and intuition.” (Freire, 2001: 48), dealing with issues related to one’s psychological traits becomes vital to achieve an integral educational formative process.

For Goleman (2009), children who are not presented to a set of skills to help them deal with different kinds of emotions, their own and others’, will face much harder challenges than those who were formed to do so. According to Goleman (2009), “[...] academic intelligence has little to do with emotional life. The brightest among us can be found on the shoals of unbridled passions and unruly impulses; people with high IQs can be stunningly poor pilots of their private lives.” (Goleman, 2009: 41). So, the “cultivation” of an emotional intelligence would turn people’s once misguided choices and decisions into balanced and well-thought ones. According to Goleman (2009), emotional intelligence could be defined as

[...] abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope.
(Goleman, 2009: 42)

However, one more thing must be taken into account. Considering that empathizing is an ability which is primarily based on interaction, the emotional intelligence has to go hand-in-hand with the social intelligence, which can be organized into “[...] two broad categories: social awareness, what we sense about others – and social facility, what we then do with that awareness.” (Goleman, 2006: 84). Therefore, “[...] social and emotional learning complements academics – putting them together educates the whole child.” (Goleman and Senge, 2014: 14).

Brazil: its contrast and the recognition of its linguistic and cultural differences

In Brazil, the process of recognizing differences took a bit longer. According to Gabriel (2008), it was only in the 1990s that Brazilian government recognized there was a certain cultural diversity in its territory and the absence of public policies that focused on those differences could be harmful to the marginalized minorities. This perception, however, was limited to indigenous and hearing-impaired people, leaving aside, for example, regional, immigration, border cultural and linguistic differences. For Silva, Assmann and Siqueira (2012), this difficulty in recognizing all the differences that permeate the Brazilian people occurs because, in the constitution of Brazilian socio-historical path, it had been avoided to build a narrative based on the contrasts that formed this nation, choosing to constitute a National Identity based on the myth of the social equality, thus homogenizing Brazilian society.

Because of this, it was only in 1990 that the process of recognition not only of Brazil as a multicultural country, but also an unequal one, began. This acceptance of differences resulted in the inclusion of this theme in Brazilian educational legislation and, in 1996, in the enactment of the law no. 9.394/96, better known as the Brazilian Education Guidelines, in which the development of bilingual and intercultural indigenous education became mandatory. It is also important to point out the approval of the Law nº 10.436/02, which recognizes the teaching of Brazilian Sign Language.

Those first steps taken towards the constitution of policies focused on the management of differences later gave rise to laws no. 10.639/03 and 11.645/08, which determined the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Culture in schools. They recognized the importance of other cultures for the formation of Brazilian society and its multiculturalism, putting on evidence the cultural contrasts that have always been part of the Brazilian society, but that were relegated in favor of the construction of a false cultural and social homogeneity.

However, although Brazil recognizes some cultural and linguistic differences in its territory and regulates the bilingual teaching of two minority languages, it is stated in Brazilian laws that Portuguese is irreplaceable, assuming a role of influence language, that is, Portuguese is the language that permeates all institutions. In this way, it can be said that Brazil adopts monolingualism. For Calvalcanti (1999: 387), this idea of Brazil as a monolingual country aims to “[...] erase minorities, that is, indigenous people, immigrant communities and, by extension, the majorities treated as minorities, that is, communities that speak discredited varieties of Portuguese.”. Thus, it can be said that Brazil does not, in fact, legitimize the diversity of languages spoken in its territory, nor does it treat languages recognized by law with equal value.

Brazil, for a long period of time, adopted monolingualism and monoculturalism as part of its National Identity. The apex of this process occurred in the government of Getúlio Vargas, during the period from 1930 to 1945, when a new political movement emerged and aimed to create a homogeneous National Identity, thus stimulating the growth of nationalist sentiment in Brazil. As a result, the teaching of Portuguese became mandatory in schools and, on the other hand, the importation of textbooks in foreign languages was prohibited, as well as the production of any material in foreign languages on Brazilian territory.

This thought only began to change during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003), when the 1996 Brazilian Education Guidelines, known as LDB, was approved. It presented a great advance in determining the mandatory and gratuitousness of the teaching of English as a foreign language in public schools from the fifth grade onwards. However, it was only in 2017, with the approval of the National Common Core Curriculum, known as BNCC, that linguistic diversity and the importance of multiculturalism and interculturalism in English language teaching were recognized.

This new Brazilian common core not only sets out the programs of study and attainment targets for all subjects but also establishes the development of competences that will assure the essential learning, which is appropriate for each child, regardless of the place where they live and study. According to the BNCC, schools must be prepared to teach students what learning is actually like, and how each one can and should actively participate in the process of building knowledge through a critical perspective. The core assures this critical mindset from the moment it determines its commitment, which is divided into two main parts: a) teaching contextualized knowledge, which will enable

effective dialogical realities, b) the responsibility to stimulate social and emotional competences in order to provide a better understanding of life.

However, when it comes to Multiculturalism and Interculturalism, the BNCC takes a descriptive approach (Candau, 2008) regarding these themes, giving Multiculturalism a qualifying function, rather than acting as a teaching strategy. The Interculturalism, on the other hand, appears in the document as a recognition device of differences to show that post-modern society is in a constant process of interaction and construction.

An example of this is in the “English Language” section, where the status of English as language is changed from a foreign language to a lingua franca, proposing, in this way, the recognition of other cultures that use the English language as a form of expression. The document also highlights the social importance of the student learning English, since we live in a globalized world, where the English language is considered global,

[...] the study of the English language can facilitate students' access to the linguistic knowledge necessary for engagement and participation in society, also contributing to the critical agency of students and the exercise of active citizenship, as well as to increase the possibilities of interaction and mobility, opening new possibilities for the building of knowledge and continuity in studies. (Brasil, 2017: 239).

With this, the BNCC of English Language works under three assumptions. The first is based on the idea of English as a lingua franca, that is, that language assumes the role of a universal language and is part of different cultures around the world. The second assumption, in turn, is a consequence of the first one, in which it is emphasized that there is no ideal way to speak English and even those that do not follow the Standard English must be validated. The third and

last assumption is about the expansion of the student's view of the world with the use of social practices in the digital world and the multiliteracy, since these issues

[...] bring together and intertwine different semiosis and languages (verbal, visual, corporal, audiovisual), in a continuous process of contextualized, dialogical, and ideological signification. Conceiving the language as a social construction, the subject 'interprets', 'reinvents' the meaning in a situated way, creating new ways of identifying and expressing ideas, feelings and values. In this sense, when assuming its status as a lingua franca - a language that materializes in hybrid uses, marked by fluidity and that opens up to the invention of new ways of speaking, driven by pluri/multilingual speakers and their multicultural characteristics -, the English language becomes a symbolic asset for speakers around the world. (Brasil, 2017: 240).

It is, therefore, clear that the BNCC is aware of the globalized world and the students' need to have this knowledge in order to be part of the contemporary society, becoming aware of the linguistic and cultural diversity existing in the world, and using the new technologies for this learning and multiliteracy. Thus, the "English Language" section is organized in five axes: orality, reading, writing, linguistic knowledge and intercultural dimension. In this article, however, only the last one, the intercultural dimension, will be explored, since the objective here is to identify how the BNCC understand the issues related to multiculturalism and interculturalism. Thus, the intercultural dimension

[...] is born from the understanding that cultures, especially in contemporary society, are in a continuous process of interaction and (re) construction. In this way, different groups of people, with different linguistic and cultural interests, agendas and repertoires, experience, in their contacts and interactional flows, processes of constitution of open and plural identities. This is the scenario of English as a lingua franca, and, in it, learning English implies problematizing the different roles of the English language itself in the world, its values, its scope and its effects on the

relationships between different persons and peoples, both in contemporary society and in a historical perspective. (Brasil, 2017: 243)

Although the document suggests that interculturalism should be addressed through problematizations about the different roles of the English language in the world and comparisons about its different uses, it is important to be note that critical thinking is not only focused on a metalinguistic analysis, using criticism to distinguish the different forms of language rather than act as a problematization exercise regarding the cultural and linguistic issues since

Mere mechanical memorization of the superficial aspects of the object is not true learning. Such a relationship with the object makes the learner into a kind of passive instrument who ‘transfers’ some contents, but this so-called learning is a denial of critical epistemological curiosity, which is a participation in and a construction of knowledge of the object. (Freire, 2001: 66)

Therefore, based on the assumption that language is a form of social expression through which feelings, ideas, and thoughts are signified in a Culture, the critical thinking used by the BNCC should focus on the study of the English language within a cultural, political, social, identity context, and not just on recognizing, comparing, contrasting and describing linguistic differences. Because it is only through the awakening of this questioning and curious mind that the learners will be able to develop not only their emotional and psychological skills, but also a social deconstruction.

The educator who opts for a “generalist” model of teaching which does not offer each child the necessary tools to develop self-awareness, eventually takes the stance of someone who favors some over others. Consequently, that educator becomes the agent that will keep some student’s perception of not belonging in a classroom setting. In this sense, young people would “[...] fail to

tap her inner reservoir of motivation and engagement.” (Goleman and Senge, 2018: 8), thus assuming an apathetic and passive role in the educational process.

The role of the school should reside in a student’s formation which goes beyond the mere expectations of an old-fashioned cognitive way of thinking society. According to Freire (2001), “[...] the school, which is the space in which both teachers and students are the subjects of education, cannot abstract itself from the sociocultural and economic conditions of its students, their families, and their communities.” (Freire, 2001: 62). In this sense, educators have to be vigilant and aware of their unique role in guaranteeing a humanistic and broad education, so that they do not fall into the hands of a decontextualized teaching.

Considering the fact that English is a language, the BNCC dictates that process of accurately teaching English has to be based on a set of contextualized procedures due to the dynamic behavior related to any language. Students must be able to reflect about the class contents because

[...] from this perspective, it is taken into consideration the English uses made by speakers spread all over the world, with different linguistic and cultural repertoires are welcomed and legitimized, which makes it possible, for example, to question the view that the only ‘correct’ English – and the one to be taught – is the one spoken by the Americans or the British. (BNCC, 2016: 241)

With that in mind, it is easy to see that educators have the obligation to teach students a broader perspective, and not solely focus on grammar and vocabulary memorization. Pupils must think critically and discuss the content of school subjects in order to achieve an understanding that goes far beyond school boundaries, which will eventually give them the necessary ability to question any knowledge given so that they can think for themselves. Schools are forming

students for life and not only for passing a test – and the sooner people responsible for the education process realize that students are humans in constant evolution, the faster schools will achieve their main goal.

Making sure students have leading and active roles in their education process should be the first and most important thing to be taken into account by those who are in charge of developing and implementing educational programs. When those people ignore the inevitable human mutability, traits and qualities, the school does not take into consideration the formative development inherent to education, thus preventing the student from building himself as the complex human being he was born to be. As Freire (2019) once said, schools ought to observe their pupils as beings under permanent formation; and not only that, but also make them aware of their incompleteness state. By doing that, students are instigated to think and reflect that the process of acquiring knowledge is an endless movement and the pursuit of this consciousness is what truly makes them learn.

Final Considerations

Through the studies of the authors mentioned here, it was possible to discuss how the use of critical interculturalism and multiculturalism can increase students' self-esteem through the assimilation of their cultural identities, thus developing the critical thinking and acceptance of differences. Therefore, thinking about the cultural diversity in countries like Brazil, and taking into account the social and emotional factors present in the BNCC, it was noted that there is a need to talk about criticism and critical thinking in order to problematize socio-cultural issues and not just raise awareness about it, because only through the development of this type of thinking the subjects will be able to accept and know who they are in relation to others, through their differences, within a collective identity that is based on a regime of truth.

It is important to discuss Critical Multiculturalism and Interculturalism, because it is from these educational tools that the project designed for a multicultural society will begin to be developed, where an individual will be trained not only to recognize, respect differences and be empathetic, but also to question them, acting as a form of resistance against the paradigms established by the dominant culture.

Therefore, it was sought to bring here discussions and questions regarding the use of Critical Multiculturalism and Interculturalism as a way to overcome socio-emotional barriers, based on the BNCC, in order to foster a reflective debate on the subject in question, as it is considered essential that the theme be broadened and deepened so that it will be possible to build more appropriate responses to the needs of today's society. When the inevitability of a critical and multicultural education is brought to discussion, it becomes clearer that in order to elevate education to the integral stage of “becoming more fully human” proposed by Freire (2019), the process of building up the student’s self-awareness and empathy comes to be equally fundamental.

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Author Details

Manoela Barbosa Pinto, Corresponding author

Graduate Program in Education, Tiradentes University, 300 Murilo Dantas Avenue, Aracaju, SE 49032-490, Brazil.

E-mail: manoelabpinto@gmail.com

Ícaro Franca Bastos

Graduate Program in Education, Tiradentes University, Brazil

Contact: icarofb@gmail.com

Simone Silveira Amorim, Ph.D.

Graduate Program in Education, Tiradentes University, Brazil

Contact: amorim_simone@hotmail.com

Tricia M. Kress, Ph.D.

Leadership for Diverse Learning Communities Ed.D., Molloy College, The United States