ELF IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS DESIGNED IN PORTUGAL: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

ILF NO LIVRO DIDÁTICO DE INGLÊS PRODUZIDO EM PORTUGAL: CONTRIBUIÇÕES DE PROFESSORES EM FORMAÇÃO

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ABSTRACT: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been widely acknowledged in diverse areas (Seidlhofer, 2011; Baker, 2015; Mauranen, 2018), particularly in English language teaching (ELT), as classrooms become more linguistically and culturally diverse. However, most EFL textbooks still prioritize cultural representations from the UK and the US and their standard varieties (Leung; Lewkowicz, 2018; Guerra et al., 2022). In the Portuguese context, state schools have also become increasingly multilingual/multicultural (Oliveira, 2023). These contexts where ELF is naturally used are ideal for promoting Intercultural Communication (IC) and Intercultural Awareness (ICA; Baker, 2015). In this study, I discuss the perspectives of a group of pre-service teachers regarding cultural and accent representations in EFL textbooks, based on a questionnaire. These participants adapted two textbook activities (grades 7 and 10th) in a workshop session to address IC and ICA. Also, further suggestions for adapting teaching materials are provided. Therefore, this paper offers additional ideas and strategies for teachers to develop and adjust their materials to better address IC and ICA.
KEYWORDS: English as a Lingua Franca, Intercultural Communication, EFL textbooks

RESUMO: O Inglês como Língua Franca (ILF) tem sido amplamente reconhecido em diversas áreas (Seidlhofer, 2011; Baker, 2015; Mauranen, 2018), sobretudo no ensino da língua inglesa, à medida que as salas de aula se tornam mais linguística e culturalmente diversas. Entretanto, a maioria dos livros didáticos de inglês ainda prioriza representações culturais do Reino Unido e dos Estados Unidos, e suas variedades padrão (Leung; Lewkowicz, 2018; Guerra et al., 2022). No contexto português, as escolas públicas também vêm se tornando mais multilíngues/multiculturais (Oliveira, 2023). Esses ambientes, nos quais o ILF é naturalmente utilizado, são propícios à promoção da Comunicação Intercultural (IC) e da Consciência Intercultural (ICA; Baker, 2015). Neste estudo, discuto as perspectivas de um grupo de professores em formação acerca das

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representações culturais e dos sotaques nos livros didáticos de ILE, coletadas por meio de um questionário. Em um *workshop,* os participantes adaptaram duas atividades (do 7º e do 10º anos) para explorar a IC e ICA. Além disso, apresento sugestões adicionais para professores desenvolverem e ajustarem seus materiais visando abordar IC e ICA mais eficazmente.

Palavras-chave: Inglês como Língua Franca, Comunicação Intercultural, Livro Didático de Inglês

INTRODUCTION

Communicating across cultures has become increasingly complex, especially in recent decades. As the number of immigrants and refugees rises, tensions and conflicts of all kinds are globally evident. Consequently, the rise in immigration and global mobility has posed various societal challenges, and education is no exception. Schools are becoming more diverse, and equipping students to communicate effectively and respectfully across boundaries is essential.

Since English is the global lingua franca, connecting it to specific nations or cultural groups is progressively difficult. Speaking mostly as a second or international language (Crystal, 2020), English is usually the common shared language between immigrant learners and their peers/teachers. The number of people speaking English as a second or international language has vastly surpassed the number of native speakers. Despite these facts, English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks continue to overrepresent native speakers and Standard British English (SBE) and Standard American English (SAE) varieties as the only legitimate models to be followed by learners. ELT materials often fail to portray the great majority of cultural backgrounds involved in current interactions in English.

Drawing on these facts and the literature of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Intercultural Communication (IC), and Intercultural Awareness (ICA), a workshop on textbook adaptation was developed for pre-service teachers, specifically a group of MA students enrolled in the professional ELT master's programs.

This paper begins by outlining the current context of immigrant students in Portuguese schools and presenting the theoretical background. The methodology involved a workshop format that included an introductory presentation of the key concepts (IC, Intercultural Competence [ICC], ICA, and ELF), followed by a brief questionnaire completed by the participants, the presentation of a case study regarding

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cultural representation in textbooks, and the adaptation of two selected activities. Participants' responses and suggestions for adaptations are presented and discussed. It concludes with further suggestions for adapting textbook activities to better reflect IC and ICA from an ELF perspective.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate a group of pre-service teachers' perceptions of cultural and accent representation in English Language textbooks designed in Portugal and analyze their suggestions for adapting textbook activities to align more closely with IC and ICA from an ELF perspective.

The high importance of professional development programs focused on the adaptation and design of ELT materials to particularly reflect an ELF perspective has been increasingly documented for both in-service (e.g., Sifakis et al., 2022; Cavalheiro; Guerra; Pereira, 2022; Chen, 2023) and pre-service teacher education (e.g., Cavalheiro, 2016; Chien, 2022; Bayyurt; Lopriore; Vettorel, 2018). Despite its limitations, the present study is expected to highlight the growing need for more targeted professional initiatives within pre-service teacher education in Portugal, specifically focused on adapting and creating ELT materials that reflect greater cultural and linguistic diversity, and explicitly integrating IC and ICA strategies from an ELF perspective.

1 SITUATING THE RESEARCH

1.1 CONTEXT

In recent years, a substantial increase in immigration flows and the refugee crisis have posed significant challenges worldwide. This influx of immigrants has profoundly impacted the educational landscape across Europe, and Portugal is no exception, as it has seen a notable rise in immigrant and refugee students.

Portugal saw the most significant increase in immigrant/refugee students among the OECD countries between 2018 and 2022 (OECD, 2022). The *2023 Immigration Report* (Oliveira, 2023) indicates that in the academic year 2021/2022, students from diverse national backgrounds accounted for 8.7% of enrollments in basic and secondary state schools in mainland Portugal. Since the academic year 2015/2016, when non-Portuguese students represented just 3.5% (37,939) of all enrolled students, their numbers have more than doubled in less than a decade. A more recent document regarding the academic

year 2022/2023, *The Profile of Student* (DGEEC, 2024), reports that approximately 12% of students in basic education and 9.7% in secondary education are from diverse origins. Although the *Profile of Student* includes students from both state and private schools, almost 90% of learners in basic education and over 70% in secondary education are reported to be enrolled in public education. Additionally, it is also important to note that this figure may not fully capture the diversity of learners in classrooms. This discrepancy arises because many students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds who obtain Portuguese citizenship are excluded from the immigration reports. Table 1 displays the 10 most represented nationalities in Portugal's basic and secondary state education system for the academic year 2022/2023.

TABLE 1: 10 MOST REPRESENTED NATIONALITIES IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOLS

School year: 2022/2023			
Nationality	Basic Education	Secondary Education	Total
Brazil	52512	15320	67832
Angola	9219	3900	13119
Cape Verde	3658	2362	6020
Guinea-Bissau	3148	1422	4570
France	3132	821	3953
Ukraine	5508	1167	6675
São Tomé and Príncipe	2537	3325	5862
China	2148	802	2950
India	2148	488	2636
United Kingdom	1851	378	2229

Source: Translated from *The Profile of Student* (DGEEC, 2024)

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While many of the most represented nationalities are from former Portuguese colonies, and these students speak different varieties of Portuguese (or creole), they certainly do not share the same cultural backgrounds. Since many of these students communicate in English regardless of their proficiency level, the English language classroom may offer a valuable space for bridging cultural gaps.

Another point to consider is the Portuguese curricular documents, namely *"Essential Learnings" (Aprendizagens Essenciais;* Ministério da Educação, 2018), which outline the content for each school grade. English is a compulsory subject from grades 3 to 11; in grade 12, it depends on the students' course choices (scientific-humanistic, vocational, or artistic). Although intercultural competences and diversity are emphasized in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* for the English subject across all levels of education, the focus still remains on Anglophone cultures. Consequently, textbooks developed in the country must adhere to the content and principles outlined in the curriculum. The pedagogical council of each school or school cluster selects textbooks from the certified lists through the online platform SIME-MEGA. As described on the website of the Directorate-General for Education, textbooks are assessed and certified by accredited higher education institutions to ensure their scientific and pedagogical quality and guarantee compliance with the official curriculum guidelines (Ministry of Education/DGE, 2025). Therefore, equipping future teachers to adapt textbook activities to better incorporate intercultural communication strategies, considering the linguistic and cultural diversity of English speakers and the specific needs of their teaching contexts, is essential.

1.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The global spread of English has been shaped by a range of factors, including colonization, economic and political power, globalization, technological advancements, and migration flows (Graddol, 2006; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024), to mention a few. Large-scale immigration flows have contributed to greater linguistic diversity in English, as multilingual English users integrate the language into their daily interactions, leading to the emergence of new varieties and localized adaptations (Blommaert, 2010; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024). Furthermore, English plays a dominant role in international business, higher education, scientific research, and digital communication, further reinforcing its global status (Crystal, 2012; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024).

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As noted by Crystal (2019), there are more than 80 territories where English is used as a first language (L1) or is an official or institutionalized language (L2). It has been estimated that there are more than 388 million L1 English speakers and around 897 million L2 speakers. However, determining the overall number of people who currently speak English worldwide is challenging, as this figure continues to grow. It has been estimated that more than 2 billion people use English globally (Crystal 2019). Consequently, English is solidifying its position as the world's primary lingua franca, serving as a bridge for communication among billions across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been reconceptualized over the decades. Jennifer Jenkins (2015) outlines the evolution of ELF research into three overlapping phases: ELF 1, ELF 2, and ELF 3. ELF 1 focused on coding the common linguistic features among non-native speakers, whereas ELF 2 shifted toward recognizing the fluid and dynamic interactions among natives, non-natives, and mixed groups. ELF 3 focuses on multilingual repertoires, identity, and translingual practices among English speakers (Jenkins, 2015), referring to a multi-lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins; Morán Panero, 2024). The centrality of intercultural awareness (Baker, 2015) is therefore increasingly relevant in ELF interactions. The fourth phase of ELF, still in early development as noted by Jenkins and Morán Panero (2024), focuses on decolonizing research and practices related to multilingualism with English through principles of social justice.

Despite the diversity and fluid dynamics recognized in ELF research, English language textbooks continue to focus mostly on the dichotomy of native and non-native speakers, portraying the former as the sole and ideal model to be achieved. While some advancements have been made in reflecting diversity, EFL textbooks often overlook the diverse backgrounds of English speakers involved in these interactions or fail to incorporate intercultural communication strategies effectively. Since no text is culturally neutral, Leung and Lewkowicz emphasize that "textbooks provide learners with a perception of the English-speaking world through the lens of the textbook writers/publishers. Typically, this world continues to be viewed from the vantage point of the idealised Anglophone world user." (2018, p. 65). Most importantly, textbooks are also commercial products: while following curricular guidelines, they are also shaped by market demands. Therefore, it is essential that these curricular documents establish clear

guidelines for the inclusion of diversity, intercultural communication strategies through an ELF approach in ELT.

For example, Brazil's Common National Curriculum Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular — BNCC) specifies that English language teaching should adopt an English as a Lingua Franca approach. Despite the controversy around BNCC, mainly because the document lacks more practical guidance on how to implement this perspective, the inclusion of the ELF approach is valuable, as it encourages critical discussions on the topic and prompts publishers to adopt a broader view of language education (Siqueira, 2025). In conjunction with the curriculum, the National Textbook Program (*Programa Nacional do Livro Didático – PNLD*) plays a decisive role. The guidelines issued in the official calls have reinforced a more intercultural and diverse perspective for English language textbooks.

Culture has long been regarded as an essential element in language education, particularly in the field of ELT. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, culture has traditionally been approached from an essentialist view (Baker, 2015). Nonetheless, the increasing number of studies (e.g., Baker, 2011; 2022; Byram, 2021; Cogo, 2018; Cavalheiro, 2015; Jenkins; Baker; Dewey, 2018) highlight the need for a more inclusive, non-essentialist approach to culture in ELT.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is an approach developed by Michael Byram (1997, 2021) that has widely contributed to including a more inclusive view of culture. Widely adopted in the Western world, particularly in European documents, ICC combines intercultural competence with linguistic/communicative competence to form the "intercultural speaker". This broader perspective of language learning and teaching better reflects the concept of ELF, as the intercultural speaker needs competencies beyond just linguistic skills. However, as Baker and Ishikawa (2021) note, this model presents some challenges for the ELF approach because it still focuses on national cultures. A broader and more fluid view of culture, which recognizes the dynamic and multifaceted nature of cultural identities, better relates to the reality of ELF contexts.

In this context, a valuable concept for this study is Intercultural Awareness (ICA):

[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).

As explained by Baker (2022), the term "intercultural awareness" is used over "cultural awareness" to highlight the focus on the processes of intercultural communication, rather than on understanding specific "other" cultures and languages. In this context, culture is not linked to specific nations or nationalities, nor does it imply a distinction between "our" culture and that of the "other." ICA is seen as an ongoing process and not a static set of knowledge (Baker, 2022). The author further explains that while it is possible to see an attempt to incorporate a more international perspective on culture in more recent ELT materials, these resources still largely reflect a predominance of the "native" speaker norm and the Anglophone cultures. Other uses of English, particularly in intercultural and multilingual contexts, are rarely represented. In the Portuguese context, as previously discussed, despite the inclusion of cultural diversity in the curricular documents, namely the *Aprendizagens Essenciais*, there remains a clear emphasis on Anglophone cultures, particularly in basic education.

As highlighted by some scholars (e.g., Sales & Gimenez, 2010; Pennycook, 2004), while English is connected to prestigious positions in many societies, it also creates or reinforces forms of exclusion. This creates a paradox: English can open up opportunities and possibilities for communication, but at the same time, it can also create barriers of exclusion. However, when the ELF perspective is adopted in ELT, it may be fertile soil to develop ICA (Baker, 2015) because it helps connect learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This research also draws on findings from previous studies on textbooks designed in Portugal (Cardoso, 2023; Guerra et al., 2022; and Guerra; Cavalheiro, 2019). These studies find that cultural representations of the UK and the US are clearly emphasized in locally designed English textbooks. This trend is also true for English language varieties, where British and American Standards are clearly predominant in audiovisual resources. While these findings highlight a limitation concerning culture and linguistic diversity in ELT materials developed in Portugal, this study aims to contribute by sharing the voices of pre-service teachers who are already engaging with these materials during their training and are likely to continue relying on them throughout their teaching careers. Also,

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it also aims to emphasize the importance of deepening IC, ICA, and ELF concepts and practices in teacher education programs.

Therefore, it is relevant to stress the importance of an ELF awareness approach in teacher education. Broadly, ELF awareness involves a critical reflection about native-speakerism, including awareness of language use, instructional choices, and the essential learnings for international communication (Sifakis; Kordia, 2021).

2 METHODOLOGY

The workshop aimed to explore IC and ICA through practical work that involved adapting activities from locally designed ELT textbooks. It was designed for pre-service teachers, specifically MA students enrolled in a professional ELT Master's program. Although the participants are referred to here as "pre-service" teachers, some of them had previous teaching experience in different contexts.

The workshop was conducted during a 1.5-hour session and delivered to two groups, a total of 23 MA students. These pre-service teachers had already been presented with the concepts of IC, ICC, and ICA. The objective was to provide participants with additional opportunities to enhance their understanding and application of the above-mentioned concepts, especially ICA, in their teaching practices, through simple yet effective adaptations to existing textbook activities. After a brief recap of these key concepts and an introduction to ELF, participants were asked to complete a short online questionnaire (Appendix A), which consisted of four questions. This questionnaire aimed to assess their perceptions of cultural and language representation in English language textbooks designed in Portugal.

Following the questionnaire, the workshop proceeded with a presentation of a case study on an analysis of cultural representation related to countries in EFL textbooks. The analysis presented focused on two locally designed textbooks, *Engaging 7* (Esteves; Viana; Moreira, 2021) and *MySelfie 10* (Rodrigues; Mendes, 2021), which are intended for Grades 7 and 10, respectively. The key findings demonstrated a cultural overrepresentation of the UK (primarily England) and the USA (Cardoso, 2023). This discussion encouraged critical reflection on the depiction of cultural elements in ELT materials and the extent to which they fail to follow the principles of ICC, ICA, and ELF. The pre-service teachers were

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organized into groups, and two activities from the aforementioned textbooks were presented for adaptation. Each group was tasked with suggesting practical and feasible adaptations to one of the two activities presented. Therefore, they were not required to change the core resources of the activities (e.g., rewriting or searching for a new text), but rather to propose adaptations that would be viable in the context of multilingual/multicultural classrooms, as well as other challenges, such as time constraints.

The first activity proposed for adaptation was a reading task from the textbook *Engaging 7*. The original reading activity presented a text about houses owned by two celebrities: John Travolta (American) and Naomi Campbell (British). The activity centered on reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises, lacking critical thinking questions. This reading task was linked to a controlled writing exercise in which learners would complete a description of another American celebrity's house (Will Smith). In this exercise, learners read a profile of Smith's house and complete the description.

In addition to emphasizing American and British cultural icons only, the text depicts realities that are disconnected from learners' experiences. While the text includes curious information (a park for Travolta's plane; Campbell's spaceship-house), which could initially capture learners' interest due to its novelty, it fails to address themes that 12-year-olds would identify with. Furthermore, a high native-speaker centrality is potentially irrelevant for L2 learners and "will have limited motivational potential for learners in lingua franca contexts" (Prodromou; Mishan, 2008).

The second activity presented for adaptation was a listening and writing task from the textbook *MySelfie 10*. The original listening activity focused on "The Cracked Pot", described as an ancient Indian folktale. The story is about a water bearer who carries two pots, one of which is cracked and leaks water along the path. This cracked pot feels it has nothing but flaws and laments its imperfections. However, the water bearer explains that he had noticed the pot was leaking and had planted flowers along the way on that side of the pot. The flowers blossomed only because they received water through the pot's cracks.

The listening task included comprehension questions and an exercise to rewrite the story based on images of the key events. The illustrations featured a brown-skinned man wearing a turban and carrying water pots. While the story provides a valuable

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opportunity to discuss self-acceptance and creativity, which are relevant themes, especially for adolescent learners, it also reinforces cultural stereotypes. Additionally, the audio resource was narrated by a British male, using Received Pronunciation, which raises concerns about cultural authenticity, representation, and power relations. The critical thinking questions related to this activity focused on the self-helping/self-acceptance part of the story, which is undoubtedly beneficial, but overlooked the underlying cultural bias. For example, the concepts of what is understood as "qualities" and "faults" are not suggested for further reflection or discussion, nor is the illustration of the Indian bearer or the British narrator, which may convey the idea of an ancient Indian story told by the colonizer.

After the participants elaborated their suggestions for adapting one of the two activities, each group presented their ideas, followed by a discussion. The workshop aimed to provide these pre-service teachers with a practical opportunity to adapt a piece of material that would highlight the significance of fostering intercultural awareness in language education.
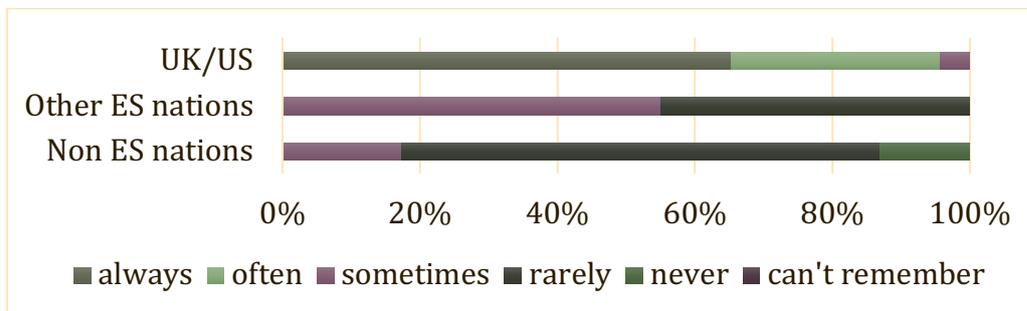
3 FINDINGS

3.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire (Appendix A) completed by the participants consisted of four questions. The first three questions focused on their perceptions regarding: 1. the representation of nations (portrayed as cultural groups and icons), 2. the use of authentic texts, and 3. accents in audio and video materials in ELT textbooks designed in Portugal. The final question (4) explored the participants' insights on IC-related topics. Respondents used a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (with a neutral option available), to express their opinion on topics such as: the representations of Portuguese culture; the depiction of nations and cultural groups, the diversity of English varieties/accents beyond Standard British and Standard American; interactions among diverse English speakers (L1/L2/multilingual/a mix of them); strategies to develop IC, and reflections on learners' own culture. The data were analyzed quantitatively, and the findings are also discussed qualitatively, being organized into themes to better explain patterns and categories.

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The findings from the first question revealed that approximately 65% of the respondents (n = 15) believe that the UK and the US are always represented. Over 69% of them (n = 16) consider that non-English speaking nations are rarely represented. In contrast, around 48% of respondents (n = 11) indicate that other English-speaking countries are sometimes represented. Therefore, it is relevant to note that even other English-speaking nations are culturally underrepresented compared to the UK and the US. Chart 1 illustrates their answers.

Chart 1. Perceptions of a group of pre-service teachers on the representation of nations in textbooks designed in Portugal

The findings on perceptions of the English accent representation (Q3) reveal that around 65% of respondents (n = 15) believe that the Standard British English (SBE) accent, primarily associated with Received Pronunciation, is always present in ELT textbook resources. Similarly, almost 61% of the respondents (n = 14) think that the Standard American English (SAE) accent is often included. Interestingly, only a small percentage, 13% (n = 3), believe that SAE are always present. In contrast, over 52% of them (n = 12) indicated that non-native speaker accents are never represented. Moreover, other native English accents, beyond SBE and SAE, are perceived as rarely represented by almost 48% of the respondents (n = 11), and only approximately 8% (n = 2) of the participants feel that these accents are often included. Chart 2 illustrates these findings.

Chart 2. Perceptions of a group of pre-service teachers on the representation of English accents in textbooks designed in Portugal
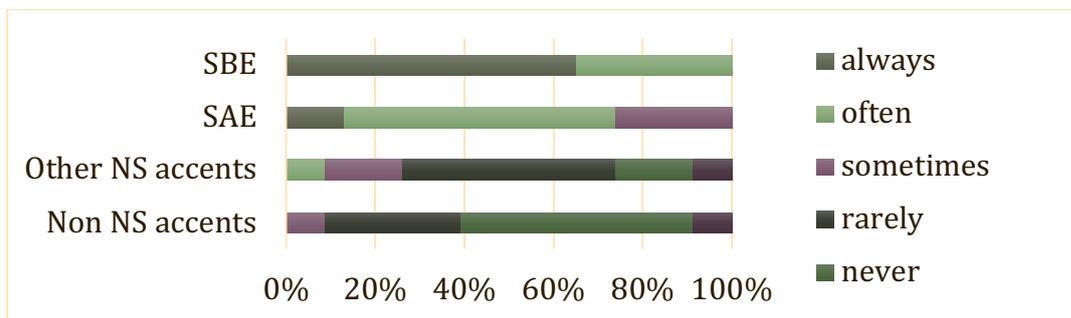
The findings from Q2 also reinforce the participants' perceptions regarding the predominance of SAE and SBE compared to other English-speaking accents, and even more so of non-English-speaking accents, which most believe are never included.

The terms Standard American English (SAE) and Standard British English (SBE) are used here in a broader sense to refer to the main characteristics of English that are commonly associated with these two major varieties and usually approached in ELT. Also, in line with Lippi-Green's (2012) position, the term standard (and consequently, non-standard) is applied in this study only for descriptive purposes, with no intention to attach intrinsic values to them.

Participants' perceptions of the use of authentic texts have been examined in Q2. Authentic texts are defined in this study as texts written for any purpose other than teaching/learning English, whether written, audio, or audiovisual. Over 65% of the respondents (n = 15) believe that a small percentage of texts, including audio and video clips, are authentic and presented without adaptation. In fact, most written texts in Portuguese English textbooks tend to be adapted. Fortunately, as Luís (2024) pointed out, these adaptations primarily involve the length of the texts, with minimal changes to the language.

The questionnaire also explored the perspectives of these pre-service teachers regarding diverse aspects of cultural representation, accent/ language variety awareness, and IC strategies. The majority (82%; n = 19) strongly agree that textbooks should feature cultural groups related to English-speaking nations beyond the UK and the US. Also, over 65% (n = 15) strongly agree that it is essential to have a greater diversity of cultural groups in English language textbooks. Over 69% (n = 16) of the respondents view the

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portrayal of individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as highly relevant. Similar findings are observed in relation to diverse English accents and varieties. Over 60% (n = 14) of the respondents acknowledge that English textbooks should not only portray representations of SAE or SBE accents but also include other varieties. Consequently, for over 43% (n = 10) of the participants, including diverse foreign accents in English, such as the Portuguese accent, this is particularly important. Also, more than 47% (n = 11) of these pre-service teachers strongly agree that textbooks must incorporate interactions among diverse English speakers (natives and non-natives, and only non-native speakers). In relation to intercultural communication, over 73% (n = 17) strongly agree that it is crucial for textbooks to focus on strategies to develop IC. The same proportion agreed that even for beginner-level learners (A1/A2), it is relevant to cover activities to raise awareness about the cultural and linguistic diversity of English speakers worldwide.

Overall, these findings suggest that these pre-service teachers perceive the need to move beyond traditional norms and integrate more diversity regarding English-speaking communities, accents, and intercultural communication strategies in English language textbooks.

3.2 PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SUGGESTIONS

Following the questionnaire, the participants were organized into five groups to adapt one of the two activities previously described. Two groups adapted Activity A (Reading activity – Grade 7), and three other groups presented suggestions for Activity B (Listening activity – Grade 10). The suggested adaptations were analyzed using the Intercultural Awareness model (Baker, 2015).

Original Activity A

The original Activity A, extracted from *Engaging 7* (pp. 84-85), consisted of five exercises: 1) making predictions as a pre-reading exercise, 2) reading and confirming predictions, 3) and 4) comprehension, 5) vocabulary. While the exercises on form and vocabulary are useful, the absence of critical thinking questions, along with the exclusive focus on British and American celebrities whose lifestyles are disconnected from students' reality, does not reflect the role of English as a global lingua franca.

Adaptations – Activity I

Group A – For the pre-reading task, instead of asking students about how they think celebrities' houses look, the group suggested a comparison among celebrities' houses they would know about, in a quick discussion. For the while-reading section, the group suggested a vocabulary exercise focusing on accommodations that students might not be familiar with and find unusual. During the while-reading task, students would be required to observe what the celebrities in the text value in a house. As a follow-up discussion, learners would share what they value in a house with the whole group. Finally, as a production and post-reading task, learners would work in groups to describe their dream house. The suggestion was also analyzed against the three levels of ICA (Baker, 2015), namely Basic Cultural Awareness, Advanced Cultural Awareness, and Intercultural Awareness. The activity proposed explores the first level of the model, focusing on the awareness of superficial cultural elements and preferences while comparing them to those of other cultural groups. However, it lacks a more critical reflection on cultural values and identity.

Group B suggested keeping the activities from the textbook and adding an extension task. After the reading exercises from the textbook, learners would be organized into groups to discuss their houses, favorite areas in their houses, and the similarities and differences in their preferences. This type of discussion would personalize their learning experience, and by sharing their favorite places within their homes, students from different cultural backgrounds could discover similarities, fostering engagement between them. In the second part of this extension discussion, learners would revisit the text and identify elements in celebrities' houses that may hold emotional significance for their owners rather than just monetary value. These discussions would serve as scaffolding to inspire students to acknowledge and identify the areas or elements in their own houses that they feel most personally connected to. Similarly to the previous activity, this one mainly explores the first level of ICA model, and touches on some aspects of the second level, for instance, when students share and find similarities in their preferences within their own cultural grouping.

The suggestions made for Activity I aimed primarily to align the topic with students' prior knowledge and experiences. While fostering discussions that connect to students'

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experiences can support a more intercultural perspective, a more explicit focus on IC would be beneficial. For example, in multicultural/multilingual settings, strategically organizing students into diverse groups could facilitate meaningful interactions across diverse cultural backgrounds. This approach would enable students to compare and contrast their ideas on favorite places within a house, thereby promoting an intercultural perspective. While describing their dream house would foster their creativity and imagination, describing the houses they are familiar with would be another option that could support intercultural awareness. As discussing houses may be a sensitive topic for many students whose families are facing housing issues, extra care should be taken in these discussions. Consequently, a text describing celebrities' houses could cause increased frustration in many learners. Also, focusing on vocabulary items commonly associated with luxurious houses is not very useful for application in different cultural settings. The emphasis solely on the text and the exercises provided in the textbook would probably miss a valuable opportunity for students to reflect upon an important topic and engage with other peers from diverse cultural backgrounds in a more meaningful way.

Original Activity II

The original activity II, extracted from *MySelfie 10*, consisted of: 1) test-format listening comprehension; 2) rewriting the story according to the illustrations provided; 3) writing a sentence conveying the message of the story. Groups C, D, and E adapted this activity.

Adaptations – Activity II

Group C proposed an activity organized into pre-, while-, and after-listening exercises, incorporating some of the activities from the textbook. For the pre-listening section, learners would be provided with a copy of the illustrations presented in the original exercise 2. First, learners would analyze the first image, which shows the water bearer carrying the pots. Based on this first picture, they would predict the context and discuss possible scenarios, language uses, and cultural settings relevant for the story. Afterwards, learners would sequence the remaining images to anticipate the narrative structure. During the listening task, students would listen to an audio recording and verify

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their predictions. The group suggested that the audio should be recorded by an Indian English speaker to incorporate diverse linguistic exposure. While having the audio recorded by a particular narrator would be almost impossible for most teachers, generating text-to-audio content with a specific accent is feasible with some technological tools (e.g., Narakeet and TTsmaker). Although not perfect, it could be an option to offer students more diversity in the audio resources. In the post-listening exercise, learners would deepen their cultural awareness by sharing and comparing stories from their backgrounds that may convey similar messages. These discussions would foster dialogues about diverse cultural narratives and perspectives. They would compare tales from their own backgrounds, identifying similarities and differences to broaden their knowledge about narratives from diverse cultural backgrounds. Finally, students would engage in a final discussion where they personalize the story by relating it to their own lives. This would help reinforce the connection between language learning and intercultural understanding.

Similar to the previous suggestion, Group D also recommended changing the narrator to one with an Indian English accent to expose students to another variety. After the listening comprehension task, the group suggested questions that would encourage students to consider whether the story would make sense within their cultural background, what differences would be perceived as qualities, and to reflect on cultural expectations that individuals would face. One of the questions would also invite students to critically examine gender roles and stereotyping associated with certain tasks within their own cultural context. This approach fosters deeper engagement with the audio resource while promoting a more nuanced understanding of diversity and social constructs.

Instead of changing the activity, Group E suggested an expansion discussion, in which learners would explore cultural parallels within *The Cracked Pot*. Students would be required to examine how diverse cultures interpret themes of acceptance and diversity. The discussion, moderated by the teacher, could begin by exploring different cultural perspectives on the two pots, focusing on themes of acceptance and self-acceptance. Next, students would share personal insights on how diverse cultural groups could approach these topics. Additionally, learners would reflect on their own cultural experiences, relate them to the tale, and recognize the variety of viewpoints within the

classroom. The activity culminates with a reflective writing exercise, in which students apply the tale's message to their own lives, emphasizing the significance of self-acceptance and valuing differences. This approach encourages both critical thinking and personal growth, reinforcing the relevance of intercultural awareness in everyday life.

Adaptations suggested by groups C, D, and E go up to some extent beyond the basic cultural awareness of ICA model (Baker, 2015) and explore a few components of levels 2 (advanced cultural awareness) and 3 (intercultural awareness). These activities include a critical reflection about cultures and personal and social development, for example, the awareness of multiple perspectives, sharing stories from their backgrounds, and personalizing the narrative.

It is interesting to note that suggestions for the Grade 7 activity do not go further in developing ICA compared to the adaptations for the Grade 10 activity. This may be due to the pre-service teacher's concern that learners may lack the necessary linguistic proficiency to understand and discuss intercultural topics in English. However, adopting an ELF perspective, where learners are encouraged to apply communication strategies, could facilitate engagement even at basic levels.

4 FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

While the pre-service teachers' suggestions incorporate a more intercultural approach compared to the original activities, there remain opportunities to include strategies to better address IC and ICA from an ELF perspective. Therefore, these suggestions aim to provide further ideas for adapting or extending existing textbook activities. Although further suggestions are presented for the specific activities from the textbooks discussed here, they can be adjusted to different contexts and activities.

For the reading activity (Activity 1, celebrities' houses), a warm-up discussion about "house" and "home" could prompt learners to reflect on these concepts and relate them to their meaning. Given that learners in Grade 7 are expected to have an elementary level of English (CEFR A2; Council of Europe, 2001), they could be prompted to say different words for each definition, and then the teacher would create two-word clouds on the board—one for "home" and another for "house". Proverbs and quotes related to these concepts could also be introduced for students' reflection. Examples include, "Home is

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where the heart is" or "A house is made of bricks and beams. A home is made of hopes and dreams". Further questions could be used to deepen their reflection, such as, "What's the difference between 'house' and 'home'?", "What does 'home' mean to you?". After this, simple definitions of 'house' and 'home' would be provided to support the interaction, followed by further questions, such as "What makes a house comfortable/a home?" "What makes a house special for us?" This warm-up includes exploring personal interpretations of "home", identifying the characteristics that would make a house special.

After reading the original text and completing the exercises provided in the textbook, students would identify in the text the elements that could transform a house into a home, and the unusual spaces and furniture in the celebrities' houses compared to the houses they are familiar with.

As an after-reading exercise, critical reflection and group discussion would help students to broaden their perspectives and relate their experiences from an intercultural viewpoint. Questions that could guide this discussion include "Did you like to read about these celebrities' houses? Why (not)?, Do you think these homes are practical and actually comfortable, or just for showing off? Why?, Why do you think celebrities choose to live in such unique houses? Do you think they are sustainable houses? Which one is better for the environment? Some people don't have a house to live in. Why does it happen? What could be done about it?" While these questions should be tailored to fit each specific context, after-reading critical reflection and discussion mediated by the teacher would address key topics related to intercultural communication and the development of global citizenship. These topics include social issues like the environment, justice, and housing.

Finally, an extension exercise could be proposed. In multilingual/multicultural classrooms, students would be organized into small groups. Ideally, learners from diverse cultural backgrounds would be placed in the same groups to promote diversity. This arrangement could be a key factor in promoting interaction in an authentic ELF environment. It may happen that students from diverse cultural backgrounds would hesitate to work together, and they would need to be encouraged to interact effectively. For example, this became evident during a visit to a school in Lisbon a few years ago, where students of the same nationality tended to group together and seemed uncomfortable interacting with other groups.

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A possibility for this production activity is for students to take pictures of houses and buildings they see on their way to school, or near their homes. They could either print these pictures or send them to be printed at school. In a subsequent lesson, each group would discuss the houses they photographed and choose one or two images to present to the class. To guide their discussion, simple questions may be provided regarding colors, shapes, and whether these houses are modern or old. Additional questions to connect to students' experiences would also be valuable, for example, "Does any of the houses remind you of any other houses you have seen or lived in? When? Where?" "Would you like to live in these houses?" Why (not)?" Besides describing the house/building physically and expressing their opinions about it, other follow-up questions could foster their critical thinking and intercultural values. These may include, "How different/similar are houses in different places/neighborhoods/cities/countries?", "How similar/different are the houses you photographed in your group?", "What stories can you imagine could happen in these houses?" For this last question, students could draw some scenes to support them in telling the story they think about. These steps would be adapted according to each context to meet learners' best interests. Another extension exercise possibility is for groups to draw a floor plan of a house and describe the rooms and furniture. Students could be encouraged to reflect on all the houses they know and have lived in. At the end, they present their floor plans to the class. This sequence encourages both analytical and creative thinking while supporting vocabulary development and critical engagement with the themes of dwelling and belonging.

In any of the suggestions, communication strategies explicitly explained and exemplified by the teacher would be meaningful in enriching ELF interactions. These strategies may include negotiation of meaning (e.g., repetition, rephrasing, self-repair, etc.); accommodation (e.g., adjusting their language, expectations); and use of learners' linguistic and cultural repertoire (e.g., code-switching, *translanguaging*), to mention a few. Learners would then be encouraged to incorporate elements unique to their cultural backgrounds. They could also explain, use, and teach their classmates vocabulary in their L1 to convey particular meanings. These strategies would support intercultural encounters and encourage multilingualism, another key aspect in ELF communication (Cogo, 2018).

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Mediation strategies, as emphasized by the Companion Volume of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), are a valuable aspect to be considered, especially in multicultural and multilingual settings (Sperti, 2021), in an ELF approach. The emphasis should then be put on intelligibility. Therefore, negotiation of meaning and use of multilingual resources are valid and encouraged, since these aspects exist in ELF encounters outside the classroom (Bayyurt; Şentürk, 2021).

The warm-up and follow-up exercises aim to address Level 1—Basic cultural awareness (Baker, 2015), more specifically related to shared behaviors, beliefs, and values, and the comparison among these interpretations. Level 2—advanced cultural awareness, and Level 3—intercultural awareness are primarily addressed in the critical reflection that follows the comprehension exercises and during the production phase. In these parts, cultural values and social issues are discussed, along with engagement with multiple perspectives within their respective groups. In level 3 (intercultural awareness), empathy and a critical thinking perspective are encouraged, as well as creativity through stories they create and narrate. Finally, the emphasis on communication strategies, the use of a multilingual and multicultural repertoire, and mediation strategies aims at helping students develop their critical perspectives through intercultural communication.

For the second activity (Activity II, "The Cracked Pot"), originally designed for Grade 10, an additional suggestion would also involve three steps. In the pre-listening exercises, students would be invited to predict the story based on the illustrations provided in the textbook. The completion of the original listening exercise, fostering comprehension and vocabulary, could be further enriched with a follow-up discussion focusing on interpreting the symbolic meanings and metaphors associated with the pots depicted in the narrative, encouraging analytical and critical thinking.

In the after-listening part, a discussion would focus on empathy, an essential skill for developing intercultural competence (Ostman, 2019). Students would be encouraged to reflect for a few moments on how the "cracked pot," if it were a person, would feel. In pairs, they would engage in a pair role-play activity where they would introduce themselves as the cracked pot, tell their story (in the first person), and share feelings and emotions, according to the audio. They would also be welcome to include any additional details they find relevant to personalizing the story. Since adolescent students might be

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reluctant to share personal stories with their peers (Asscheman et al., 2020), adopting others' perspectives could help them deal with shyness and develop empathy by stepping into someone's shoes. The learners should be encouraged to practice attentive speaking and listening.

In a second step, they would reflect on situations where someone feels like a cracked pot. Since Grade 10 students tend to have a higher level of communication skills (B1 level), this discussion could be deepened with more critical thinking questions about the cracked pot's feelings and perceptions of its imperfections. Possible questions that could support this discussion include "Why is it important to recognize our own flaws? What can we learn from them?", "How did the cracked pot see itself at the beginning of the story? What about the end? What changed?", "What are small things we can do every day to be kind to ourselves?", "Why do you think it's important to see the value in other people?", "What can we say or do to friends who think they are not good enough?"

Similar to the reading activity for Grade 7, an extension production exercise could be proposed. Learners would likewise be arranged in small groups (diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds) to engage in comparative discussions about traditional stories that carry a positive message in their opinion. They would reflect on their cultural origins and thematic similarities. In this part of the activity, communication strategies should also be reinforced. Students could practice telling these traditional narratives to each other, highlighting the feelings, thoughts, and emotions related to them, while practicing attentive listening.

The final stage involves a creative writing task, which would start with exploring the defining features of folk tales. This exploration would involve reading examples of these tales in languages the students are familiar with. The Portuguese teacher and other language teachers at school could work together to read and analyze different stories with students. Learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds would use their repertoire and experience to write a simple story in English that would resonate with them, regardless of their origin. This sequence aims not only to develop linguistic and intercultural awareness but also to foster critical thinking and storytelling skills.

This activity aims to address the three stages of the ICA model, but with a stronger emphasis on level 3. It begins with the recognition element, leading to an understanding

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of cultural behaviors, and then engages students in critical thinking, empathy, negotiation, storytelling, and multilingual collaboration.

In summary, both suggestions aim to provide useful ideas for addressing the three levels of ICA (Baker, 2015), particularly Level 3 from an ELF perspective, while also encouraging multilingualism and effective communication strategies, even at lower language levels.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The group of pre-service teachers who participated in the workshop recognizes the lack of cultural and accent diversity in EFL textbooks designed in Portugal. Their views are consistent with findings from previous studies on Portuguese ELT textbooks (e.g., Guerra, 2005; Guerra & Cavalheiro, 2019; Guerra et al., 2022; Cardoso, 2023). As a result, most participants advocate for the inclusion of a greater cultural and accent representation in textbooks in the country, stating that it is not only desirable but also necessary.

The adaptations proposed by these pre-service teachers reflect their concern for more culturally diverse activities from a critical perspective. While their suggestions include an intercultural component, mainly through discussions, a stronger emphasis on implementing specific strategies to develop IC from an ELF perspective could further strengthen their approach. For instance, explicit instructions on using language to ask for clarification, repetition, paraphrasing, confirmation checks, negotiation, and translanguaging (Baker; Ishikawa, 2021; Cogo, 2018) would facilitate their discussions. In this sense, focusing on learners' language and cultural repertoire would further enrich the activities, especially during these authentic ELF interactions. To make it clear, translanguaging "includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures" (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). According to this concept, learners would be allowed to use all the languages they know to make meaning within their contexts, including a series of multimodal means of communication (speaking, writing, signing, etc.). When addressing intercultural issues, the focus on the learners' stories is often a way to make connections between them and bridge the gaps between cultures. Consequently, translanguaging builds a social space for multilingual learners because it integrates several aspects of their identity (stories,

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experiences, beliefs, etc.) into a dynamic, personal, and meaningful way of communicating (Wei, 2011).

The scarcity of clear and direct strategies in the suggested adaptations by the workshop participants demonstrates one of the workshop's limitations and highlights the need for future improvements. Extended time limits and additional instructions could facilitate the adaptation process. Additionally, these constraints also emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for pre-service teachers regarding strategies in adapting and creating materials to address IC and ICA from an ELF perspective. Furthermore, the validity of the suggestions proposed in this study would be consolidated by piloting the activities in real classroom settings with students from both grades.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the need for greater cultural and accent diversity in Portuguese EFL textbooks and underscores the importance of ongoing pre-service teacher education in IC, ICA, and ELF. It reinforces the value of expanding intercultural education from an ELF perspective in such contexts. Although the adaptations reflect participants' concern for more diverse and inclusive materials, a focus on specific strategies to incorporate an ELF perspective is encouraged. Incorporating a continuous ELF-awareness approach into teacher education can better equip educators to meet intercultural needs for ELF learners and help them bridge the gaps among their multilingual and multicultural peers.

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