

ENGLISH LEARNING AT A DISTANCE: A CASE STUDY ON SOCIAL-LINGUISTIC AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

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Abstract

Considering that there is a political-digital movement of globalization of which Brazil makes part and for which access to English knowledge is demanded, this paper discusses the theme of social/digital inclusion as an effect of a formal education in English at university level in Brazil. With the understanding that digital and social inclusions can be facets of one same process, a third, linguistic facet, is incorporated in our reflection and made visible, as the three aspects are conceived as interconstitutive of an event that can be, for certain postcolonial, non English speaking countries, of the rising of a social visibility and place. The corpus of analysis chosen for this study is hybrid, composed of a collection of answers to questionnaires and postings in discussion forums by students who participate in a four-year undergraduate long distance course of English and English Literature provided by a Federal University in the Southeast region of Brazil. The course licenses teachers for K-12 schools and is part of a Federal Program do graduate teachers. Our theoretical framework is a discursive one (Pêcheux, 1969, 1975), from which we see both English and ICTs as kinds of knowledge that are practiced within conditions of production related to history, processes of memory and subjectivation, together with post-colonial reflections on language policies and practices (Spivak, 1999), from which we discuss the specific characteristics of teaching/learning English in Brazil.

Keywords: English language, social inclusion, digital inclusion, post-colonial condition, discourse

Introduction

As practiced today, the political movement of globalization may demand, in various circumstances and although arguable¹², certain kinds of knowledge as conditions for being part of it. Two of them are: a certain level of proficiency in the English language and some expertise in the usage of digital technologies. In countries like Brazil, these conditions are posed as quests given our history with foreign languages and our very recent policies and actions for broader access to digital technologies¹³. A broader access to third level education is also relatively new. Considering the size of the country and its internal organization around the biggest urban centers, there has been a need to create and offer more access to undergraduation courses that can reach the farthest areas, being long distance education a possible way of response. In this context, and together with actions that have been expanding

¹² In the globalization context, we see the circulation of the English language as a result of language policies that result from worldly economic and political moves and pressure and not as policies which have been locally discussed and collectively decided, towards what would be the maintenance of local identities.

¹³ The institutionalization of national policies for computer and Internet access begun in 2010. See Decree-Laws No. 6.948, from August 2009, and No. 7.175, from May 2010, which legislated about the creation of the Steering Committee of the Digital Inclusion Program and the National Broadband Program, respectively.

the infrastructure for digital technology access, the Open University of Brazil¹⁴, which covers distance educational courses in different areas of knowledge was institutionalized in 2005. Since its beginning, the creation of long distance courses and also the culture of distance education is still in process, as different private and public universities have been joining the initiative and making use of the Internet and virtual platforms to create pedagogical material and virtual classes. The first and second generation courses in this modality have just reached or are now reaching their finalization.

Researches have been problematizing these new technological conditions of education (Huang et al, 2013; Kenski, 2007; Lemos, 2002; Levy, 1999, 2009), and much has been said about the impact, contributions or disadvantages of technologies in the educational processes and practices, however studies focused on how the technological innovations actually affect them are still new (Bullen, Morgan & Qayyum, 2011; Sancho, 2010). In the area of studies related to the teaching and learning of foreign languages (FL), it is within the transdisciplinary realm of Applied Linguistics that one can investigate the effects of technologies in the development of language teacher education.

In this paper, and considering the Brazilian context, we aim at discussing the theme of social inclusion as a result of digital and foreign linguistic inclusion at the same time, as a process at university level and by a discursive perspective. We understand that being included involves being active and visible in social practices in diverse forms and modalities and that it refers not only to having access to these kinds of knowledge but also to foreign languages in non excluding teaching and language practices that see global and act local. We thus agree with Kleiman (2013), as she defines inclusion as a process in which ‘peripheral knowledge’ is legitimate leading to epistemological decolonization regarding the research production and social participation.

Our considerations in this study are built with the results from a research in which we analyze the representations built by pre-service English teachers from a distance course in a public Brazilian University concerning (i) digital learning practices and (ii) distance English learning. We understand that these subjects’ representations concerning both digital learning practices and distance English learning may affect the relationship they establish with the learning environment they take part in to develop the course (as it is the place where they do the tasks they are assigned; interact with professors, tutors and peers; solve administrative problems etc), and with the language they learn-teach. As an effect of the course and because of its specific characteristics, we believe a social-linguistic-digital inclusion process is taking place for the students. In the lines below, firstly, we discuss the history of the English language in Brazil. Secondly, we present the course under focus, and the issue of spaces and forms of enunciation in foreign languages for countries like ours. Thirdly, we present our research findings.

English as a foreign language in Brazil

The process of learning a foreign language is determined by different aspects that refer to both subjective and historical conditions at play. The answer to why an individual engages into learning a foreign language has to do with desire (working at the unconscious, symbolic order) and personal possibilities (e.g.: economic, logistic etc), and may or may not resonate the broader historical determinations, that is, the political and economical, global and local moves, the national, regional and private language policies, laws and learning trends that result from them. The answer to if an individual actually learns the foreign language and gets to enunciate it, however, presupposes all the previous conditions and has to do with the history of languages and language policies and practices the individual is

¹⁴ In Portuguese: Universidade Aberta do Brasil – UAB.

immersed in, to a historical possibility to enunciate and be heard. Speaking from a post-colonial country that was colonized by the Portuguese, and that has English mostly practiced as a foreign language, learning English and being able to enunciate it are matters that cannot simply be resolved (Rajagopalan & Rajagopalan, 2008).

The question over why or how a language can be considered foreign has been widely discussed in the field of Applied Linguistics and many have been the theoretical perspectives through which it has been theorized. The discussions range from theoretical frameworks that see language as symbolic and discursive orders that build subjectivities and identifications (Revuz, 1998; Serrani, 2005; Bolognini, Oliveira & Hashiguti, 2005; Coracini, 2003; Grigoletto & Carmagnani, 2005) to the ones which consider language as an abstract system of linguistic forms, as a communication tool or as a means of interaction¹⁵. From a discursive perspective, a language is a symbolic materiality that works as a partially autonomous system (Pêcheux, 1975) whose meaning is an effect of its practice in history, as it is related to the exterior conditions that make the rising of meaning possible (Pêcheux, 1983). The political status of being a foreign, second or first language, however, and if and how they remain in such statutes, and which is one of our interests in this study, may also refer to the language policies and laws that result themselves from political and economical relations among countries at different periods in history. These policies and laws force the emergence of foreign language courses, which, at their turn, are also dynamic and reflect other determinations, as epistemological constructions and their effects on the teaching methodologies and pedagogical materials, the development and access to language technologies. We shall examine these circumstances in Brazil.

The 2008 UNESCO & FUNAI report on Brazilian indigenous languages and cultures¹⁶ estimated between 150 to 180 existing spoken indigenous languages. Around 30 other immigrant languages can be added to this number (Oliveira, 2002). The Brazilian national and official language has been Portuguese since 1758 (when it was still an Empire), and the Brazilian Sign Language was institutionalized as a second official language in 2002. Since its creation (dated to 1889), the country has had a tendency for monolingual policies (Wanderley, 2013, p. 131) which silenced many languages and even gave them a status of taboo languages, as they became legally forbidden¹⁷. Formal, institutionalized access to foreign languages has thus been closely related to the national policies and laws that either created and permitted or banished disciplines of foreign languages in the school curriculums. It is noteworthy to mention that access to school itself has also been an issue to a country whose economy was basically agricultural and exploratory until very recently and where schools have mostly been an urban construction. In our history of foreign languages, classical, erudite languages like Latin and Greek were studied by the few people who had access to them at their time, and were followed by French and English, which had stronger investment for the formation of teachers and the creation of chairs in schools. For its mercantile and political importance, with time, English superseded the intellectual reference for French since the imperialist period, and has remained as one of the most relevant taught foreign languages. Although surrounded by Spanish speaking countries, Spanish has only

¹⁵ For further details on conceptions of language and language teaching, check Brown (1994), Canale & Swain (1980), Harmer (2001), Kumaravivelu (2003), Ur (1996).

¹⁶ Farani, M. & Meira, M. F. & Defourny, V. International Technical Cooperation Project Documentation of Brazilian Indigenous Languages and Cultures. Brasília, 2008. Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/el_Brasilia_prodoc.pdf. . Access: October, 2014.

¹⁷ Some examples are the 1758 Decree-Law of the Marquess of Pombal; the 1938 Decree-Law No. 406, that extinguished the foreign schools in national territory, and the 1939 Decree-Law No. 1545, during the New State, dictatorial period, forbidding the teaching of foreign languages in schools and their usage in public.

recently been incorporated in the school curriculums, with the creation of MERCOSUL, the Southern Common Market.

English has thus always been economically influential in the Brazilian history with the more incisive English (since the 1800s) and American (since the 1940s) trading policies and presence in Brazil, and it has been very visible in the production of cutting-edge technologies. This influence is materialized in the many lexical terms that have been incorporated or adapted to our daily practices in Portuguese¹⁸ and in our cultural habits as well, with a great circulation of pop American and English songs, American movies and series, clothing and eating styles, for example. The language has been massively taught in private language schools since the 1960s, especially with the proliferation of franchising schools and their marketing campaigns (Bolognini, Oliveira & Hashiguti, op. cit, p. 37), which have helped constitute the imaginary representation that it can only be properly or “truly” learned there, as knowing the language has been represented as synonymous to being able to speak it (Brito & Guilherme, 2012). Their campaigning against the teaching methods in regular K-12 schools has successfully guaranteed their existence so far, as “being able to speak English” has been believed to occur only after attending such courses.

The English teaching/learning processes in these spaces are also strongly tied to educational and colonizing technologies. Countries like Brazil have been consuming a variety of educational materials and courses created by English speaking countries like England and the United States of America. Success in the processes of teaching/learning the language, however, is relatively little. Although vastly read and practiced in sectors like universities and companies, and although it is a discipline in regular schools for at least eight years in K-12 schools, English is not considered as a second spoken language in Brazil. A bilingual Portuguese-English situation is mostly recognized as a reality that refers to families, communities and economically developed centers only.

In this historical context, it seems to us that a kind of blockage to enunciate (in) foreign languages is foundational of our national memory/identity (Hashiguti, 2013) and so is speaking and enunciating in English. Enunciating (in) a foreign language is seen as a matter of historical (symbolic) possibility and not of capacity, and it has to do with the emergence of a voice, in the case of post-colonial countries like Brazil. The emergence of this voice is a result of inclusive practices.

Learning and teaching English at a distance for/as social inclusion

The Plan for Teaching Formation for Basic Level Education¹⁹ was an educational policy created in 2009²⁰ by the Ministry of Education and based on a partnership with the Coordination for the Qualification of Higher Level Staff²¹, the Municipal Secretaries of Education, and universities all over the country in an effort to graduate and license teachers to work in K-12 public schools. The universities were invited to know the policy and to elaborate proposals for participation. The courses could be either presential or at a distance, and they would reflect the reality and needs of the communities and regions focused. Many universities proposed long distance courses following the parameters of the Open University of Brazil, where courses are provided at a virtual platform, and for which specific tailored materials (printed study guide and video-classes) are produced. The course under analysis in this study fits this last kind.

¹⁸ ‘Drive-through’, ‘sale’, ‘escanear’ and ‘salvar’, as adaptations of ‘scan’ and ‘save’ (Comp.), ‘site’ (for websites) are some of the examples.

¹⁹ In Portuguese: Plano Nacional de Formação de Professores da Educação Básica Pública – PARFOR.

²⁰ Federal Decree No. 6.755, from January 29, 2009 and the Ministerial Order No. 9, from June 30, 2009.

²¹ In Portuguese: Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES

It started in 2011 with 162 adult students from various cities in the State of Minas Gerais, in the Southeast area of Brazil. According to a research carried out with the students in the second term of the course, most of them had attended public schools in high school and were attending university for the first time. Most of the students are married, aged between 18 to 60 years old in the beginning of the course. It was also the first time all of them attended a long distance course. Few of them had had access to private English courses before.

Representations about digital learning

In the beginning of the course, students were asked to read a text about English learning in the cyberspace and to talk about their learning experiences in digital environments as well as their habits regarding the use of Internet. The analyses of the answers posted at the Discussion Forum point out that the discourse concerning the numerous benefits of technology is predominant²² (even if it is sometimes put into perspective by some of its disadvantages), which could lead to the perception that the Forum is a homogenous space that just consolidates hegemonic positions (Brito & Hashiguti, press). Grouped into regularities, the students' opinions about learning at a distance, via the Internet, is firstly seen as a limitless possibility, as freedom without barriers, development and as a reality that is more real²³. However, by unveiling the discursive threads that constitute these subjects' voices, it is possible to see that the images about what it is like to learn in the 'virtual world' is permeated by the singularity of each subject and his memories of learning and history of life. In the answers, differences concerning familiarity with technological tools, digital learning and virtual interactions come about showing that the relation subjects establish with distance learning occurs among conflictive learning practices that are reconfigured along the course, as we may see in the following discursive sequences²⁴.

(DS01) I'm from Y generation. I grew up playing games and I had access to the Internet at 17 years old /.../ My generation likes problems and barriers to be solved fast /.../ I see more positive than negative aspects in English teaching at a distance. We are **free** to study whenever we want. Attending classes is important, because the presence of the teacher can solve doubts, but distance demands more /.../ Without the Internet I'm nothing.

(DS02) Learning English in the web? **The possibilities seem endless.** The only problem I would highlight is the lack of human warmth, visual contact, body language that, in some cases, dismisses the need to use a more sophisticated vocabulary. As well said by my child: **it seems that today nothing more is real, everything is very virtual.**

(DS03) /.../ I took a long time for me to have contact with the virtual world, I'm 48 /.../ The Internet brings the world towards us, **we just have to filter** what is useful for knowledge and learning, because the virtual world can also bring some a bother to those who have no discernment. Regarding the distance course I see more positive aspects because it makes us have more responsibilities, as, although we have no physical contact with teachers and peers, we have the duty of interacting with each other to have our doubts solved.

²² It is important to highlight that this discourse is partly determined by the conditions of production of the task assigned to the pre-service teachers: the fact, for instance, that pre-service teachers read a text in which the author focused on the differences between traditional and virtual classes (drawing attention to the potentialities of the latter) or that as students in a distance course they tend to outline its advantages.

²³ Words and expressions that make these senses visible were highlighted by us.

²⁴ All sequences were translated from Portuguese to English.

(DS04) /.../ technological revolution shows that these relations [between individuals] can also happen virtually. I think this new educational modality is very interesting, because **barriers are broken, distance diminished. Learning isn't restricted to time or places, it is established with broad freedom**, however, also surrounded by rules.

(DS05) First I want to say that, besides my husband and kids, what gave me enthusiasm to take the Letters course was the fact that it is at distance, once here, where I live, there is no college, and also because I like English.

(DS06) It calls my attention the fact that **virtual interaction propitiates much more contexts of real interaction**. The contact with people from different parts of the world inserts us in real contexts leading to collaborative learning.

(DS07) For me, a person who was born in the late 50s there is an enormous difficulty to deal with this infinity of information, but my little grandchildren help me, however I see that interactive virtual communication is the **biggest technological development of men and makes it possible to anybody to get informed about anything**. I believe the virtual English classes can enable the interchange among diverse cultures.

For some of these pre-service teachers being online is just a continuation of their everyday life (SD01), an opportunity to interact in a broader perspective (SD04, SD06) or even the only chance to attend college (SD05). For others it may bring a sense of strangeness not only due to the fact that they have to work with unknown tools (SD07), but also because 'being online' in this context involves being exposed and read by everyone or not having physical contact with teachers and classmates (SD02, SD03). The point is that being 'inserted' into formal distance learning requires movements of dislocations regardless, for example, the age or experience of students. Even though some of them are more familiar with digital literacy (especially in what concerns networking), being a pre-service English teacher in a distance course brings different demands from the ones they may be accustomed to responding, such as: recording videos or audio archives in English and posting it at a forum (which means having to listen to yourself in a FL and also be heard and evaluated by the others); producing collaborative texts (WIKI) based on a topic given by the professor; compiling glossaries regarding the subject being studied; participate in web conferences etc. (Hashiguti & Brito, 2014).

Distance English Learning

The researches that have been carried out in the mentioned distance course (Brito & Hashiguti, press) suggest that the pre-service teachers, when asked, in the beginning of the course, to evaluate their experiences of learning English in this context, inscribe themselves in the *discourse of distance English learning difficulty*, which is sustained by the representation that virtual courses do not enable learners to develop language proficiency (especially regarding oral production) with the same effectiveness of presential courses.

We claim that such representation seems to be built upon two main images: (i) *the image of digital learning practices* and (ii) *the image of 'knowing a language'*. The former involves pre-service teachers' expectations concerning what it is like to learn both a foreign language and how to become a teacher of this language through a distance course. Being a new experience to all the subjects, and given the fact that many of them were not even familiarized with basic digital practices, we argue that to be a 'distance pre-service English teacher' puts them in a position in which they have to dislocate their own learning practices and knowledges, constructing a digital learning culture that brings about the clash between discursive memories regarding the relation of: virtual/presential environments, synchronous/asynchronous interactions, digital/physical bodies, among others. The latter is

mainly based on the idea of language as a ‘tool’, possible of existing outside its speakers and their practices of verbal interaction and thus possible of being ‘acquired’ by learners. Our analyses have shown that these images are being problematized by the subjects enabling them to inscribe themselves in discursivities that postulate language as a complex process of constant enunciation determined by historical and political aspects of meaning production.

When enunciating about the course, we also see the emergence of a *discourse of perseverance* in the speeches of the pre-service teachers which diverges from the discourse of difficulty and points out the desire of the subjects to face the perception of lack before the image of English language knowledge as a complete construct and to become enunciators in this language. Besides, by mobilizing voices that resonate meanings of ‘determination’, ‘motivation’, ‘willpower’ and ‘victory’, they highlight the relevance and importance of the course to their personal and professional development and thus to their social and digital inclusion.

In order to investigate the way these subjects resignify the course itself in the position of preservice English teachers at a distance, now in the penultimate semester, we asked them to answer a questionnaire in which they were supposed to talk about: the place of English language in their lives after they started the course; the way their lives have been affected by the experience of distance learning and by their relation with ICTs since the beginning of the course; and the activities and practices proposed throughout the course that made them feel more comfortable with English and ICTs.

Although students reproduce pedagogical discourses that usually emphasize the idea of ‘progress’, ‘transformation’, ‘citizenship’, it is relevant to notice that, by highlighting the contributions of the course to both their professional and personal development, they outline, for instance, how alterity (it is the relation between the ‘I’ and the ‘others’) may provoke discursive dislocation and subjective repositioning. In the way of regularities, what we can understand is that new ways of gazing and being were raised, as new subjectivities in the foreign language, giving room for the repetition of the sense of broadening spaces and breaking limits, which were already present in the representations about the distance learning via the Internet. ‘Transformation’, ‘development’, ‘being able to enunciate the unspeakable’, ‘vanishing representations’ all say about the constitution of different discursive positions and subjectivities, and of the constitution of a place of enunciation (that is, a social place) as seen in the following sequences:

(DS08) **The course made me see more critically** not only the world but the whole reality that surrounds me, not to mention the readings and beautiful texts that I can’t forget until today.

(DS09) **By studying English, my horizons have broadened**, because I started to search for contacts with contents, people and learning situations with which I wasn’t concerned before. I made a movement towards this universe and with it I’m reaching new heights in cognitive terms.

(DS10) /.../ with the learning I’ve acquired, it is possible to say that the English language, through the course of Letters-English/PARFOR has contributed and continues to contribute to the construction of a discursive competence and this way to a much better human and citizen **development** than before, as it has offered **the possibility of being in touch with other ways of feeling, living and expressing**.

(DS11) My practices have changed in the sense that **it was necessary for me to adapt to a specific virtual environment**, learn how to work with new resources and to deal with some limitations, **establish a new routine of studies and contact with new people and situations of learning and interaction**.

(DS12) Distance learning and ITCs have entered my life through the door of indifference and fear. But a week later, **this fear and this indifference vanished and gave place to pleasure and willingness to search for learning more.**

(DS13) Regarding English, I can say that **I've particularly broadened** in a meaningful way my fluency in general terms, and that **I've had significant gains concerning especially the abilities of oral comprehension, writing and reading.**

(DS14) First the practices experienced through the virtual English lab /.../ provided **a real contact of everyday situations in English learning** that is essential for my **development.**

(DS15) I'd like to mention as a positive aspect, the initiative of the lab created in the virtual environment and that offers interesting opportunities of interactions and **broadening of knowledges and competencies.**

(DS16) The course, Letters-English PARFOR, was essential as a **personal and social rescue tool** for me. [...] The contact with the English language in the discursive approach that the course presents provided an opportunity for me and still nurture the cause of **my transformations as a person.**

(DS17) I started to make use of ICTs and all electrical and digital tools in all sectors of my life such as: communicating with people in the pursuit of learning for teacher training in English. Finally, **today** without fear of being exaggerated, **I say the Internet is part of my life.** It is essential because it provides my interaction with the world. [...] The course of Arts-English PARFOR came into my life, providing **opportunities for learning what was an unspeakable world, it freed me [...], (it) revolutionized** my knowledge and reading, not only from the perspective of English language learning, but the human, social and cultural literacy that we may learn from our professors.

We argue that learning and social inclusion can be conceived by the lens of interpellation: when subjects are interpellated by the other (by the *beautiful texts, the contents, people and learning situations with which I wasn't concerned before, the possibility of being in touch with other ways of feeling, living and expressing*), when they are 'open' to the feeling of *strangeness* (to the need of *adapting to an specific virtual environment, to overcome the indifference and fear, which vanished and gave place to pleasure and willingness to search for learning more*), they are then able to meaningfully resignify learning practices (*I've had significant gains concerning especially the abilities of oral comprehension, writing and reading; virtual English lab /.../ provided a real contact of everyday situations in English learning that is essential for my development*) and to 'take' the word in a significant way, assuming an enunciative position which regards power relations and processes of identifications with certain discourses.

It is indeed the significant taking of the word the aspect responsible to affect and transform the subject (SERRANI-INFANTE, 1998). In other words, it seems that the distance language course offered these subjects a place from which they could speak and be heard, which did not exist before, a space of enunciability which legitimate their position as English learners and future teachers. Such an effect is not only socially inclusive, in our perspective, but also of the constitution of a different diverging discourse about the English language though/by which the founding memories of foreign languages as taboo languages can be dislocated and resignified in our history.

Conclusion

Taking into account subjects' heterogeneity and singularity, we state that digital learning practices are not given *a priori*, instead they are constructed along the development

and engagement of subjects in a variety of language practices and discourses that may resignify their beliefs and concepts regarding learning. We argue that this process of commitment and of (*de*)stabilization can lead to digital and social inclusion as a process occurring from the subject in relation to the others and not outside him. In other words, it is from their own heterogeneity as language subjects that these pre-service teachers interact with their peers, tutor, teachers, materials, virtual learning environment and with themselves as subjects that have to build a ‘virtual’ image before the others.

To be a distance pre-service English teacher demands from the subjects to struggle with matters that vary from logistic aspects of digital learning to issues that involve identity and power relations in this environment. In order to legitimate their own position as future English teachers, they have, for instance: a) to deal with the lack of appropriate technical resources to develop the course; b) to manage the time spent on managing technical aspects of the course (learning how to upload/download a video or finding where in the virtual learning platform tasks should be posted or developed) and the learning activities themselves; c) to deal with the skepticism concerning the quality of online courses (White, 2003); d) to face the historical ‘weight’ that constitutes the processes of learning/teaching English in Brazil; e) to engage in digital and academic literacy practices; f) to resignify themselves as English learners/future teachers taking into account the relation subject-language-cyberspace.

The concept of inclusion is often used in the literature but not fully problematized (Rawal, 2009) and it is a term that is far from being univocal as it evokes different meanings determined by ideological positions within a capitalist society with its antagonisms and contradictions. Indeed, the discourse of inclusion postulates everybody’s access to constitutional rights and shoulder the responsibility of one’s success (or failure) over the individual’s effort and capacity regardless his social class or economic condition (Maciel, 2009).

We understand both social and digital inclusion not as the mere (quantitative) presence of students in a course as if their simple enrollment in a program could guarantee insertion in legitimate social practices, always mediated by language. We conceive inclusion as a process of engagement which enables subjects to fully participate in such practices in which literacy events occur. And it is important to outline that by saying this we do not defend students’ conformation to the *status quo* context, instead we claim that they should be given conditions to resist hegemonic discourses and practices, assuming a political position concerning their own place in the world. That is to say that inclusion involves enabling subjects to problematize and resist the very discourse of social and digital inclusion, which may produce different effects of meaning sometimes mobilized to attend political and economic interests.

As we see it, we arrived at the twenty-first century with movements that enable the provision of methods and materials for teaching English and other disciplines in the digital environment, in short time and with great variety, but also with the presence of glaring social differences around the world. At the same time that this century is characterized by the accumulation of information, the speed of its circulation, by proposals for commercial and cultural globalization, the widespread use of computers, new textual forms and the need to learn at least one foreign language, which usually is English, there are also a large number of inhabitants in countries in development who live in absolute poverty, on the margins of social visibility and very far from any possibility of formal education or legitimacy of the varieties of language they speak. Thus, although we have already been discussing the need for digital literacy and English bilingualism and broader access to foreign languages, traditional literacy and the teaching of the mother tongue itself may still be issues in play, and so is social inclusion, its possible forms of realization and importance.

The way we understand it, a possibility for socially including those who are on the margins of social visibility and to make a meaningful, ethical teaching process to countries like ours is to provide spaces for learning languages and forms of teaching and learning that take into account these historical and methodological conditions, being inclusion a methodological matter itself. That is, teaching a national or foreign language is already an effect of the injunction in certain linguistic policies (Orlandi, 1998) and teaching one way and not another is an effect of political, epistemological affiliations that tell of the concepts of language and subject that language teachers have. Opportunities to learn politically and economically important languages must always be created in a form not to repeat the same globalization discourse, and with the reflection on its status and consequences to social matters. Slides of meaning from common sensical representations should be made historically possible, with the constitution of places and positions of enunciation. Likewise, we understand that learning a foreign language is a practice that changes and moves the subject (Revuz, 1998), and which calls into question his/her relationship with the first language, provoking reflections on languages, the self and his/her social identifications, so it is a much bigger process than only learning what could be an instrumental language.

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