



VOLUME - V.3

SPECIAL ISSUE

DEZ. - 2025

ISSN: 2966-1439

P.116-131

RETHINKING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: AN ELF AND INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION APPROACH

REPENSAR A FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES PARA SALAS DE AULA CULTURALMENTE DIVERSIFICADAS: UMA ABORDAGEM CENTRADA NO ILF E EDUCAÇÃO INTERCULTURAL PARA A CIDADANIA

Lili Cavalheiro¹

ABSTRACT: As societies become more culturally diverse due to migration, schools also reflect this shift, presenting teachers with new challenges, and the English language classroom is no exception. In these contexts, English is often the only shared means of communication as a lingua franca (ELF) both in and outside school settings. ELF can, therefore, facilitate successful intercultural communication, fostering an openness and willingness to connect with others across cultural boundaries. However, to achieve this, English language teachers should not only develop an understanding of ELF and ELF-aware pedagogical approaches (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis et al., 2018) but also explore how these may be connected with intercultural and global citizenship education (Grazzi, 2020; Porto, 2018a, 2018b). By integrating these perspectives, teachers may encourage learners' critical thinking, empathy, and intercultural competence, all of which are necessary for students to navigate our current society as global citizens. As de Costa (2022, p. 118) highlights, the goal is for ELF users to "move between and across local, national, and global contexts in dynamic ways." Thus, pre-service teacher education plays a crucial role in preparing future teachers to meet these challenges and shape learners who are responsive to our societal needs. This paper considers how these issues have been implemented within a pre-service teacher education program in Portugal, analyzing their impact on teacher trainees and examples of their pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS: ELF. Intercultural citizenship. Pre-service teacher education.

RESUMO: À medida que as sociedades se tornam cada vez mais culturalmente diversificadas devido ao aumento da migração, as escolas refletem essa realidade,

¹ Assistant Professor. Universidade NOVA de Lisboa/CETAPS – Centre for English, Translation, and Anglo-Portuguese. lcavalheiro@fcsh.unl.pt.

colocando novos desafios aos professores – incluindo na sala de aula de língua inglesa. Nestes contextos, o inglês surge frequentemente como o único meio de comunicação, funcionando como **língua franca (ILF)** tanto dentro como fora do ambiente escolar. O uso do inglês como língua franca tem, assim, o potencial de promover uma comunicação intercultural bem-sucedida, incentivando a abertura e a disposição para interagir com o outro além das fronteiras culturais. No entanto, para explorar este potencial, os professores de inglês devem não só desenvolver uma compreensão do conceito de ILF e de abordagens pedagógicas sensíveis a esta realidade (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis et al., 2018), como também refletir sobre a forma como estas podem articular-se com a educação intercultural e a educação para a cidadania global (Grazzi, 2020; Porto, 2018a, 2018b). A integração destas perspetivas pode contribuir para o desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico, da empatia e da competência intercultural dos alunos, capacidades essenciais para uma comunicação internacional eficaz e para uma cidadania global ativa. Como refere de Costa (2022, p. 118), pretende-se que os utilizadores de ILF circulem entre contextos locais, nacionais e globais de forma dinâmica. Neste sentido, a formação inicial de professores desempenha um papel fundamental na preparação de futuros docentes para estes desafios. Este artigo analisa a implementação destes princípios num programa de formação inicial de professores em Portugal, explorando o seu impacto nos formandos e nas suas perspetivas pedagógicas.

Palavras-chave: ILF. Cidadania intercultural. Formação inicial de professores.

INTRODUCTION

At a time of increasingly sociocultural diversity and global mobility, students need to be prepared for today's multicultural and multilingual world. Many classrooms, consequently, mirror this society, which is influenced by the flow of people, ideas, and languages across borders. Since English often functions in these contexts as a lingua franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2011), that is, as a common language of communication among speakers of various first languages within and outside the classroom, English language teaching (ELT) must take on new dimensions. This change has significant implications not only on how English is taught and learned but also on the pedagogical principles that guide teacher education.

Despite this diversity, a monocultural standpoint and preference for native-speaker norms continue to be perpetrated by many teachers who ignore the multilingual, multicultural realities of their students. To move beyond these limitations, there is a growing need for pre- and in-service English language teacher education to embrace ELF and ELF-awareness (e.g., Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2025) as well as an

intercultural approach where intercultural citizenship education (ICE) (e.g., Byram, 2008; Grazzi, 2020; Porto, 2018a, 2018b) may be explored to equip students for today's current communicative demands as well as promote stronger social integration in communities. Such approaches are crucial when preparing teachers to critically engage with language ideologies, foster intercultural dialogue, and empower learners to participate actively in their communities as global citizens.

This paper, therefore, begins by delving into the concepts of ELF and ICE, followed by a discussion on how these key theoretical perspectives may play a vital role in English language teacher education by fostering inclusive and transformative pedagogies for teachers and students alike. By doing so, the aim is to cultivate reflective and responsive educators equipped to contend with the complexities of culturally diverse English classrooms. The following section considers how these issues have been implemented within a pre-service teacher education program in Portugal, analyzing their impact on teacher trainees along with some examples of their pedagogical practices.

1 DEALING WITH THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

When I was doing fieldwork for a project a few years ago at a school in the heart of Lisbon, I came across a startling example of the difficulties and lost opportunities that arise in classrooms with a diverse student body. The middle school English language class I visited had students from every continent, representing a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. What surprised me the most was not the diversity itself, but the lack of interaction between those students. There seemed to be little attempt to overcome these barriers, and communication was limited to small, culturally homogeneous groups. The teacher justified the lack of integration by pointing out that the group had an overall low level of English, that many did not know Portuguese and that some of these students were only in Portugal temporarily. The overall feeling seemed to be to let things simply run their course, rather than seeing this as a pedagogical and social issue that should be addressed. As with this teacher, many others are possibly in similar situations, unaware of how to manage these contexts. In such cases, classrooms risk reinforcing existing social divisions rather than serving as spaces for meaningful connection and inclusion. Without intentional efforts to foster critical reflection, empathy, and active intercultural engagement, these environments may inadvertently exacerbate social divisions.

1.1 TAKING AN ELF-AWARE APPROACH

Much has been published on ELF since the early 2000s (e.g., Jenkins, 2005, 2007; Mauranen, 2005; Seidlhofer, 2001), however, the concept continues to raise questions among uninformed educators in the field. As a result, it is vital to first stress the inclusive stance of ELF, as it focuses on English language use in Kachru's (1985) Expanding Circle as well as the Inner and Outer Circles, especially in multicultural and international contexts. More recently, Selvi and Yazan (2021) have also highlighted how ELF serves as a "common linguistic link and context bringing together individuals from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds" (Selvi & Yazan, 2021, p. 1).

Given the diverse nature of various communicative scenarios, it is evident that traditional native speaker norms, which have long dominated in ELT, seem increasingly inadequate for today's needs (Seidlhofer, 2011). Instead, a paradigm shift toward ELF calls for rethinking the objectives and methods of ELT to prioritize intercultural communication over native-speaker likeness. This reorientation presents opportunities to transform the language classroom into a space of intercultural learning. Adopting an ELF-aware approach (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2025), therefore, emphasizes the dynamic, negotiated nature of communication among speakers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It resists the notion of English as a fixed set of native-speaker norms and, alternatively, highlights adaptability, mutual understanding, and meaning-making in context. As a result, an ELF perspective can lead to more inclusive and relevant pedagogical practices (Lopriore & Vettorel, 2025), where ELF-aware teachers are encouraged to rethink and reflect upon several issues, namely the importance of increasing ELF exposure in language curricula, emphasizing respect for multilingualism in ELT, raising awareness of Global Englishes in ELT, advocating ELF strategies in language curricula or emphasizing respect for diverse cultures and identities (Galloway & Rose, 2021, p. 13). This can ideally be achieved through tasks that simulate real-world ELF interactions (e.g., interviews, debates, podcasts), validating different varieties and uses of English as well as fostering critical awareness of linguistic ideologies and power relations. Such practices will enhance learners' communicative effectiveness and prepare

them to engage with linguistic diversity in globalized contexts. In doing so, ELF-aware teaching aligns naturally with the intercultural education objectives.

1.2 ARTICULATING ELF WITH INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

As previously discussed, learning English in today's superdiverse world entails much more than simply being grammatically proficient. Interculturality also plays a central role in achieving effective communication in ELF scenarios and should thus be problematized to avoid its reification. As Holmes and Dervin (2016) stress, "(...) ELF users do not meet cultures, but complex subjects who 'do' identity and culture with each other" (Holmes & Dervin, 2016, p. 9). This issue may be observed in publications like the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) at the beginning of the 21st century as well as in the work developed by Michael Byram (e.g., 1997, 2008) on Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Will Baker (e.g., 2011, 2015) on Intercultural Awareness (ICA) or, more recently, in works dedicated to Intercultural Citizenship Education (e.g., Byram et al., 2017; Grazzi, 2020; Porto et al., 2018), which builds on the former two concepts.

As one of the key documents guiding language education in Europe (and even beyond), the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) has played a vital role in urging learners to develop their plurilingual and pluricultural skills to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. Although the document does not openly address Byram's (1997) ICC model, its core values are inherent in the framework's approach to intercultural awareness, attitudinal openness, and sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence, hence promoting the idea of the language learner as an intercultural speaker who can interact with diversity, mediate between languages and cultures, and use language for effective and meaningful communication.

Byram's ICC model, one of the most influential within language teaching, goes, however, beyond what is presented in the *CEFR*. It provides a more ample understanding of what it means to be an intercultural speaker by identifying five *savoirs*, namely attitudes of curiosity and openness towards other cultures (*savoir être*), knowledge of social groups and their cultural practices (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating cultural meanings (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction that enable learners to engage with new cultural contexts (*savoir apprendre/faire*) and critical cultural awareness

(*savoir e'engager*), which encourages reflection on values, beliefs, and power relations both within and across cultures. As Byram (2012) further notes,

The intercultural speaker needs intercultural communicative competence, i.e. both intercultural competence and linguistic/communicative competence, in any talk of mediation where two distinct linguacultures are present, and this is something different from and not comparable with the competence of the native speaker. (Byram, 2012, p. 89)

While groundbreaking for its time, Byram's model also has its limitations, as Baker (2022) highlights. For example, the initial formulation of ICC has been criticized as being neo-essentialist in establishing links between culture, language, and country, and although Byram (2021) has recently clarified that ICC's focus is not only on national scale culture and language correlations, the line between "my" culture and the "foreign" culture is still perpetuated. Additionally, ICC cannot comprise all that is perceived in actual examples of intercultural communication.

To better explain this fluid, dynamic, and emergent nature of intercultural communication, especially when it comes to ELF interactions, Baker (2011, 2015) developed the notion of ICA by building on Byram's work, broadening its application to include plurilithic and de-territorialized English use in ELF contexts. He defines ICA as "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context-specific manner in communication" (Baker, 2015, p. 163). Emphasis is placed on the processes of intercultural communication rather than on understanding other cultures and languages in specific, hence detaching culture from an essentialist viewpoint targeted at countries or nationalities and avoiding the "my vs. other" culture distinction.

While an advance, ICC and ICA focus on awareness raising rather than on action. If the aim is to bridge cultural barriers, such as the ones verified in the English language classroom I visited, ICE centers its attention on action and change through direct engagement and action with others and other communities (Baker, 2022). Intercultural citizenship can therefore be easily developed in the context of the language classroom, as it addresses intercultural communication as well as "other" cultures (Byram et al., 2017; Porto et al., 2018). Moreover, ICE's dedication to local, national and global social justice

allows students to actively participate in, value and respect diversity among these communities. In this sense, notions of activity, change and experience are central. By working with others, learners may engage in intercultural citizenship experiences as well as social/political activity, subsequently changing the learner and their relationship with others and diverse social groups. In doing so, ELT may enhance learners' ICC and encourage them to practice mediating their many linguacultural identities via the use of a common language – English – to actively participate in society (Grazzi, 2020).

Besides language, other 21st-century skills are also called upon, such as consciousness-raising (e.g., observing, describing, analyzing, discovering), comparative interpretation (e.g., comparing/contrasting, connecting, de-centering, perspective-taking, interpreting), and critical thinking (e.g., critical reflexivity and critical action via community engagement) (Porto, 2018b, p.494). Moreover, using the language with a genuine need, for instance, through project work on socially relevant themes (e.g., ecology, peace and conflict, diversity, human rights, sustainability, poverty) allows learners to develop not only these skills, but also a sense of community (by working with others from different backgrounds) where they may improve their language awareness and reflection, vocabulary development, meaning negotiation, experimentation with new language and use language in real scenarios (Porto, 2018a).

To accomplish such an approach in the ELT context, not only do students need the time and space to reflect upon the correlations between language learning and use, intercultural communication and their understanding of intercultural citizenship, but language teachers also need the opportunity to contemplate their own use of English and the potential development of an intercultural citizen identity, which may be a more pertinent alternative to the ideal native English speaker as a teacher (Baker, 2022). This implies delving into more critical approaches to language and intercultural citizenship education in teacher education programs, an issue that remains underexplored in many pre-service teacher education courses.

2 PREPARING TEACHERS FOR DIVERSITY IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

2.1 BUILDING REFLECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGIES

As schools become increasingly multicultural and multilingual, there is an urgent call to reconfigure pre-service teacher education courses to develop future ELT educators'

awareness of the current status of English as well as new competencies required for English learners. This is particularly relevant at a time when culture and the intercultural component continue to be often dealt with in the classroom in a stereotyped and essentialist manner, centered on comparisons between national cultures, focusing on, for example, festivals, food and touristic images (Baker, 2015). This essentialist approach is particularly observed in textbooks, which in many settings are the core of language teaching and where the cultural approach is undertaken in a superficial and stereotyped manner. Siqueira (2016) refers to this approach in ELT textbooks as the “plastic world”, where he also highlights the native-speaker centeredness of these materials, “elements such as cultural references, for instance, have always resorted to the practice of mirroring the daily life of native speakers, spreading and incorporating their beliefs, different types of behavior, values, and ways of life” (Siqueira, 2016, p. 248). Given this approach, Cogo et al. (2023) have called for the need to critically review teaching materials used in classroom practices.

In this sense, pre-service teacher education should assume a more comprehensive approach, by moving beyond just technical training to promote a greater reflective stance. In doing so, prospective teachers can critically engage with language ideologies, question assumptions they may have about English, and acquire more inclusive practices to validate their learners’ different experiences. These are some of the key factors to explore as many in-service teachers lack knowledge of how to manage multi-cultural/lingual settings, in addition to the overall lack of support in policy documents, curricula, syllabi, textbooks, and materials to teach citizenship and human rights issues. Moreover, there is also the difficulty in engaging in relevant practices within schools and communities (Porto et al., 2018).

Bearing in mind this reality, teacher education programs that take on a reflective stance should encourage future teachers to develop competences like analyzing, comparing and contrasting, critical thinking, de-centering, discovering, describing, interpreting, observing, relating, perspective-taking, reflexivity, and critical cultural awareness. Additionally, it would also be pertinent to critically reflect upon issues, such as:

- Whose English are we teaching?

- What cultural and ideological assumptions are embedded in our teaching materials and practices?
- How can English also be used as a tool for building intercultural understanding and citizenship?

This reflective practice aligns directly with an ELF-aware teacher education framework (e.g., Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2025), which emphasizes teacher agency, local appropriateness, and transformative learning, as previously discussed in the first section. Articulating an ELF-aware approach with tasks and discussions related to real-world issues, such as migration, social justice or climate change, helps foster pedagogical responsiveness and empathy. From an (inter)cultural perspective, this shift in focus from product (e.g., knowledge of specific linguistic forms and cultural practices) to processes of communication is central for students to successfully adapt their linguistic and other communicative resources to each interaction (Porto, 2018a). This may be approached by connecting meaningful global themes with local classroom realities through a variety of different manners, like project work, digital storytelling, intercultural dialogues, or community-based learning experiences, among others. The results are positive not only for the learners, who develop language skills and are engaged as active citizens, but also for the teachers, as it supports the formation of their own professional identity as an intercultural mediator and agent of change.

2.2 INSIGHTS AND EXAMPLES FROM A PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN PORTUGAL

This section takes into consideration the specific context of ELT pre-service teacher education programs at NOVA University of Lisbon in Portugal, where there is a course solely centered on ELT (monolingual course) and two other bilingual courses where English is paired with either Portuguese (L1) or with another foreign language (French, German or Spanish). These are two-year courses targeted at ELT at upper basic (grades 7 to 9) and secondary (grades 10 to 12) levels. Students in the first year have classes at the university and in the second year, they are at schools observing and teaching and have few classes at the university.

The number of foreign students enrolled in the Portuguese school system in recent years has increased significantly. In the 2022/2023 school year, there were a total of 145,700 students enrolled in basic and secondary education in mainland Portugal (in both

the public and private sectors), comprising over 11% of the student population (DGEEC, 2024), a drastic increase in the last ten years (Oliveira, 2013). As a result, the teacher education programs at NOVA have tried to follow these trends and offer courses that are in keeping with the challenges future teachers may face, as well as equip them with the necessary tools to ensure more inclusive, successful and productive classrooms. Within the specific field of English, two courses have focused on developing more inclusive notions of interculturality: TEFL Methodology II and Language and Intercultural Citizenship Education.

In the former course, it is an obligatory seminar for all prospective English language teachers and comprises the following objectives, among others: developing linguistic and cultural competences from an intercultural perspective; developing the production and use of materials and the design of tasks aiming at a reflective and critical analysis; developing further the formative, social and citizenship aims inherent to foreign language education; developing a critical understanding of foreign language education and intercultural communication; and participating in links with partners abroad, including visits, exchanges or ICT links. The course combines theoretical and practical sessions, including presentation, demonstration, practical activities, group discussion and reflection on the topics studied. It aims at creating a safe space for critical theoretical reflection to help students prepare a final small project or learning tasks within intercultural citizenship.

With regard to Language and Intercultural Citizenship Education, it is mandatory within the monolingual course and is offered as an elective for the bilingual courses, meaning that not all teacher trainees are required to attend. It addresses more specific issues of ICE than those explored in the TEFL Methodology II course, providing a more centered focus on the intercultural dimensions of language teaching. In this case, it includes objectives, such as: developing awareness, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity within the learning of English; identifying and critically considering issues, challenges and implications for intercultural communication within ELT; understanding the social, cultural, and linguistic factors involved in the process of intercultural communication; considering the skills, competences and knowledge to be promoted to foster ICE as integrated with FL subjects; promoting intercultural dialog between different systems of beliefs, values and attitudes; and reflecting on intercultural

learning as a transformative process of the self (personally, professionally, academically). The course combines theoretical input and discussion with an analysis of practical incidents and different types of texts (e.g., written and visual), and includes strategies like text discussion, oral presentation and discussion, role-playing, self- and meta-reflection, debating and group interaction.

In both cases, trainees have the opportunity to delve into critical and relevant issues of how interculturality may be explored in the English language classroom, providing them with fundamental notions on how to work with these issues in real-life scenarios in schools. Two examples will be provided on how interculturality and ICE may be implemented. The first case is an example created by a student for the TEFL Methodology II class, but which may be applied in any English classroom, and the second example is of an actual project a teacher trainee implemented in their school, based on what we had discussed in the first year of the master's program.

In the first example, the teacher trainee chose to explore the concept of tattoos and what they may represent in different societies through project work. For this, they chose a BBC article from 2018 on Maori face tattoos (“Maori face tattoo: It is OK for a white woman to have one?”) as a starting point, where students would have to identify and map out different perspectives regarding the use of the “moko” (a chin tattoo used by Maori women). In addition to working directly with the article, students would also critically reflect on and discuss the meaning of tattoos in their own cultures. Afterward, they would have a moment of intercultural exchange, where online discussions would be promoted with people from other geographical regions/countries to explore the meanings of tattoos in other contexts. Based on these two moments, a comparative discussion would follow for students to compare their findings and reflect on the existing cultural differences regarding tattoos. As language is not confined to the classroom walls, the trainee also proposed that students carry out local interviews with individuals who have tattoos, exploring the personal reasons behind them and how they are viewed by society, which would allow them to critically assess and compare the insights from the interviews along with the initial cultural meanings previously discussed. Since tattoos may sometimes be seen as taboo or misinterpreted, as a final output focusing on public outreach, the teacher trainee suggested students create a leaflet/poster and host a public talk on “The World of Tattoos” in collaboration with local institutions (e.g., library), where they could host

interactive sessions, engaging the community (especially older generations) in discussions about tattoos, fostering intergenerational dialogue and understanding.

The second example provides a real instance of a teacher trainee placed in a school in the center of Lisbon, where morning classes are targeted at the local students and the afternoon classes are directed at migrant/refugee students; a scenario in which neither of the groups cross paths either at school or within the community at large. Perplexed by this situation and based on what had been widely discussed at university, the trainee proposed a project that would promote an intercultural encounter between the morning students (that the trainee was working with throughout the school year) and refugee students, aiming at breaking down any existing stereotypes, promoting intercultural communication, promoting translanguaging practices and having students relate to others' experiences.

Before the actual intercultural encounter, the morning students were informed they would be communicating with and meeting refugees from various countries and were asked to identify and write down their assumptions and stereotypes regarding issues like multiculturalism, refugees and immigration. Additionally, they also had to write a poem about what they believed the refugee experience is like. Previous to the actual encounter, the teacher trainee also divided all the students into mixed WhatsApp groups so they could start communicating and getting to know each other. On the day of the encounter, the teacher trainee designed several tasks, some of which are presented here. For instance, as a warmer, they did a "step forward if..." line game in which students had to step forward to the line if they personally related to the feeling/situation mentioned in the statements, such as, if they lived in Lisbon, if you liked rap music, if they liked the school, if they ever felt excluded or discriminated, or if they ever felt difficulty fitting into a new environment.

The aim was for them to share their experiences and start recognizing that they probably did not have as many differences as they might think. In another moment, "From WhatsApp to the classroom", students were invited to get into their virtual groups and reflect on their prior WhatsApp exchanges, how they felt texting someone they had not met beforehand, as well as questions/aspects they would have liked to ask or share but did not. They were then subsequently asked to consider and share what they found most important from their discussion (e.g., opinions, feelings, and considerations about their

virtual exchange). In another task, “Poems and experiences”, the morning class shared what they learned in class (if they had not done so virtually) as well as their poems about the refugee experience. The refugee students were then asked to share their own experiences, to see to what extent they matched the others’ views, and both groups had the opportunity to ask questions and share different viewpoints. To finish, in the following lesson with the morning students (after the in loco meeting), the teacher trainee requested they reflect upon the experience, by having them contemplate how they felt meeting the afternoon students in person, what they had discussed (e.g., did they revisit any stories or information shared virtually), whether their views had changed regarding their initial stereotypes and assumptions, and what had they gained from this experience.

The two examples here provided demonstrate how, with the correct guidance, teacher trainees can create and implement insightful, thought-provoking projects that actively involve students in the language classroom. In the first case, the tattoo project engaged students in critical reflection, intercultural dialogue, and community action. By exploring tattoos as cultural symbols through text, intercultural exchanges and local interviews, students analyzed different viewpoints, reflected on cultural meanings within and beyond their communities, and raised awareness of how personal and societal views on tattoos vary from culture to culture. The idea of having students actively involved within their communities is closely aligned with the principles of ICE, combining language learning with critical cultural awareness as well as civic engagement.

In the second case, the teacher trainee facilitated an encounter between the local and refugee students whose paths would probably not cross, if not for this project. Through reflective, interactive, and experiential tasks, the morning students not only confronted their assumptions about refugees and engaged in meaningful intercultural dialogue, but they also critically reflected upon their experiences. The initial interaction via WhatsApp was essential to help build rapport before the face-to-face encounter, while the post-encounter reflections allowed students to assess how their beliefs had changed, hence promoting empathy, intercultural understanding, and a sense of belonging. Overall, both projects exemplify how language education can support inclusive practices and democratic engagement through critical, experiential, and socially relevant learning.

CONCLUSION

As has been discussed throughout this article, combining ELF with ICE provides a useful pedagogical framework for English language teacher education, where linguistic competence, critical cultural awareness, empathy, and civic engagement are vital skills to be developed with learners in today's globalized world. Teacher education programs, therefore, play a fundamental role in preparing pre-service teachers to become intercultural mediators and agents of change by equipping them with tools to critically reflect upon language ideologies, engage in intercultural dialogue, and design inclusive, socially relevant classroom practices. The two examples presented reveal how future English teachers can create stimulating and innovative projects that challenge stereotypes, all kinds of prejudice, promote mutual understanding, and extend language learning into real-world intercultural encounters when provided with appropriate guidance. These projects go beyond the traditional classroom, contributing to learners' greater motivation and engagement, as well as the opportunity to communicate with others they would probably not cross paths with on a day-to-day basis. ELT, as a result, goes beyond simply a linguistic effort to build more inclusive and democratic societies, bringing together students in the classroom and also with the wider community.

REFERENCES

- BAKER, Will. Intercultural awareness: Modelling an understanding of cultures in intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca. **Language and Intercultural Communication**, v. 11, n. 3, 197-214, 2011.
- BAKER, Will. **Culture and identity through English as a lingua franca**. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015.
- BAKER, Will. **Intercultural and transcultural awareness in language teaching**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.
- BAYYURT, Yasemin; SIFAKIS, Nicos. ELF-aware in-service teacher education: A transformative perspective. In: Jenkins, Jennifer; Baker, Will; Dewey, Martin (eds.). **The Routledge handbook of English as a lingua franca**. London: Routledge, 2017, p. 501-513.
- BYRAM, Michael. **From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and reflections**. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2008.
- BYRAM, Michael. **Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence**. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997.
- BYRAM, Michael. **From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship**. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2008.
- BYRAM, Michael. Language awareness and (critical) cultural awareness - relationships, comparisons and contrasts. **Language Awareness**, v. 21, n. 1-2, 5-13, 2012.

BYRAM, Michael. **Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Revisited**. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2021.

BYRAM, Michael; GOLUBEVA, Irina; HAN, Hui; WAGNER, Manuela (eds.). (2017). **From principles to practice in education for intercultural citizenship**. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

COGO, Alessia; CROOKES, Graham V.; SIQUEIRA, Sávio. **English for a critical mind. Language pedagogy for social justice**. Stuttgart: DELTA Publishing, 2023.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE. **Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE. **Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

DE COSTA, Peter I. Identity work and the symbolic power of language in the ELT classroom: advancing the intercultural citizenship and ELF agenda. **Journal of English as a Lingua Franca**, v. 11, n. 1, 117-124, 2022.

DIREÇÃO-GERAL DE ESTATÍSTICAS DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA (DGEEC). **Perfil do Aluno 2022/2023**. Lisboa: DGEEC, 2024.

GALLOWAY, Nicola; ROSE, Heath. The global spread of English and Global Englishes language teaching. In: Selvi, Ali Fuad; Yazan, Bedritten (eds.). **Language teacher education for Global Englishes. A practical resource book**. London & New York: Routledge, 2021, p. 11-19.

GRAZZI, Enrico. The social role of ELF to enhance intercultural communicative competence and intercultural citizenship in ELT. **Status Quaestionis**, v. 19, 95-108, 2020.

HOLMES, Prue; DERVIN, Fred (eds.). **The cultural and intercultural dimensions of English as a lingua franca**. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2016.

JENKINS, Jennifer. Teaching pronunciation for English as a Lingua Franca: A sociopolitical perspective. In: Gnutzmann, Claus; Intemann, Frauke (eds.). **The Globalisation of English and the English Language Classroom**. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2005, p. 145-158.

JENKINS, Jennifer. **English as a lingua franca: Attitude and identity**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

KACHRU, Braj B. Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In: QUIRK, Randolph; WIDDOWSON, Henry (eds.). **English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 11-30.

LOPRIORE, Paula; VETTOREL, Paola. Principles and practices of English as an international language teacher education. In: SELVI, Ali Fuad.; GALLOWAY, Nicola (eds.). **The Routledge handbook of teaching English as an international language**. New York & London: Routledge, 2025, p. 393-410.

MAURANEN, Anna. English as lingua franca: An unknown language? In: Cortese, Giuseppina; Duszak, Anna (eds.). **Identity, community, discourse. English in intercultural settings**. Bern: Peter Lang, 2005, p. 269-293.

OLIVEIRA, Catarina Reis de. **Indicadores de integração de imigrantes: relatório estatístico anual 2023. 1ª ed. (Imigração em Números – Relatórios Anuais 8)**. Lisboa: Observatório das Migrações, 2023.

PORTO, Melina. Does education for intercultural citizenship lead to language learning? **Language, Culture and Curriculum**, v. 32, n. 1, 16-33, 2018a.

PORTO, Melina. Intercultural Citizenship Education in the Language Classroom. In: DAVIES, Ian; HO, Li-Ching; KIWAN, Dina; PECK, Carla L.; PETERSON, Andrew; SANT, Edda; WAGHID, Yusef (eds.). **The Palgrave handbook of global citizenship and education**. Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2018b, p. 489-506.

PORTO, Melina; HOUGHTON, Stephanie Anne; BYRAM, Michael. Intercultural citizenship in the (foreign) language classroom. **Language Teaching Research**, v. 22, n. 5, 484-498, 2018.

SEIDLHOFER, Barbara. Closing a conceptual gap: The case for a description of English as a Lingua Franca. **International Journal of Applied Linguistics**, v. 11, n. 2, 133-158, 2001.

SEIDLHOFER, Barbara. **Understanding English as a lingua franca**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

SIFAKIS, Nicos; BAYYURT, Yasemin. English as a lingua franca and English as a lingua franca-aware pedagogy. In: SELVI, Ali Fuad.; GALLOWAY, Nicola (eds.). **The Routledge handbook of teaching English as an international language**. New York & London: Routledge, 2025, p. 126-139.

SIFAKIS Nicos C.; LOPRIORE, Lucilla; DEWEY, Martin; BAYYURT, Yasemin; VETTOREL, Paola; CAVALHEIRO, Lili; SIQUEIRA, Domingos Sávio Pimentel; KORDIA, Stefania. ELF-awareness in ELT: Bringing together theory and practice. **Journal of English as a Lingua Franca**, v. 7, n. 1, 155-209, 2018.

SIQUEIRA, Domingos Sávio Pimentel. English as a lingua franca and ELT materials: Is the “plastic world” really melting? In: BAYYURT, Yasemin; AKCAN, Sumru (eds.). **Current perspectives on pedagogy for English as a lingua franca**. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015, p. 239-257.