

The Nexus of Race and Class in ELT: From Interaction Orders to Orders of Being

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This article contributes to studies of race and class in English Language Teaching (ELT) by examining the local production of meanings in pedagogical encounters mediated by global textbooks, focusing on racialized occupational hierarchies in Brazil. We seek to locate these meanings in the interpretative frames provided by the experiences of two Black, first-generation university students, which we connect to dehumanizing histories of labor relations and narrow textbook representations. The findings suggest that Brazilian ELT, through its reliance on global textbooks, presents interactional scenarios that are often the site of racial humiliation. Following Grosfoguel and Sousa Santos' conceptualization of racial oppression, we identify racialized orders of being as an analytical category that allows for connections to be made between political economy and language education, including as part of anti-racist pedagogical efforts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationally, race and class have attracted growing attention within research on language education (Kubota 2009, 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017). This work points to the influence of histories of colonialism, aligning with wider decolonial critiques of modernity (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). In Brazil, as Melo (2015) argues, English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms have failed to acknowledge historical and contemporary oppressions grounded in slavery, despite Brazil being the destination of the largest number of enslaved people brought by force to the Americas and the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery (Telles 2004).

Access to foreign languages in Brazilian education has historically been restricted to a social and racial elite; however, recent mass expansion of secondary and tertiary education, along with affirmative action policies, have brought more Black, Indigenous, and working-class students into foreign language classrooms. For the first time, a majority of public university students in Brazil are first-generation (neither parent attended university), Black, and from poor

households (Souza 2019). With this new audience, ELT in public universities has become an important site for challenging inequalities.

Adopting a socially engaged epistemological stance, we focus on how local and global social categories are invoked in pedagogical relations established in Brazilian classrooms through the use of global textbooks. Global textbooks and their Brazilian readers are connected by the historical and geographical flows that produce, on the one hand, the global city, and on the other, the global periphery, a relationship within which race plays a central organizing role. In making this claim, we draw on insights from Fanon (2008), Mbembe (2014), Azevedo (1987), and Grosfoguel (2016), who emphasize the dehumanization of racialized groups and coloniality as the hidden underbelly of Western modernity. The notion of coloniality, which refers to the maintenance of forms of Eurocentered power established during the colonial era (Quijano 2007), is particularly important for situating the meanings produced by the contemporary textbook industry within the wider spatiotemporal scale in which race gains force as a social category.

Our perspective is shaped by our own experiences. Gabriel is a Black professor of English at a recently established public university where the majority of students enter via affirmative action programs. Joel is a White professor of English who has used the materials analyzed here in two public universities, both of which have a high proportion of Black and working-class students from urban and rural peripheries. In our practice, as teachers, we address issues of race, class, sexuality, and gender that are raised by our students who are protagonists in a moment of significant social change in Brazilian education and society. This change involves tensions with pre-existing and exclusionary communicative norms that we investigate using the notion of interaction order (Goffman 1983). Importantly, for our analysis, interaction orders are always open to challenge, particularly at points where historically excluded or subordinated groups enter into spaces and situations from which they were previously excluded. Here we focus on the experiences of two Black, first-generation university students as a starting point for situating the racialized and racializing dimensions of the projected interaction orders that are part of ELT pedagogy.

2. RACE, CLASS AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Critiques of ELT have suggested that the centrality of the ‘native speaker’, even within multicultural frameworks, results in the suppression and inferiorization of learner identities, including ethnic identities (Kubota 2009). In response, Rosa and Flores (2017) advocate what they term a ‘raciolinguistic perspective’, focusing on:

- (i) historical and contemporary co-naturalizations of race and language as part of the colonial formation of modernity; (ii) perceptions of racial and linguistic difference; (iii) regimentations of racial and linguistic categories; (iv) racial and linguistic intersections and assemblages; and (v) the contestation of racial and linguistic power formations. (Rosa and Flores 2017: 3)

Textbook analysis has provided a rich field for identifying the connections between race and language, pointing out erasure, stereotyping, and underrepresentation of minorities (Thomas and Law 2017; Ho 2018). Latin American analyses have tied race to class as overrepresentation of White and socially elite characters often goes hand in hand (Ferreira and Camargo 2013; Mastrella-de-Andrade and Rodrigues 2014; López-Gopar and Sughrua 2014). Further, textbooks also reflect gendered divisions of labor and value (Ferreira 2019). Ferreira's analyses of a Brazilian-produced textbook found that close to half of representations of males were of White men in professional or intellectual activities, while just 10 per cent were of Black men engaged in similar activities. Representations of females were fewer, and similarly skewed, with 43 per cent being of White women in such activities compared to 4 per cent representing Black women.

It is important to recognize that textbooks are not faithful reflections of social relations or hegemonic ideologies, but situated products subject to changing markets and uses (Copley 2018). Copley shows how textbooks produced locally for migrant workers in Britain in the 1980s invited discussion of alienating working conditions, unemployment, and collective action. By contrast, more recent textbooks aimed at a global middle-class, or aspirational middle-class, have embraced a neoliberal ideology by inviting discussion of individualized 'success' narratives evacuated of material constraints and working-class perspectives (Gray and Block 2014; Copley 2018). This emphasis is based on commercial considerations that also help to explain why questions of social power, including race, gender, and sexuality, are avoided. The central ideological figure of the competitive, self-made entrepreneur hides the colonial underbelly of the informal, poorly paid, unsafe, and often degrading labor performed by those excluded from official labor markets, in contexts as diverse as Abidjan, Athens, Berlin, and Jakarta (Schilling *et al.* 2019).

This type of employment is not only exposed to degrading conditions and treatment, but is also undertaken by populations that have been racially oppressed historically, and are subject to a new form of 'racial capitalism'. In settings characterized by severe underemployment, unemployment, and the consequent prevalence of informal or illegal economic activities, legitimate social identities of race and gender are thereby denied to a segment of the population (Matlon 2011; 2016). Matlon, for example, argues that young Black men in West Africa who gain a meager living through occupations such as mobile street vendors, are positioned as 'illegitimate workers and non-citizens' (2016: 1) since 'their work is not a point of pride, so much as an act of desperation' (2011: 2).

Beyond the 'shared experience of exploitation' (Copley 2018: 48), racialized occupational hierarchies are therefore capable of imposing routine experiences of humiliation and abjection that are not shared by all workers, although they are certainly identifiable with working-class experiences of social life as 'often burdensome, unsatisfying, and structurally rooted in antagonistic relations of exploitation' (Copley 2018: 48). This relegation is in keeping with

Grosfoguel's (2016) discussion of race as an organizational category within an oppressive economic and social order that incorporates dehumanizing colonial histories into contemporary inequalities. Building on Fanon, Grosfoguel shows how race is used as a dividing line between 'being' and 'nonbeing'. In his words,

the people classified above the line of the human are recognized socially in their humanity as human beings and, thus, enjoy access to rights (human rights, civil rights, women rights and/or labor rights), material resources, and social recognition to their subjectivities, identities, epistemologies and spiritualities. The people below the line of the human are considered subhuman or non-human; that is, their humanity is questioned and, as such, negated. In the latter case, the extension of rights, material resources and the recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualities and epistemologies are denied. (Grosfoguel 2016: 10)

Grosfoguel (2016) further argues that, while these zones of being and non-being are heterogeneous and mobile, they can be distinguished by the relations of civility, recognition, and action allowed within the zone of being, as opposed to the capitalist and imperialist regulation of the nonhuman/sub-human zone through perpetual violence and appropriation/dispossession (15).

This opposition has strong purchase for analyzing Brazilian social realities and history and considering the types of 'civility' that are promoted pedagogically through textbook representations. The naturalization or racial inequalities post-slavery emerged through the positioning of former slaves as unruly and unsuitable workers in the waged labor market, which was constructed through mass European migration and 'whitening' of a racially mixed population (Azevedo 1987). Not only physical features and bodily presentation, but also linguistic norms that masked blackness were promoted. Being Black involved being deemed inadequate, unsuitable, or incompetent, including linguistically (Bagno 2002). While class and racial classifications do not correspond exactly, race is the strongest marker of class membership, and social mobility is lower amongst poor Black Brazilians than poor White Brazilians, with racially mixed socializing common only amongst working-class groups (Telles 2004). Social mobility often implies 'whitening' through speech, bodily performance (hair straightening, skin lightening), or re-categorization (as *moreno* (brown) rather than Black).

It is important to note that gender oppression intersects with racialized occupational hierarchies, particularly through occupations that are strongly associated with Black women—including domestic workers and nannies. The Black feminist linguist Lélia Gonzalez (1983) notes that the terms *mulata* and *servant* are used interchangeably of the same subject in Brazil. Domestic workers are expected to know their place, carefully monitoring their speech and behavior, a theme also raised by US intersectional feminists such as

Patricia Hill-Collins and Angela Davis, the latter meeting being influenced by Gonzalez. The myth of racial democracy, part of state-sanctioned nationalist ideology, works against such dehumanization being framed in racial terms in Brazil (see Freyre (1986) for an influential example). This myth, which presents the mixing of races in colonial Brazil without reference to popular uprisings or revolts, makes invisible the resistant racial and gender identities and curtails the potential for denunciations of racism and misogyny.

3. RACE AND CLASS AS PART OF A SITUATED NEXUS OF PRACTICE

Nexus analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2004) offers a promising theoretical tool for connecting global ELT textbooks to their reception and locally produced meanings. Nexus analysis, following Scollon and Scollon (2004), involves examining three key dimensions of a given social practice: the social identities and histories of participants; the interaction order; and the discourses drawn upon by participants. From this perspective, a nexus of practice is ‘the point at which the historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas, and objects come together to enable some action which in itself alters those historical trajectories in some way ...’ (Scollon and Scollon 2004: 159).

For our purposes, the social practice under examination is the pedagogical relationship mediated by ELT textbook representations of paid employment. The participants we are primarily concerned with are Black and working-class university students who draw upon discourses that already marginalize (and reflect on the marginalization of) their bodies in the English language classroom. Previous classroom research suggests that in Brazilian schools that serve Black and working-class students, learning English often involves a rejection of self, culture, and class identity, as the following statements collected as part of a university outreach project in Mariana, Minas Gerais, indicate:

Learning English is a bit stuck-up. Why learn another language? Do you want to leave? Don’t you like your language? Don’t you like Brazil? Do you want to become an American? (Student 1, 15 years old, Black, Oscar Middle School, reported in student reflective journal)

Speak English? That’s fancy! It’s for rich people, not for me (Student 2, 15 years old, Black, Oscar Middle School, reported in student reflective journal). (Windle and Muniz 2018)

In examining how such discourses provide interpretative frames for pedagogical encounters mediated by textbooks, we argue that indexical meanings are produced locally (Hanks 1999). Meaning must be sought in interactions of text with readers at a specific nexus, a point at which overlapping indexical orders from multiple scales come together through processes of ‘entextualization’ (Silverstein and Urban 1996; Blommaert and Rampton 2011).

Indexical meanings emerge in both everyday life and in pedagogical interactions as part of a ‘interaction order’ (Goffman 1983). In face-to-face interactions, Goffman argues that individuals are socially situated, and situate themselves, through language, in distinctive ways that are shaped by a shared focus and identification of their interlocutor. Interaction orders are ‘loosely coupled’ (12) with wider social structures by allowing for classification and evaluation of interlocutors. In the interaction order:

the characterization that one individual can make of another by virtue of being able directly to observe and hear that other is organized around two fundamental forms of identification: the *categoric* kind involving placing that other in one or more special categories, and the *individual* kind, whereby the subject under observation is locked to a uniquely distinguishing identity through appearance, tone of voice, mention of name, or other person-differentiating device. (Goffman 1983: 3) (emphasis in original).

The racial categorization of an individual has the power of evacuating individual identifications of legitimacy, respect, and humanity, following Grosfoguel (2016). Such categorization all but eliminates the individual as a ‘speaker’ in an interaction that is sharply defined ‘on entrance’ by a racialized social order. Goffman argues that face-to-face interactions are central to the production of categorical differences and inequalities on a macroscopic scale (age, gender, class, and race), through gatekeeping and ‘reading’ of ‘embodied indicators of status and character’ (1983: 8), even as these considerations are concealed through a wide range of rationalizations.

4. METHODOLOGY

We sought to identify discourses and experiences contributing to a pedagogical interaction order in the ELT classroom through interviews with two Black, female, working-class Brazilian university students of English—Jessica and Elen (pseudonyms). The participants were selected due to their pre-existing relationships of trust with the researchers and as members of the ‘democratizing’ wave of social groups previously excluded from Brazilian higher education. Interviews were conducted in Brazilian Portuguese and transcriptions of the recordings were shared with the interviewees, who provided corrections and additional comments in writing. The excerpts reported here have been translated into English by the authors, with punctuation added for ease of reading. We asked the participants about the occupations present in their immediate family and social circle, their own employment experiences, interactions with others from a range of occupations, and their perceptions of how different types of workers are treated. We also asked questions directly related to learning English, presenting them with a prompt from a globally circulating English textbook.

We locate their responses within a wider discursive context connecting them to the occupations represented in the text and to the racial composition

of those occupations in Brazil, using available statistical sources. Our analysis is guided by an understanding of the indexical meanings of occupational categories and associated interactions as are 'acquired through direct language socialization (in which linguistic behaviors associated with particular types of interaction may be taught explicitly) and through individual experiences of various interactions involving specific forms of indexicality' (Barrett 2017: 11). As Barrett notes,

Through repetitions of particular types of interactions, we come to associate specific ways of speaking with various attributes associated with different contexts of interaction. Memories of prior interactional contexts come to serve as exemplars for evaluating contexts as they occur and establishing expectations for the behavior of participants in a given situation. (Barrett 2017: 11)

The texts we examine as part of this locally produced indexical order are books 2 and 3 of *American English File* (Latham-Koenig *et al.* 2013; Latham-Koenig and Oxenden 2013) (henceforth *AEF*), published by Oxford University Press and aimed at young adults. The series draws heavily on British newspapers, stock agencies, such as Getty Images. *AEF* is similar to the great majority of internationally circulating ELT textbooks in that, it is produced in the global north and is used in any number of settings that may be unfamiliar to its authors. Nevertheless, Brazil is a major market that is directly targeted by publishers, and ELT textbook authors also circulate across such markets promoting their work.

We classify the occupational representations in *AEF* by social class and show how these are related to racial classifications in Brazil (although these racial divisions are familiar to the settings where *AEF* was produced). We follow Block's (2013) concerns in defining class in terms of both economic and symbolic relations, acknowledging that this may blur some lines of class distinction (Copley 2018). As such, in addition to location in relation to production (Marx 1976), we consider cultural capital as an attribute that defines membership of particular professional groups, following Bourdieu (1984). As such, *business owners* and *high-level managers* are positioned as members of a capitalist class typified by high levels of economic capital. We identify a cultural elite most strongly defined by the requirement of high levels of cultural capital for access (including educational opportunities) and success. A middle-class category is identified for occupations that typically involve formal educational qualifications, formal employment, stable wages, and a high level of legitimacy. This is a heterogeneous category, as some occupations, such as *teacher*, require high levels of education and enjoy a certain level of respect in society, but command extremely low wages (roughly 10 per cent of the wage received by a *medical doctor*). *Student* is the only occupation that is not an economically defined activity and we retain it, albeit problematically, with the middle-class occupations, since extended study has been historically dominated by White, wealthy, privately educated families in which parents were also university-

educated (Souza 2019). The final category we identify as working-class. The lowest paid and most precarious occupations within this category, in particular, are bereft of symbolic capital—the legitimacy, authority, prestige, and honor that other types of capital (economic, cultural, linguistic, social) jointly confer (Bourdieu 1984). Around the world, including the productive settings of global textbooks, this symbolic capital includes a racial dimension—which has been termed ‘the racial boundaries of citizenship’ (Hawthorne 2019), racial capital (Hunter 2011), and ‘racial acceptability’ (Windle 2017). Here we represent this racialized symbolic capital via the heuristic divide between a humanizing zone of being and a dehumanizing zone of (non)being.

5. STUDENT INTERACTIONAL TRAJECTORIES AND FRAMES

Interactions involving the occupational categories represented in *AEF* indexed experiences of exclusion and humiliation for our participants, Jessica and Elen. We invited them to discuss the chapter ‘What’s the right job for you?’ (*AEF* 3), which opens by asking students to match a sequence of images to written and audio descriptions of a highly paid office worker who sets up an online business after she is fired. In this chapter, students are prompted to re-tell this story, and, in oral interactions, describe similar situations in their own social circle. These two communicative tasks are illustrated by White characters in gender-normative roles (baking cakes for the female, flying planes for the male). We further asked the participants to comment on a prompt to ‘match your personality to the job’, a quiz accompanied by illustrations suggestive of workplace interactions involving White individuals only. The interviewees identified the workers represented as *doctor*, *scientist*, *nurse*, and *manager*.

Having grown up in rural Bahia, the daughter of plantation laborers, Jessica observed that the interactional situations shown, like others that are common in ELT textbooks she had been taught with, were not the kind she would feel comfortable in or wish to join. This is striking given her ambition to study medicine after completing her current undergraduate studies in humanities. Jessica identified *homemakers* as the type of worker she would feel most comfortable talking with, justified by her belief that ‘elite’ professionals look down on more ‘humble’ people, like herself:

These professionals feel superior to everyone, they are haughty, different to my way of speaking that is more informal and humble. If we are in a lowly position, we are treated badly, and if we are in a high position we are ‘mistaken’ and marginalized.

Here, Jessica identifies an interaction order in which categorical attributes strongly curtail interactional possibilities, with the formal speech of elite professionals indexing sentiments of social and racial superiority. Jessica, who identifies racism and other forms of prejudice as structuring such encounters, interprets her own speech as indexing a disqualified or ‘lowly’ social location.

This is made concrete in an example she gives of being addressed by a fellow shopper as if she were a cleaner in a shopping center. As a Black female, she is, as Lélia Gonzalez (1983) observes, almost automatically categorized as a servant at the opening moment of an interaction encounter in which she is 'out of place' as a fellow customer.

Jessica further identified 'elite spaces' such as jewelry shops and big brand-name stores as places where she felt uncomfortable, related to her view that in some situations Black professionals and individuals are delegitimated:

They might be accepted due to laws that protect the Black population, but countless times we are treated badly with little jokes and even humiliations.

This interactional marginalization also occurs at the hands of the occupational category of which she is a member as a university student. Although this is a category under pressure from its changing social composition, the university student is a historically elite category that contributes to marginalizing racialized others. Jessica distances herself from this category when notes that the cleaners at her university are:

... treated as if they are invisible. Rarely does anyone even say hello to them, unless they need something. It's absurd, but it's a common reality.

The people most likely to be treated disrespectfully, in Jessica's view, are *rural workers* and *homemakers*, precisely the occupations that are most present in her immediate family and social circle in rural Bahia. Both Jessica and Elen suggested that that informal employment, of the type in which they had previously worked (such as street vendor), did not offer dignified working conditions and that these were overwhelmingly undertaken by people like themselves—Black and northeastern. With a 'traumatic' relationship to learning English, Jessica further observed that the people shown in ELT textbooks generally did not look like herself or her family, a comment repeated by Elen.

Unlike Jessica, Elen did not feel personally constrained or restricted in interactional situations with 'elite' professions or in elite spaces, but described more generalized double standards in interactions involving Black workers and individuals. She noted that the workers from her immediate social circle are treated in ways that range from 'minimal respect to abusive', with none providing a sense of 'dignity'. Instead, dignity was indexed by occupational categories that require higher education, such as university professor.

Elen lives in São Gonçalo and studies in Niterói, two urban conglomerations that adjoin Rio de Janeiro, one of South America's largest cities and the former national capital. She noted that her experience of attending secondary school in the commercial and administrative center of Niterói had put her into contact with a wider social spectrum than her hometown of São Gonçalo, considered to be an urban periphery, and given her confidence in interactions with members of more socially and economically privileged groups:

Studying in this school changed my vision and understanding of many things. Previously I studied in a school near home, with people who came from the same socioeconomic reality, same experience, etc. At the Liceu, people came from various places, whether São Gonçalo, Niterói (the center, the favelas), from Rio etc. There was a great cultural exchange. And that is where I suffered much more from prejudice than in the other school. Maybe I remember this more because I had a bigger idea of the world around me.

This formative experience helped to provide Elen with a sense of confidence in identifying and confronting prejudice, which provides a way of challenging and seeking a different frame for an interaction. The daughter of a driving instructor and a street vendor, Elen was undertaking her second undergraduate degree, in English. As such, her experience is of someone who has formed a strong attachment to the English language and managed to find interactional accommodations within the ELT classroom. She noted of her educational trajectory:

I'm from a big family, my parents had four children. We never had problems with food, clothes, shoes, etc., but studying a language course was impossible. It was always too expensive for my parents, since it would mean paying fees for four children, so English was always a distant reality in our house. We understood that this [English] was for people who had money and, in fact, that is still how it is, even though there has been a greater opening-up of language courses.

Although her parents sought to encourage an interest in English, Elen did not like the subject in school, feeling a sense of 'rejection' for the language. Like the private courses her parents could not afford, English at school was largely closed off due to the unaffordability of the textbooks:

My parents couldn't buy everything that was required, let alone the dictionary that was very expensive . . . I remember the name of it even now (laughter). Without the necessary materials, I couldn't really learn. That made me feel bad.

Elen's interest in English was only sparked in her first undergraduate degree, tourism, at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), where she developed positive relationships with her professors and a more critical view of how English had been presented to her. In this regard, Elen raised her repeated contact with *AEF* and her changing perception of the text, prompted by classroom discussions and contact with student politics:

I had already studied with *AEF* in other courses, before studying at UFF. I think, in common with other language textbooks, it focuses on the culture of the country being taught. And it reinforces very strongly the idea that English is from England or the United States. And that really stuck in my mind that there were two types of

English from two countries. Everything we learn from them ends up inferiorizing our identities as learners. We can't find any type of representativity in the book. But, I confess that didn't really notice these issues before. Questions around ethnicity, culture and so on, weren't really debated. So, we learn from the book, and it's all very naturalized. Later, we started to notice it and start to criticize it. I used to notice some of those things but I thought, well, this is a foreign book, that's what their culture is like. I didn't notice how much this excluded other identities.

This comment opens up a path for challenging the interactional order indexed by global textbooks by breaking with the idea that they represent cultural authenticity of the productive setting ('what their culture is like'). Elen expressed skepticism of the language–culture association that she initially used to explain the absence of learner identities like her own, and which become the object of debate following a period of politicization.



6. OVERLAID OCCUPATIONAL UNIVERSES

The nexus of practice we have begun to outline involves multiple scales that nevertheless appear to offer a degree of convergence in relation to racialization. The occupational universe with which students have immediate experiences is part of a wider occupational universe at local and national scales, and this is overlaid in the English classroom with the mobile and decontextualized occupational universe of *AEF*, which is similar to the great majority of global ELT textbooks. Apart from *student*, none of the occupations of Jessica and Emily's family and social circle (such as domestic servant, driver, and hairdresser) were represented amongst the 30 occupations we identified in *AEF* (Table 1).

Internally, *AEF* presents an occupational hierarchy in which prime position is occupied by *businesspeople*, the only occupation repeated across chapters to make up 22.5 per cent of occupational representations, a finding in line with Gray's (2010) identification of new capitalist values in textbook representations of work. Some other jobs, professions, and occupations appeared primarily to support the businessman and businesswoman narratives, as was the case of the hotel receptionist and the boatman. Marco, a *waiter* (who was the only Black person with an identified occupation represented), was presented as the only professional forced to work when the others are having fun (*AEF* 2: 88). Marco comments on his excessive workload and antisocial working hours; however, there is no sense that exploitative conditions generate resistance. Whereas Marco is presented as a worker who is unhappy with his job, the *businesspeople* are portrayed as successful and happy, as are other occupations symbolically distinguished from manual labor (to the left of the thick vertical line in Table 1).

AEF concentrates on economic occupations in the formal economy, and on middle-class professions that often have structured career pathways integrated

Table 1. Occupations in AEF 2 and 3 by class/status and relationship to interaction orders and orders of being

Class and status identification	Capitalist (high economic capital)	Cultural elite (high cultural capital)	Middle-class (stability and respectability; symbolic capital)	Working-class (low economic and cultural capital)
Occupation	Business person Managing director Marketing manager President	Music producer Actor Journalist Photographer Singer Designer Athlete Radio host Film director TV host Writer Instrumental musician	Lawyer ICT consultant Therapist Psychologist Police officer Librarian Physician Teacher Student	Waiter Housekeeper Boatman Cashier Hotel receptionist
Positioning in interaction order		Positively positioned		Stigmatized or erased
				
Order of being		Humanizing zone of being		Dehumanizing zone of (non)being

with academic qualifications, personal tastes, and talents. These can be seen as occupations of ‘choice’, based on a sense of vocation and interest, accessible through comfortable material conditions and ample educational opportunities. Jessica and Elen identified occupations from this group as those that receive honor and respect (a footing of interactional legitimacy), and although not close to them, they know people from a range these professions (including lawyer, business person, doctor). Such professions are in contrast to occupations of necessity that are undertaken to earn money and guarantee survival, but which do not necessarily hold intrinsic interest and offer only minimal social and economic recognition (to the right of the thick vertical line in Table 1).

Communicative situations in which occupation (of self, family members, interlocutors) is taken as an important marker of social identity, as in AEF,

assume a connection between personal interests, educational trajectory, and 'profession', allowing for thematization of tastes, preferences, and talents. Many of the professions represented, particularly those from the field of cultural production, are concentrated in large, wealthy urban centers, such as those characterized as Global Cities, including London and New York (Sassen 2001). The projected interactional order is shaped by the norms of the global city and of its most mobile and legitimate citizens, members of a global middle class who are implicitly White and western (Koo 2016). Membership of this group provides a guaranteed 'footing' (Goffman 1983) in a global interactional order, and designates cultural elites and their experiences, in particular, as universally interesting and legitimate topics of discussion.

This global middle class intersects with a small part of the Brazilian occupational universe, and most starkly excises the 52 per cent of Brazilians who are Black (Table 2). If we take formal professional identification as a prerequisite for interactional legibility and humanization, then this immediately cuts out the majority of Brazil's population who are engaged in informal employment (Laporta and Cavallini 2018). Overall participation in economically remunerated activities (paid employment, self-employment, unpaid assistance to family members) is low, involving around a quarter of the population in large urban centers, and as little as six per cent of the population in rural areas (IBGE 2018). Informal workers include those who do not have an employment contract or are self-employed, such as domestic servants and street vendors, and on average they earn 40 per cent less than those in formal employment. Just one in three domestic servants, who make up close to 10 per cent of all workers, have an employment contract, for example (IBGE 2012). Jessica observed, in her interview, that Black women are particularly vulnerable:

They may suffer from humiliation, racism, prejudice, psychological and sexual violence, due to being in a position that is frequently of vulnerability, due to needing a job to support themselves or their family.

Black Brazilians are heavily overrepresented amongst those in informal employment, unemployed, and on low wages. For example, 80 per cent of the lowest wage earners are Black compared to 20 per cent of high wage earners (Parrode 2017). In the contexts in which the authors teach, therefore, it is not possible for most of our students to define their own or their social and family circle's social identity by 'profession' available through *AEF*, except through negation and relegation to the zone of nonbeing. For Gabriel, the Black child of rural laborers in palm oil production, a sector in which 80 per cent of all workers are Black, is a racialized exclusion manifested in incredulity and suspicion amongst students and colleagues as to their status and competency as a university professor. Research with members of Brazil's small Black middle-class shows that experiences of distrust and discomfort are indeed frequent (Figueiredo 2004).

Although data on the racial composition of occupations in Brazil are not readily available, it is possible to provide a rough estimate for some of the

Table 2: Identification of selected occupations in AEF and distribution by ‘race’

Order of being	AEF	Brazilian proxy category	Percentage White	Percentage Black
Humanizing zone of being	Lawyer	Lawyer employed in firm ^a	99	1
	Manager	Manager ^b	95.3	4.7
	Businessperson	CEOs ^c	95	5
	IT consultant	IT Engineer ^d	92	8
	Physician	Medical specialist ^e	89	11
	Actor	TV actors ^d	84.6	15.4
	President	Members of parliament ^d	79.9	20.1
	Musician	Classical musician ^d	79.2	20.8
	Teacher	Public school teacher ^e	58.0	42.0
Dehumanizing zone of (non) being	Housekeeper	Cleaner (formally employed) ^e	22.8	77.2
	absent	Rural workers (various sectors) ^e	7.3–12	92.7–78

^a<https://www.jota.info/advocacia/menos-de-1-dos-advogados-de-escritorios-sao-negros-23112017>

^b<https://www.iadb.org/pt/noticias/comunicados-de-imprensa/2016-05-06/perfil-racial-e-genero-500-maiores-empresas-brasileiras,11463.html>

^c<http://temas.folha.uol.com.br/desigualdade-no-brasil/negros/com-metade-da-populacao-negros-sao-so-18-em-cargos-de-destaque-no-brasil.shtml>

^dhttps://g1.globo.com/economia/noticia/brancos-sao-maioria-em-empregos-de-elite-e-negros-ocupa-vagas-sem-qualificacao.ghtml?fbclid=IwAR3A9xKIu9q0gLOjk8DbIJVH_jAZGFAMcB3AzWkqZHkKaf-q0iXID6qUaxI

^e<https://www.redebrasilatual.com.br/trabalho/2014/05/negros-no-servico-publico-2996.html>

occupations represented in AEF, (Table 2). These figures demonstrate the overwhelming absence of Black Brazilians from middle and elite occupations and overwhelming concentration in dehumanized occupations—to the extent that misrecognition is common in interactional situations that involve a discrepancy between racialized appearance and occupation.

Such categorical divisions do not capture the relationship between classes and racially identified groups. This is expressed not merely through exploitation of one class by another or the verbal humiliations in interactions between unequal interlocutors, but also in physical and lethal violence, whose routine use as part of a system of social control has been termed ‘necropolitics’ by Mbembe (2003). In Brazil’s congress, dominated by large landowning dynasties, a quarter of congressmen with landholdings have been charged with labor violations, including use of slave labor (working days of up to 24 h, labor in exchange for food, coercion by armed guards, unsafe conditions, and living quarters) (Aranha et al. 2018).

In the rural setting in which Joel used AEF, thousands of subsistence farmers and mine workers (locally known as ‘pawns’ (*peões*) have lost lives and

livelihoods as poorly maintained waste dams controlled by mining multinationals repeatedly collapse (Windle 2019). Occupational identifications such as rural workers and ‘pawns’, in this context, index relations of subordination to the universe of the global middle class presented in *AEF* (lawyer, manager). The global middle class is present in the setting of multinational mining operations at the service of capital, for the most part keeping a safe distance from those it helps to exploit and expropriate. It is difficult to imagine cordial and respectful interactional scenarios involving these groups which, in reality, seldom come into direct one-on-one contact and never on a footing of equality.

7. STRATEGIES FOR INTERRUPTING RACIALIZED INTERACTION ORDERS

In light of the interactional inequalities outlined above, it is important to open up space for interaction orders that validate and give voice to university students who are marginalized. This involves confronting the historical discourses that underpin structural racism in Brazil, including the denial of racial distinctions and the naturalization of racial inequalities. One strategy is to develop metapragmatic awareness of this exclusion through phenomena such as misrecognition. Student narratives, such as the ones we have presented above, can help to raise awareness about interactional inequalities, and this is the approach that has also been adopted in some Brazilian anti-racist educational work.

Considering the potential of metapragmatic reflection, we asked our interviewees to comment on the hypothetical scenario of a conversation between a waiter and a doctor, as representatives of contrasting points in the racialized occupational hierarchy. Jessica suggested that only during a medical consultation would they be on an even footing, while Elen suggested the possibility of a more egalitarian interaction under the condition that occupational status is not made relevant:

There is an implicit division imposed by social convention, by which one sees oneself as bigger/smaller than the other in light of the social occupation they occupy. But, if neither knows what the other does and if they were in a position of equality in a social setting, sharing the same space, then we can't be deterministic. So, this answer is not a rule, but a common occurrence.

Such a position of equality is perhaps uncommon, but shared social spaces are increasing as access to higher education expands, and there is a need for the re-negotiation of how race constitutes part of an indexical order that often predefines interactions.

Again, the scenario of misrecognition is one that calls attention to the centrality of micro-interactions to the wider social order and its potential transformation. A useful example of a renegotiated interactional scenario comes in the form of a meme published on the Black rights page ‘Portal Negro’ (<https://>

bit.ly/2RTd9N0). In this meme, a hypothetical patient (who is not depicted) asks a group of Black individuals in lab coats to speak to the doctor. The response, attributed to 'us', is 'we are doctors'. The affirmation places Black doctors at the center of a disruptive interaction order, challenging the patient's inability to project a Black person into a medical occupation. The meme, translated into Portuguese from an English-language version published on Afrocentric Instagram page Talk2Pops (<https://www.instagram.com/talk2pops>), is a pedagogically valuable example of a transnationally circulating text that opens up possibilities for resistant interactional orders. Discussing the meme, both Elen and Jessica suggested that hospital patients would not recognize the Black individuals shown as doctors:

Some phenotypical characteristics are more common in certain professions and this is imprinted on the collective imaginary. It would be unusual for a Black person to be seen as a medical doctor or in any other leadership or prestige role. (Elen)

People are used to seeing us Black people as subaltern and not in 'superior' positions. The meme is made to break exactly this paradigm since, through our struggles, more and more Black people are able to conquer a space in the universities and employment market. And however much light-skinned people underestimate us, professionalism is individual and intellectual, not defined by skin color. (Jessica)

While Elen suggested that the indexical dissonance of the meme draws attention to race as a defining feature of the occupational universe in the 'collective imaginary', Jessica focused on the disruptive potential of 'breaking' with this imaginary. She further connected this with contemporary political and personal struggles. Interestingly, although misrecognition also works along gender lines, the fact that the majority of those represented in the meme are women was not raised as potentially positioning them as something other than doctors.

There is potential in such reflections to connect contemporary recognition struggles to historical struggles that have a transnational dimension. Both historical and contemporary struggles call upon transatlantic diasporic identities in which the English language can be identified as part of completely different interaction orders. These are on display in contacts such as those established through the Black Lives Matters Movement, with meetings in Brazilian *favelas* bringing together local and international activists, including from the USA, Palestine, and South Africa.

8. CONCLUSION

This article has examined some ways in which a newly diversified student population is positioned by the interactional order projected in ELT framed by stark racial divisions that map onto the occupational universe of the globally

circulating textbook. In highlighting the local construction of meanings, we argue that pedagogical interactions are shaped by histories of analogous interactions, and that professional categories index a set of pragmatic and metapragmatic norms from past experiences, which in turn are nested within a racialized division of labor. As interactional and pedagogical products, textbooks gain their meanings principally through the processes of circulation and repeated use. Such texts are not 'innocent' in relation to the 'unknown' entextualizations they may encounter; indeed, presumed innocence is central to their ideological force. Global textbooks are shaped by commercial considerations in a global marketplace and by relations of coloniality, which include structural racism as part of occupational hierarchies in the settings in which they are produced.

Mobilizing principles from what Rosa and Flores (2017) have termed raciolinguistics, we have focused on symbolic and material distinctions that establish occupational categories as part of a humanizing zone of being or as part of a dehumanizing zone of nonbeing. This racial dichotomy, emerging from the intersection of social structures and historical narratives (Grosfoguel 2016), provides an interpretative framework for Brazilian students and teachers that is both entrenched and naturalized. Consequently, textbook representations of work become part of a pedagogical interaction order that reinforces pre-existing inequalities. The sociological concept of interaction order is useful for undertaking the implications of these connections, but also the potential for their disruption.

In sum, as more Black students not only enter universities but become teachers, they face the task of confronting discomfort and denial when race is explicitly raised as an issue. To do so, metapragmatic reflections and scenarios of indexical dissonance provide space for demonstrating how language and race are connected. This is further grounded in a redefinition of the social identity and work of the English language teacher outside of the hegemonic norms of native-speakerism and the global north. This is not a task for Brazilian ELT alone. As racialized occupational hierarchies are a global phenomenon, English classrooms all around the world need to challenge established interaction orders and orders of being to open space for both students and teachers to construct a more democratic and anti-racist pedagogical relationship.

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