Let’s talk about English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF): a cycle of project-based task.

Throughout this narrative, we seek to share a cycle of classroom experiences lived through the implementation of a project entitled ‘Let’s talk about English as a *Lingua Franca*’, implemented with students from the 3rd semester of integrated courses (Ensino Médio Integrado) at Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina – IFSC, in Florianópolis. By doing so, we ultimately reinforce the need to bridge theoretical discussions on English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) to our pedagogical practices.

On the following sections we provide a brief theoretical contextualization on ELF, and the rationale of a cycle of project-based tasks that aimed at leading learners to explore ELF beyond the limits of the school context.

**English as a *Lingua Franca*: implications for language policies and pedagogical practices**

There are many terms used to name the ample use of English worldwide. Here, we use the notion of English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF), since this appears to be a broader term, covering translingual situations where English is used as a way to negotiate meanings in *inter* and *intranational* contexts.

The relevance of raising a discussion on ELF in relation to pedagogical practices is grounded on the fact that this concept implies the constitution of a paradigm shift on additional language education. First, an ELF perspective leads us to move beyond the idea of ‘proper’ or ‘legitimate’ uses of language as those practices certified by a specific and privileged normative center. Instead, it presents lingua-cultural norms as always negotiated, and therefore legitimized in specific contexts (SEIDLHOFER, 2005).

Furthermore, the notion of ELF challenges the idea of language ownership through the deconstruction of a native-speakerism ideology, which upholds that so-called native speakers are a target model to be followed, for they represent a western culture from which spring the ideals both of English and of the methodology for teaching it (PHIPPS & GONZALEZ, 2004).
These new conceptions are the basis for the reorganization of a new paradigm of language teaching that, although set in a post-modern world, co-exist, in constant tension, with modernist fictions that commonly shape contemporary pedagogical practices, namely the existence of nation-states, each with their national language and culture; the existence of standardized languages with their stable grammars and dictionaries; the superiority of national languages over regional dialects; and the clear boundaries between native and foreign languages, to mention a few.

An ELF paradigm leads us to a view of language as *languaging*, which evokes a tendency in post-structuralist sociolinguistics that focuses on the social diversity of speech types and deconstruct the notion of distinct national languages, and consequently that of bilingualism or multilingualism. This view underscores an understanding of different languages based on the way that individuals become social actors and distinguish among themselves through their particular languaging, a perspective supported by authors such as MAKONI & PENNYCOOK (2007), who defend the idea of separate national languages as an invention, and disinvent the concept of multilingualism and plurality of languages. Languaging is seen by these authors as a construct that orients social interactions in ways that may produce the unity of certain linguistic practices into so-called languages. In this sense, different linguistic practices create a network of transformations that generate complex languaging and, at the same time, produces the unity of certain linguistic practices as a language (GARCÍA & LEIVA, 2014).

Considering such post-structuralist interpretation of ELF, the main objective in learning English is not to achieve a native-speaker proficiency, but to become translingual subjects (KRAMSCH, 2009), which are not necessarily those who speak many languages with the same proficiency, but rather someone who has an acute awareness of the social, cultural and emotional contexts in which their various languages have grown, and of the life experiences they evoke. Here, the notion of translingualism does not refer to a collection of different national languages only, but rather to various socioideological languages, codes and voices in the different contexts.
where social actors participate. Given that, in the reality of our classrooms, we should recognize our students as subjects whose linguistic repertoires are composed by various (national and socioideological) languages that might be used for different purposes, not only for accomplishing practical communicative goals, but also as a source of pleasure, a puzzle, or a way of understanding oneself and others (KRAMSCH, 2009).

The project: English as a Lingua Franca - representations and practices

Taking the previous discussion on ELF into consideration, we advocate for the development of pedagogical practices that involve learners in observing and analyzing critically the repercussions of a global lingua franca on their lives within and outside the school context. With that in mind, we developed a project entitled ‘Let’s talk about English as a Lingua Franca’ with groups from the third semester. We have chosen these specific groups due to the fact that the 3rd semester marks the starting point for the teaching and learning of English at IFSC, and talking about ELF would work as an intended introduction to the course.
The aim of the project was to explore and problematize the following questions: (1) Why has English become a global lingua franca? (2) How do we perceive the uses of English in our communities and in our school context? To explore such issues, we organized the progress of classroom tasks into four phases, as shown in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Phases</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Methodological Movements</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phase 1: Classroom discussions (4h/ 2 meetings) | (1) To explore students’ representations about English as a national language.  
(2) To deconstruct the myth of the Native Speaker.  
(3) To critically analyze the social phenomena around ELF. | Expositive moments, discussions, debates, reading and writing activities. | Printed material, videos, slideshow presentations | Engagement in the activities and discussions set in the classroom. (individual) |

*Table 1:*

*Table 1 – Project ‘ELF: representations and practices’*
Throughout the four phases of the project, students were engaged in activities that sought to explore the aforementioned questions. The first one - *Why has English become a global lingua franca?* - was the starting point for the development of the project when, through classroom discussions, debates, reading and writing activities, the group was able to understand the complex social, political and economic phenomena behind the global status of English.

At this stage, it was also paramount to deconstruct a series of myths commonly associated with English language teaching and learning. Notions of membership and normativity associated with the figure of the native speaker were problematized, and
the very conception of a foreign language, as a tool-kit that belongs to the other, was called into question. During this moment of the project, learners were assessed through their participation in classroom discussions.

Following the introductory part of the project, students were then encouraged to investigate how English was being appropriated in the communities where they live and to find out how it was being used in the school context. For this, groups were provided with the following guidelines:

1. Go to the streets of your community and take pictures of banners, billboards, façades, pieces of clothing, signs etc., where you can see English words.
2. Catalog the words found and figure out their meanings.
3. If possible, try to interview people to understand if there is any reason for the choice of English.

In addition to the pictures, we developed a questionnaire, collaboratively with students, to explore the uses of English in the school context. Here, they had to think of questions that would help them investigate the different communicative contexts where IFSC students used English, and then organize all this information into graphs and tables that would be used in the following phase of the project. In order to do so, learners used online tools such as Google Docs to implement the questionnaires, as well as create and edit graphs and tables. At this stage of the cycle, students were assessed on the basis of their involvement in data collection activities.

The next step was to organize all the data on an online platform, where students would be able to share their interpretations of the pictures from their communities, and the questionnaires administered in the school campus. For this phase of the project, classes were organized at a computer lab, where each student could have a computer at their disposal to design webpages such as blogs or tumblrs. Instructions on how to design these pages were not necessary, since students were already familiarized with that technology. In terms of assessment, in this phase we took into consideration how creative and critical learners managed to be in their written productions. Figure 1 below shows an example of the online platforms
developed in class:

**Figure 1 – Example of students’ productions**

In the blog represented in *Figure 1*, it can be observed how students used the data collected during the project, which basically consisted of questionnaires and photos of their communities, to understand how English was used as a *lingua franca* on linguistic landscapes around them and through various communicative contexts, as shown by one of the graphs on the right.

Finally, in the last stage of the project, the class had the chance to share the results of their research with the whole school community. In order to do so, the groups organized presentations and invited other classes to join us in the auditorium. At this last stage, students were assessed on the basis of resourcefulness and creativity in the creation and performance of their oral presentations.
Project outcome and feedback from the students

Interesting results were achieved from the implementation of this project. During the first phase, we were able to see how learners felt motivated to engage in the discussions proposed. It was also interesting to notice how many students in the class had a western, white and socially privileged native speaker model as a parameter for learning English, and how such a belief could be deconstructed or weakened in the light of the debates held about ELF.

During the second and third phases, it was possible to perceive students as agents of their own learning processes. The investigation on the uses of English within and outside the school context has brought together the reality between school and communities outside, and it has attached great social relevance to the learning objectives of the discipline in a light and enjoyable way. Students' feedback on the project reinforce the conclusions presented here:

“As aulas foram muito boas. Criar o blog, procurar as imagens e tentar achar uma explicação para elas foi divertido.” (Student 1).

“Os grupos souberam se organizar e as apresentações foram produtivas e interessantes, já que houve coleta de dados em campo e a maioria dos resultados exibidos em gráficos trouxeram questões pertinentes. Achei a ideia de criar um blog muito boa, pois assim podemos alcançar mais pessoas para mostrar a importância do inglês.” (Student 2).
When looking at the set of all the steps taken throughout this project, we also realize the benefits of using technologies (ICTs) in a contextualized and critical way. Here, ICTs were much more than mere facilitating tools, but possibilities for students to engage in authentic moments of language use, and to perform tasks which were associated with their contexts outside the classroom. Taking all this into account, learning an additional language could happen in a meaningful way, materialized in social practices within and beyond the classroom thresholds.

**Reference List**


