

Gender stereotypes and critical language education

Estereótipos de gênero e educação linguística crítica

Estereotipos de género y educación lingüística crítica

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa uma proposta de educação linguística crítica, examinando a relação entre estereótipos de gênero no contexto dos Sul(s) Globais e sua articulação com (de)colonialidades em planos de aula elaborados por participantes de um curso de formação de professores de inglês no nordeste do Brasil, voltado ao uso de realidade aumentada. A proposta integrou o ensino do *Simple Present* a discussões sobre desigualdade de gênero, conectando o tópico gramatical convencionalmente abordado nos livros didáticos às práticas sociais cotidianas dos estudantes. Sob a perspectiva da educação linguística crítica, é essencial repensar os papéis das línguas em diferentes contextos, reavaliando repertórios epistemológicos e práticas pedagógicas que estimulem a transdisciplinaridade e a produção de conhecimento crítico. Os resultados demonstram como a integração de questões sociais ao ensino de línguas incentiva reflexões e fortalece o engajamento dos estudantes, contribuindo para a consolidação de uma educação linguística crítica.

Palavras-chave: Estereótipos de gênero; Educação linguística crítica; Sul Global; Ensino de inglês; Realidade aumentada.



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ARTIGO

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes a critical language education proposal by examining the relationship between gender stereotypes in the context of the Global South(s) and their articulation with (de)colonialities in lesson plans developed by participants of an English teacher training course in Northeast Brazil, focused on the use of augmented reality. The proposal integrated the teaching of the Simple Present tense with discussions on gender inequality, connecting the grammatical topic conventionally addressed in textbooks to students' everyday social practices. From the perspective of critical language education, it is essential to rethink the roles of languages in different contexts, reassessing epistemological repertoires and pedagogical practices that promote transdisciplinarity and the production of critical knowledge. The results demonstrate how the integration of social issues into language teaching fosters critical reflection and strengthens student engagement, contributing to the consolidation of a critical language education.

Keywords: Gender stereotypes; Critical language education; Global South; English language teaching; Augmented reality.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza una propuesta de educación lingüística crítica, examinando la relación entre estereotipos de género en el contexto de los Sur(es) Global(es) y su articulación con (de)colonialidades en planes de clase elaborados por participantes de un curso de formación de profesores de inglés en el noreste de Brasil, orientado al uso de realidad aumentada. La propuesta integró la enseñanza del *Simple Present* con discusiones sobre desigualdad de género, conectando el tema gramatical convencionalmente abordado en los libros de texto con las prácticas sociales cotidianas de los estudiantes. Desde la perspectiva de la educación lingüística crítica, es esencial repensar los roles de las lenguas en diferentes contextos, reevaluando repertorios epistemológicos y prácticas pedagógicas que fomenten la transdisciplinariedad y la producción de conocimiento crítico. Los resultados demuestran cómo la integración de cuestiones sociales en la enseñanza de lenguas incentiva reflexiones y fortalece el compromiso de los estudiantes, contribuyendo a la consolidación de una educación lingüística crítica.

Palabras clave: Estereotipos de género; Educación lingüística crítica; Sur Global; Enseñanza de inglés; Realidad aumentada.

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language and power structures is a central concern in critical language education (Pennycook, 2001), especially in the Global South(s), where colonial legacies continue to shape social and educational practices (Quijano, 2005). In this context, gender stereotypes represent a fundamental issue, as they are deeply embedded in discursive structures that sustain social inequalities. Integrating discussions on gender issues into language teaching enables educators to promote critical awareness and encourage students to engage thoughtfully with the social world (Sunderland, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004).

Consequently, educators can also challenge the construction and perpetuation of gender stereotypes through language and foster more inclusive, equitable, and critically engaged learning environments. This study explores the dynamics of gender issues in education, emphasizing the need for critical approaches to challenge and deconstruct hegemonic discourses (Freire, 1970; Canagarajah, 1999). It also investigates how English language teachers incorporated discussions on gender stereotypes into their pedagogical practices, underscoring the importance of teacher training¹ programs in reshaping how in-service educators perceive and address social issues in the classroom. To illustrate this, the article analyzes two lesson plans developed during a teacher training course, in Brazil, on Augmented Reality (AR) in English language teaching.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is grounded in the principles of critical language education (Pennycook, 2001), which advocates for pedagogical practices that empower learners to question and resist dominant discourses (Janks, 2009; Mignolo, 2011) while also linking language learning to social justice issues (Freire, 1970). The conceptual basis also encompasses the notions of decoloniality (Quijano, 2005; Mignolo, 2011), postmethod condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), and gender stereotypes (Butler, 2020; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Louro, 2014).

Methodologically, the study is grounded in Freeman's (1998) Teacher Research. As the name implies, this methodology positions teachers as active agents in their practices and enables a reflection on how pedagogical choices can influence student engagement and critical thinking.

Regarding the organization of the text, this article is structured into six sections. Following this introduction, the subsequent two sections examine the theoretical underpinnings of the present study. The fourth section details the methodological approach adopted for this investigation. The fifth section presents the empirical findings derived from the study. Finally, the concluding section synthesizes the primary contributions, considers their implications for teacher education, and proposes potential directions for subsequent research endeavors.

¹ The word *training* in this article does not carry a behaviorist connotation. Rather, it refers to ongoing teacher professional development. The term was chosen because, in English, it is more commonly used to refer to education or development programs for teachers.

1. CRITICAL LINGUISTIC EDUCATION AND (DE)COLONIALITIES

The pedagogical practices that inspired this research align with the field of Critical Language Education, hereinafter referred to as CLE. It is essential to state explicitly that this approach is neither a technique nor a fixed language teaching method. CLE is both a political and pedagogical approach that recognizes the intrinsic relationship between language, power, and social structures (Rocha, 2019). Inspired by Freirean pedagogy (Freire, 1970), it seeks to examine how education either reinforces or challenges existing social structures. One of its main objectives is to develop learners' critical awareness of language dynamics in contexts of inequality.

CLE aims to promote social justice by democratizing education and fostering inclusive learning spaces (Rocha, 2019), while expanding access to diverse knowledge (Silva Júnior & Matos, 2019). It critically examines technology and language to uncover liberating possibilities and challenge dominant ideologies. The lesson plans analyzed use AI technology within this perspective. Additionally, CLE supports adaptable classroom environments that utilize students' varied linguistic resources (Canagarajah, 1999).

Drawing from Critical Applied Linguistics, CLE addresses critical issues like access, power, and resistance (Pennycook, 2001), rejecting the view of language as neutral and acknowledging its social and ideological complexity (Canagarajah, 1999). It opposes linguistic colonialism, which has devalued knowledge from colonized peoples (Silva Júnior & Matos, 2019), and aligns with the postmethod condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), advocating for flexible, context-driven teaching. CLE emphasizes learner autonomy, critiques imposed norms, and engages with social issues, offering adaptable pedagogical principles for diverse educational contexts. In addition, CLE advocates for the integration of critical and posthumanist perspectives, which aim to elevate marginalized voices and epistemologies, particularly from the Global South (Landim & Oliveira, 2023).

The dominance of a Eurocentric worldview distorted Latin American identity, forcing local populations to adopt a European self-concept, as Quijano (2005, p. 129, our translation) notes, "the Eurocentric perspective of knowledge operates as a mirror that distorts what it reflects." In this context, understanding the notion of coloniality, a persistent power structure that shapes labor, knowledge, and social interactions along racial and gendered lines, becomes crucial.

Conversely, decoloniality aims to dismantle these hierarchical systems of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class, which continue to influence knowledge and social relations, often in alignment with global capitalism and Western modernity (Mignolo, 2011). In addition, it offers a transformative theoretical perspective that challenges the persistence of colonial power structures beyond territorial domination, particularly in language education. Decoloniality opposes conventional pedagogical practices that uphold colonial hierarchies and the dominance of languages like Global North English (Silva Júnior & Matos, 2019). Decolonial language education views language as a dynamic practice shaped by power relations, exemplified by English as a *Lingua Franca*, which

emphasizes intelligibility and context (Pennycook, 2001). This approach encourages educators to critically examine colonial ideologies, resist traditional methods, reflect on their biases, prioritize learners' identities, and foster critical citizenship.

2. GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Given that CLE promotes the struggle against social inequality, analyzing how gender issues are approached in language teaching becomes particularly relevant. This involves dismantling reductive gender narratives, interrogating the social construction of gender roles, and resisting the erasure of marginalized identities by valuing the experiences of those who exist outside dominant gender norms.

In educational contexts of the Global South(s), which can be understood through the concept of periphery as an opposition to the idea of center within linguistic imperialism (Canagarajah, 1999), textbooks often serve as the primary, or only, curricular resource, shaped by dominant cultural narratives. These materials can evoke varied student responses, with some feeling alienated by content that doesn't reflect their realities, while others are attracted to idealized depictions of affluence and social mobility. This highlights the complex relationship between curriculum design and student engagement in unequal educational settings.

In Brazil, policies like the National Textbook Program (PNLD) establish rigorous criteria to ensure educational materials promote gender diversity and combat discrimination. Textbooks used in public schools undergo strict evaluations to align with social justice principles, leading to well-structured materials that aim for fair representation of women. However, despite this thorough review, gender stereotypes may persist.

To explore gender stereotypes in English language teaching, an analysis of a task from a textbook used in the final years of elementary education will be conducted. Initially, it is important to contextualize gender. According to Louro (2007), the coexistence of laws, norms, and principles that discriminate based on gender identities or desires outside the "normal" is unacceptable. Discrimination creates a foundation for various social stereotypes, including gender-related ones. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the broader context of inequality and discrimination that sustains these stereotypes before examining them in educational materials.

This study adopts a post-structuralist perspective, viewing gender as a complex system of social relations and discursive practices shaped by local contexts (Butler, 2020; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Louro, 2014). It emphasizes sociohistorical, transcultural, and translinguistic differences in gender construction (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). Unlike biological perspectives, post-structuralism sees the body as a sociocultural and linguistic construct, shaped by power dynamics (Meyer, 2013). Gender is not immutable or naturalized but is continuously developed and reiterated through discursive practices (Oliveira & Pereira, 2017).

For Meyer (2013, p. 20, our translation), the concept of gender signals “a departure from analyses based on a reduced idea of male and female roles/functions towards a much broader approach.” In this context, it is important to recognize that roles generally attributed to women are those related to household care and motherhood, whereas men’s roles are commonly associated with authority, failing to reflect the complexity of human identities. Thus, by expanding our understanding of gender, we create space for a society that values diversity and individuality, moving beyond the constraints imposed by these limiting social constructs, known as gender stereotypes.

According to Oliveira and Pereira (2017), gender stereotypes are socio-cultural constructs shaped by discursive practices and reinforced by institutions. They influence perceptions of gender behavior and are perpetuated through media, education, and relationships, contributing to ongoing inequality and prejudice. Recognizing gender as a fluid social construct, rather than a static condition, means stereotypes can be questioned and changed. Discursive practices that challenge these norms can dismantle stereotypes, fostering a more inclusive and diverse understanding of gender identities, which is crucial for eliminating societal barriers.

Historically, language has functioned to perpetuate depreciative and stereotypical representations of women, encompassing both offensive terminology that associates women with weakness and the systemic silencing of female voices. Addressing these stereotypes in educational settings makes it imperative to interrogate the prevailing models of language, which often reinforce traditional gender norms. As Pennycook (2001) asserts:

language systems themselves encode basic gender inequalities. Clearly, language is an important site of the reproduction of gender inequality, but to understand how gender and sexuality may relate to a range of issues in applied linguistics, we need to consider carefully what models of language, power, and identity we are using. (Pennycook, 2001, p.151)

Educational materials, as tools of cultural mediation, offer opportunities for individuals to critically engage with issues such as gender equality and social inclusion (Fernandez, Goncalves & Flandoli, 2023). The textbook has the potential to foster critical thinking, which, in turn, shapes societal perspectives and structures.

Reflecting on the manifestations and consequences of gender stereotypes in language teaching, a critical analysis of some tasks from an English language textbook used in the final years of Brazilian elementary education will be conducted. The textbook selected for this study was *Alive!* (Paiva & Braga, 2018), 6th grade edition, from PNLD 2020–2023. This textbook was chosen because it presents two contrasting approaches to gender stereotypes: deconstruction and reinforcement.

This analysis examines how English language textbooks (re)produce gender stereotypes through their narratives and visual content, shaping students’ perceptions and identity formation. It also reflects on the role of these materials in reinforcing normative gender roles and highlights strategies that can be used to promote gender equity in pedagogical practices. In the opening

chapter of the textbook, Figure 1 illustrates four well-known women participating in different sports activities. Three of these women are Brazilian, and two of them are depicted engaging in sports historically dominated by male athletes.

Figure 1 - Positive female representations in the textbook



Source: our compilation from the textbook: *6 Alive!* (Paiva & Braga, 2018, p. 12)

The representations emphasize their significant roles in society. These illustrations have the potential to inspire students, especially non-white young women, while also presenting male students with empowering depictions of women that challenge gender stereotypes, foster respect, and cultivate empathy in boys, all while dismantling rigid gender norms and mitigating toxic masculinity.

The second picture (Figure 2) is a compilation of three tasks that intend to teach the Simple Present tense while addressing the demanding nature of a mother's schedule and her daily time management. The fact that the grammar topic is the Simple Present, the same grammar topic in the lesson plans that are analyzed in this study, is not a coincidence. It is a very recurrent topic in English language textbooks, since it refers to people's habits and routines. However, deeper reflections on these routines as social practices and their social implications are rarely seen.

Figure 2 – Representation of a mother's routine

2. Read the cartoon and replace the capital letters to complete the sentence below in your notebook.

A day has **A** hours, but mothers need **B** hours because they **C** a lot of activities.

3. Does your mother (or stepmother/father/grandmother/grandfather/aunt/uncle) need a day with 36 hours? Answer in your notebook.

4. The picture below represents a mother's routine. In your opinion, is this a good routine? Why (not)? Write it down in your notebook.

Yes, she/he does. No, she/he doesn't.

Source: our compilation from the textbook: *6 Alive!* (Paiva & Braga, 2018, p. 94)

In task 2, students are required to read a cartoon that illustrates a mother and her two children in a store setting, where a saleswoman markets “the perfect watch for mothers,” a fictional device with a 36-hour day. Based on the information in the cartoon, students need to complete a sentence by stating the number of hours in a day and the total hours a mother needs to fulfill her chores. The use of humor in this scenario serves as a critical commentary on the excessive workload often assigned to women.

In Task 3, students are asked whether their male and female relatives need a 36-hour day. The standard structure for answering questions in the third person in the Simple Present tense is then introduced, including the use of the personal pronouns “he” and “she” to distinguish gender. Depending on how students respond, it may be possible to compare the results regarding their relatives' lifestyles, although the task does not suggest further discussion based on students' written responses. A point to consider is whether instructions for facilitating a discussion on this topic are included in the teacher's manual version of the book.

Figure 2 also presents Task 4, which reinforces gender stereotypes by depicting a pie chart of a mother's routine, portraying her as effortlessly balancing work, household chores, and family responsibilities, all while smiling and showing no visible signs of exhaustion. The section of the pie chart relegated to her personal needs is the smallest. Following up on Task 4, students are prompted to evaluate the mother's routine, writing supporting arguments in their notebooks. While this activity promotes individual reflection, facilitating a class discussion of their evaluations would offer a richer understanding of diverse perspectives.

Task 5, shown in Figure 3, again focuses on the routines of students' relatives, this time emphasizing the lifestyles of mothers, stepmothers, or grandmothers. The task aims to teach students about vocabulary related to frequency adverbs, prompting them to describe the activities of their female relatives and their recurrence.

Figure 3- Representation of female figure stereotypes

5. What is your mother's (or stepmother's/grandmother's) routine? In your notebook, describe her activities and indicate their frequency. You can use words and time expressions from the box.

My mother (stepmother/grandmother) listens to music on the weekends.

1 every day	6 on Fridays	10 on the weekends
2 on Mondays	7 on Saturdays	11 once a week
3 on Tuesdays	8 on Sundays	12 twice a week
4 on Wednesdays	9 from Monday to Friday	13 three times a week
5 on Thursdays		14 never



a. wakes up early	f. does the laundry	k. takes me to school	p. goes to bed early
b. cooks dinner	g. makes the bed	l. takes our dog for a walk	q. has lunch at work
c. gets up late	h. studies	m. works	r. goes to bed late
d. does the dishes	i. makes breakfast	n. listens to music	s. cleans the house
e. wakes me up	j. reads a book or a magazine	o. helps me with my homework	

Source: our compilation from the textbook: *6 Alive!* (Paiva & Braga, 2018, p. 95)

As illustrated above, the task provides two lists — one of frequency words and another list of daily responsibilities — along with four pictures of women of varying ethnicity and age, meant to represent students' female relatives. Students are asked to write sentences reflecting the routines

of these women. While the model sentence, “My mother (stepmother/grandmother) listens to music on the weekends,” illustrates a leisure activity, most activities on the list are traditional chores assigned to women, such as waking up early, preparing dinner, washing dishes, and waking the children, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes. Among the four images in the task, only the one depicting a Black scientist represents a role not directly associated with caregiving or mothering.

The textbook makes a notable attempt to address gender issues through grammar and vocabulary instruction. A task in which students assess the mother's routine exemplifies how such topics can be explored to challenge inequalities and injustice. Considering the influence of textbooks on students, these materials should play a role in deconstructing inequalities, fostering respect for differences, and nurturing the development of critical, reflective citizens who are free from prejudice and respectful of others and their cultures. In this sense, it is necessary to monitor for stereotypes and prejudices related to gender, language, race, and sexual orientation to prevent their unintended inclusion in textbooks and to ensure that these materials genuinely respect individual identity differences (Araújo & Ferreira, 2018)

The language textbook tasks analyzed reveal a clear imbalance in the distribution of chores, with men assigned fewer responsibilities. Chores are predominantly assigned to women, reinforcing a gender stereotype that confines women to caregiving roles while excluding men from such duties. This male favoritism, at the expense of female exhaustion, contributes to the continuous (re)production and naturalization of gender stereotypes in educational materials (Oliveira & Pereira, 2017). This dynamic not only intensifies the burden on women's daily routines but also upholds patriarchal values that persist in contemporary society. As a result, the textbook reinforces gender inequality, leading students to internalize its implicit messages and visual representations, particularly because they often view it as a reliable source of information.

In this context, teachers must reflect on what textbook activities propose beyond the formal curriculum, considering the underlying messages and values they convey. A critical approach enables teachers to foster students' reflective reading of social realities, promoting awareness of gender inequalities and engagement with social transformation.

3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This study adopts a qualitative research design, grounded in the principles of Teacher Research (Freeman, 1998). This methodology “is about uniting the two sides of teaching — the doing and the wondering — into one form of practice” (Freeman, 1998, p. 3). It involves systematic inquiry into teaching and learning processes, emphasizing reflective practice and pedagogical decision-making. Therefore, this approach is particularly relevant in the context of CLE, as it enables educators to critically analyze their teaching methodologies while addressing broader social issues.

In addition to being qualitative, this research is also bibliographic, as it is grounded in a robust theoretical framework comprising books, academic articles, and prior studies on CLE, gender studies, and AR in language teaching. Freeman (1998, p. 4) underscores that “research is never neutral; it is not simply a matter of investigating the world and finding what is ‘true’ about it. Rather, it always involves elements of valuing, of assuming certain things and discounting others”. The integration of theoretical reflection and empirical investigation enhances critical engagement in English language teaching and generates practical contributions to pedagogical practice.

3.1 Contextualization of research: teacher training course and AR project

This study is situated within the broader scope of the research project “Augmented Reality in English Language Teaching in Public Schools: Research Action and International Cooperation²,” a collaborative effort between the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), the Department of Education and Culture of Sergipe (SEDUC-SE) in Brazil, and the University of Miami in the United States. Funded by FAPITEC-SEDUC (Call 02/2020)³, the project aimed to challenge the traditional model of vertical knowledge transmission, where universities are seen as the sole knowledge producers, and teachers as passive recipients. It adopted a dialogic approach, emphasizing co-constructed knowledge through interaction between various educational agents (Freire, 1970; Celani, 2006). This deconstruction of hierarchical knowledge aligns with CLE principles, as it resists linguistic imperialism (Canagarajah, 1999) and supports postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

The project was structured in three phases: (i) a training of trainers⁴ course, (ii) a teacher training course, and (iii) an analysis of the training courses and an investigation of the implementation of AR in English classes in public schools. The teacher training course, conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consisted of eight weekly meetings between September and November 2021. The meetings explored various aspects of AR in English language teaching, covering theoretical discussions, practical demonstrations, and collaborative lesson planning. This research emerges from the second phase of the aforementioned study. It is centered on the analysis of two lesson plans created by English language teachers from Sergipe's public schools. These plans integrate gender stereotype discussions with teaching the Simple Present, using AR technologies.

To ensure ethical research practices, pseudonyms were assigned to the teachers using the same pseudonym pattern developed in the work of Araújo and Boa Sorte (2024), which also discussed results from this same teacher training course from a different analytical perspective. The two participants who designed the lesson plans discussed in this study are referred to as Teacher

² The project was approved by the UFS Institutional Review Board (IRB). Protocol number: 4.387.436.

³ Available in: <https://fapitec.se.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Edital-Nº-02-2020-SEDUC.pdf>. Access in: 20 mar. 2025.

⁴ A master's dissertation by Oliveira (2024) addresses the training of trainers.

Daphne and Teacher Cinderella⁵. As Celani (2005) emphasizes, anonymity is a crucial aspect of ethical research, allowing participants to share their insights freely while minimizing potential risks.

3.2 Data production and analysis procedures

The primary data for this study were produced through video recordings of the teacher training course final meeting. These recordings capture both the lesson plans developed by the teachers and their oral presentations, in which they explain their pedagogical choices. It is worth noting that both the recordings and the lesson plans are in Portuguese, the mother tongue of the project's teachers, trainers, and researchers. The recordings were subsequently transcribed and translated into English, ensuring a detailed account of both the written instructional materials and the teachers' reflections. This transcription process enables a more comprehensive analysis of how gender stereotypes are addressed within the proposed instructional activities and how the integration of AR facilitates discussions on gender issues.

The analytical process follows Freeman's (1998) framework, which consists of four key stages: naming, grouping, finding relationships, and displaying. These stages enable a structured interpretation of the lesson plans and teachers' reflections, facilitating the identification of patterns in the integration of gender issues into English language teaching.

The first stage is called naming, and involves breaking down the lesson plans into discrete components, assigning labels to elements relevant to the research focus. Freeman (1998, p. 99) explains that "naming involves labeling the data in some way. These names are called 'codes'". In this study, these codes derive from both lesson plans and teachers' presentations.

The second phase, known as grouping, entails clustering the coded elements into broader thematic categories. As Freeman (1998, p. 100) explains, "grouping the names you are giving to or finding in the data begins to create a structure around the data, like the scaffolding on a building as it is being constructed." This phase enables the identification of overarching themes that shape how the lesson plans engage with gender issues within the framework of CLE.

The third stage, titled as finding relationships, examines how the identified categories interact, revealing underlying patterns in the pedagogical choices made by the teachers. Freeman (1998, p. 100) highlights that "finding relationships among groups or categories is like putting cross-braces on the scaffolding, which strengthen it so it will be less likely to twist or shake". This process provides insights into how the teaching of the Simple Present is interwoven with discussions on gender stereotypes.

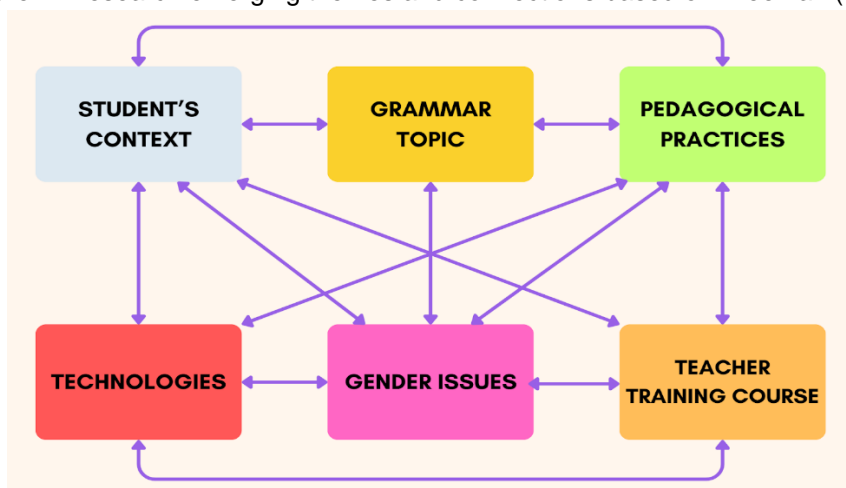
⁵ In this article, we refer to English language teachers using "Teacher" followed by their pseudonyms, reflecting a cultural aspect of Brazil. Unlike in most Anglophone countries, it is customary in Brazil to address educators by their first names rather than by their surnames.

Finally, the displaying stage involves mapping the identified patterns into a coherent framework to visualize the connections between linguistic and social dimensions in the lesson plans. According to Freeman (1998, p. 100), "These displays make the interpretation concrete and visible; they allow you to see how the parts connect into a whole". This step facilitates a clearer articulation of how the teachers' materials promote a critical approach to language education.

This methodological approach aligns with previous research on the role of AR in language teaching, particularly in the Global South(s), where technological innovations must be critically examined concerning local educational needs and social contexts (Araújo & Boa Sorte, 2024). Through Teacher Research, this study contributes to a growing body of literature advocating for more reflective, contextually relevant, and engaged approaches to English language teaching.

The figure below illustrates the themes that emerged from the analysis process and their intrinsic connections.

Figure 4: Research emerging themes and connections based on Freeman (1998)



Source: Designed by the authors

The methodological framework outlined above provides the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the lesson plans and teachers' oral presentations. In the next section, the study's findings are presented and discussed, considering the theoretical perspectives previously presented.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The integration of gender discussions in English language teaching requires both linguistic and critical engagement, as it enables students to question social norms while developing their language skills. The analysis of the two lesson plans reveals similarities and differences in the way the teachers approached this theme. Both Daphne and Cinderella designed lessons that connected grammar instruction, particularly the Simple Present tense, with discussions on gender roles. These

lessons were intended for the first stage of Youth and Adult Education in High School (EJAEM⁶). Moreover, both used technology — AR and virtual experiences — to foster student engagement. Despite these similarities, their pedagogical choices diverged significantly in terms of teaching strategies, the extent of student involvement in critical reflection, and the type of AR resources used. Therefore, the following subsections examine each lesson plan separately before drawing broader theoretical implications regarding grammar teaching, social language practices, and CLE in English language teaching contexts in the Global South(s).

4.1 Analysis of teacher Daphne's lesson plan

Teacher Daphne's lesson plan focuses on the integration of the Simple Present tense and adverbs of frequency with discussions on household chores and gender roles. The lesson begins with the presentation of slides that introduce routine activities, followed by a short text that exemplifies daily habits. Subsequently, students are introduced to the Alboom software, which provides digital cards illustrating different household tasks. The lesson culminates in an exercise requiring students to complete sentences with adverbs of frequency, fostering a discussion on how responsibilities within the household are distributed based on gender norms.

Additionally, Daphne applies contextualized teaching aligned with a decolonial approach by centering her activities on students' daily routines, reflecting Pennycook's (2010) view that language education should be rooted in local practices to foster critical engagement. Learning is intrinsically linked to context, environmental conditions, and students' identities (Pennycook, 2001). Teacher Daphne's pedagogical choices demonstrate her awareness of these factors. As Canagarajah (1999) mentions:

[...] it would be wrong to assume that learning is always autonomous, and never hindered or contaminated by contextual forces. Sociocultural conditions always influence our cognitive activity, mediating how we perceive and interpret the world around us. (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 12).

Following Canagarajah's (1999) perspective, the teacher presents her lesson plan proposal and provides critical reflections on the students' socio-educational contexts. She inquires: "Who divides the tasks? And why is the responsibility of performing all activities assigned to women?" (Teacher Daphne, teacher training course, eighth meeting, 2021, 04:00-04:05).

These questions emerge from the observation of gender roles, which are imposed from childhood, perpetuating situations of social injustice. Daphne highlights that in many families, domestic tasks are predetermined, with women primarily responsible for them. The term "domestic chore" reflects a labor division based on race and gender, originating during the colonial period and

⁶ In Brazil, EJAEM is an acronym for Educação de Jovens e Adultos no Ensino Médio. It is a modality of education aimed at people who did not complete Basic Education at the appropriate age.

solidified in 19th-century Brazil, which oppressed black women (Gonzales, 2020). This historical subjugation continues through the racist association of black women with roles like cleaning, childcare, and cooking. The term word "domestic" reinforces the idea of docility, rooted in the physical and psychological submission imposed on women since colonial times.

Although the plan encourages reflection, it is unclear how critically students will analyze gender roles, as it does not explicitly guide them to question the systemic nature of gender inequalities. Freire (1970) warns that without structured critical dialogue, discussions may remain superficial, ultimately reinforcing dominant ideologies instead of challenging them.

Integrating AR through the Alboom software offers a rich multimodal approach (Kress, 2010), significantly enhancing student engagement and interaction with the topic. By enabling the visualization of household tasks in an interactive format, AR helps students more effectively connect language structures to their lived experiences. Nonetheless, this technological resource's effectiveness in promoting critical awareness depends on how the discussion is guided. As Janks (2009) argues, critical literacy involves not just engagement with texts but also an interrogation of the ideologies embedded within them.

Daphne uses an eclectic approach to teach adverbs of frequency with the Simple Present, combining grammar with reflection on gender roles, in line with the postmethod condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). While the lesson encourages awareness, it lacks deeper engagement with gender relations. Sunderland (2000) highlights the need to address gender explicitly, and Daphne's plan, though promising, needs more support to challenge stereotypes and promote a decolonial perspective (Quijano, 2005; Mignolo, 2011).

4.2 Analysis of teacher Cinderella's lesson plan

Cinderella's lesson plan takes a more immersive and experiential approach to gender discussions. Also designed for an EJAEM class, the lesson is structured around the question "Who is at home?" and seeks to engage students in a critical examination of gendered labor divisions. The lesson begins with a review of the Simple Present tense, using examples from students' daily lives. Subsequently, students watch video clips, including scenes from *The Incredibles* and social media videos featuring stay-at-home dads. The objective is to expose students to different representations of household roles and challenge traditional notions of gendered responsibilities. Figure 5 illustrates part of Cinderella's lesson plan:

The core element of this lesson is an interactive activity using virtual reality (VR) headsets and AR resources. Students are divided into two groups, with one group immersed in a simulated household environment where they must complete household tasks, while the other observes and describes these actions in English. In the second phase of the activity, gender roles are reversed: initially, only female students are asked to perform household tasks while male students engage in

leisure activities. This role-reversal exercise is intended to provoke reflection on societal expectations and generate discussion on the unequal distribution of labor within households.

During the presentation of the lesson plan, Cinderella emphasizes her commitment to designing a lesson rooted in students' realities, stating: "In this lesson, specifically, I wanted to start very much from the reality of the students, a reality that I have known well for some time" (Teacher Cinderella, teacher training course, eighth meeting, 2021, 56:49-56:55). She further explains that her students come from a rural area and have limited exposure to alternative perspectives on social roles: "They have very little perspective on what life can be like, whether in terms of obligations, professions, leisure, everything. Therefore, I always seek to broaden this horizon for them" (Teacher Cinderella, teacher training course, eighth meeting, 2021, 59:47-59:59). By acknowledging the students' sociocultural background, the lesson not only contextualizes gender discussions but also introduces perspectives that challenge patriarchal norms deeply embedded in their daily lives.

Another pivotal element of the lesson is the inversion of traditional gender roles, which the teacher frames as a way to problematize societal expectations: "The man taking on all household tasks and the woman going out to work" (Teacher Cinderella, teacher training course, eighth meeting, 2021, 1:00:37-1:00:40). Through this approach, she creates a scenario in which students experience an alternative social structure, potentially leading them to reconsider their own assumptions about gendered labor. This pedagogical strategy echoes Janks' (2009) argument that critical literacy must transcend textual analysis to include personal and emotional responses. Cinderella's use of VR aims to foster not only intellectual reflection but also an affective engagement that could strengthen students' understanding of social inequalities.

The emotional response elicited by the planned activities is also a key aspect of the lesson's critical potential. Cinderella acknowledges this in her reflections: "I hope this experience will create the sensation of capturing the student by their feelings," adding that she expects "a very strong indignation" (Teacher Cinderella, teacher training course, eighth meeting, 2021, 1:04:43-1:04:53). The teacher's strategy suggests that by placing students in an embodied experience, they might develop a more profound awareness of the injustices associated with gendered labor divisions.

Students conclude the lesson with a written reflection that encourages critical analysis of their lived experiences and the equity of household labor division, promoting deeper engagement and structured expression. However, Cinderella recognizes that the impact of these reflections depends on how the discussion is facilitated: "Then I will ask them if this feeling of indignation would change if, instead of the partner who is there taking care of their own interests, they went out to work" (Teacher Cinderella, teacher training course, eighth meeting, 2021, 1:04:55-1:05:09). This question prompts students to consider broader social structures beyond their immediate emotional reactions, reinforcing Freire's (1970) call for an education that fosters critical consciousness rather than passive absorption of information.

Integrating VR, AR, and interactive discussions, Cinderella's lesson plan strongly aligns with decolonial pedagogical principles. It positions students as social agents capable of questioning and reshaping their realities. Silva Júnior & Matos (2019) and Rocha (2019) highlight the importance of recognizing students' agency in CLE, especially in the Global South(s), where historical and structural inequalities shape educational experiences. Furthermore, Cinderella's lesson plan exemplifies a socially responsive approach to English language teaching, encouraging students to interrogate dominant ideologies while developing their linguistic competencies.

4.3 Theorizing Practices: English language teaching and CLE in the Global South(s)

The research findings reveal that both lesson plans successfully integrate grammar teaching with social issues, but the depth of student engagement depends on the pedagogical strategies used. Teacher Daphne's plan promotes linguistic exploration but relies on traditional discussion methods, which may limit critical engagement. In contrast, Teacher Cinderella's plan utilizes immersive technologies for a more emotional and embodied learning experience, aligning better with critical pedagogy. These differences emphasize the importance of pedagogical choices in fostering critical student engagement.

In a context that demands attention to students' age differences as well as their social and cultural diversity (Souza Filho, Cassol & Amorim, 2021), the teachers' chosen topic fosters reflection on their routines, encouraging them to question the meanings of their activities and the social roles traditionally accepted without critique. The generational diversity of EJAEM classrooms, encompassing both women historically excluded from education and young adults facing new structural barriers, calls for pedagogical approaches that promote dialogue, mediate differences, and encourage critical reflection on gender and social issues.

The need to understand how local teaching practices interact with broader ideological structures is crucial in CLE. According to Canagarajah (1999, p. 122), "In the midst of the conflicting influences from the center and the periphery, local teachers have to adopt creative and critical instructional practices in order to develop pedagogies suitable for their communities." The voluntary participation of teachers in training courses focused on integrating AR into pedagogy marks a shift from traditional methods toward embracing contemporary educational resources. Effectively using AR, a technology capable of transforming educational experiences (Peddie, 2017; Liu et al., 2017; Redondo et al., 2020), requires adapting to changing classroom realities and resisting dominant English language teaching discourses. This process also involves recognizing the historical influence of colonial power structures on knowledge production in the Global South. As hooks (1994, p. 22) states, "Professors who embrace the challenge of self-actualization will be better able to create pedagogical practices that engage students, providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply."

This adaptability is evident in the teachers' flexible pedagogical planning, particularly in Daphne's approach, which integrates AR as a teaching resource while also presenting viable alternatives in case of technological limitations. Aware of the school's infrastructure — a small institution in an small town without a computer lab — she ensures that the lesson prioritizes critical discussion rather than technological dependence. Monte Mór (2019) and Rocha (2019) emphasize the need for a translanguaging perspective in CLE, one that allows students to navigate multiple linguistic and ideological spaces. The two lesson plans exemplify how educators in the Global South(s) can incorporate social issues into language teaching while adapting pedagogical strategies to their specific classroom realities.

When used with clear and theoretically grounded objectives, AR helps students visualize real-life scenarios, fostering active linguistic knowledge construction (Araújo & Boa Sorte, 2024). In both lesson plans, grammar instruction is integrated with broader sociocultural discussions, aiming to go beyond mere grammatical acquisition. The teachers use grammar to address social justice issues, aligning with CLE and challenging dominant gender power structures. These findings highlight the importance of linking grammar with students' lived experiences, rather than focusing on decontextualized exercises. As education in the Global South confronts inequality and colonial legacies, classrooms must become spaces for critical reflection and social transformation (hooks, 1994). The lesson plans analyzed demonstrate how English language teaching can foster both linguistic proficiency and critical awareness.

FINAL REMARKS

This article aimed to explore the intersection of gender stereotypes and CLE within the Global South(s), emphasizing the potential of integrating social issues into English language teaching. By analyzing lesson plans designed by in-service teachers engaged in a training course that combined digital technologies, specifically AR, with pedagogical reflection, the study revealed the pedagogical value of connecting grammar instruction to everyday social practices. The findings illustrate that teaching grammar through a critical lens — anchored in students' realities and experiences — may promote both linguistic development and critical awareness. The teachers' lesson plans, shaped by postmethod and decolonial perspectives, demonstrate how the English language classroom can become a space for challenging hegemonic narratives and questioning traditional gender roles. In this context, the Simple Present tense becomes more than a grammatical structure, it works as a tool for social analysis and reflection.

In the final analysis, the study reinforces the importance of encouraging pedagogical practices that are socially conscious. In doing so, it contributes to the consolidation of a CLE in the Global South(s), grounded in dialogue, inclusivity, and the pursuit of social justice.

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