# FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN CONFLICT: SEARCHING FOR CONCILIATORY CRITICAL ATTITUDES

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▪ ABSTRACT: Learning a foreign language includes not only mastering its systemic and functional dimensions, but also developing a critical attitude, considering aspects such as awareness of the numerous conflicts that underlie its study, along with numerous solutions already attempted, either through confrontation or conciliation. The main objective of this study is to investigate the possibility of a conciliatory solution to these conflicts, proposing a methodology based on Elective Affinities. The theoretical underpinnings come from Critical Discourse Analysis, inducing conflict emergence, and attaching to it the concept of Peace Cultures, with the idea that conflict can be resolved through dialogue. The data are collected from what was published by the world press on September 12, 2001, about the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York the day before. The conclusion is that conflict resolution through conciliatory attitudes challenges the speaker to enact a provisional rupture with its immediate context to build more lasting bonds with interlocutors of other cultures.

▪ KEYWORDS: Critical Applied Linguistics. Critical Discourse Analysis. Cultures of Peace. Elective affinities.

## Introduction

This study assumes that teaching a foreign/additional language (FL) is a pedagogical practice aimed to give students mastery of the language in three fundamental dimensions: systemic, functional, and critical. We put the systemic dimension at the bottom level, based on the concept of sign, in which language is understood as an instrument for representing things in the world and which assumes on the student the responsibility for automating the lexicon and the syntax of the language being studied. At the intermediate

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level, the functional dimension emerges, and language is defined as an instrument to act on the interlocutor: unconsciously, language is used to achieve certain objectives, either to praise, encourage, guide or to disqualify, humiliate, marginalize the person we speak to. It is unconscious because people usually have no idea that language is one of the instruments they use to produce these actions, doing things with the words they speak (AUSTIN, 1975). Finally, at the top level, we have the critical dimension, which we define as a gesture of reflection that transfers to consciousness what we do unconsciously when we use language. When someone, for example, speaks, listens, reads, or writes, he or she maybe excluding or being excluded by the other, practicing or suffering exclusion without realizing it, remaining at the level of action without reflection. Acting in the critical dimension is, therefore, an attempt to demonstrate how this is done when we use language, unveiling what may have been silenced, hidden, or naturalized (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001).

The main objective of this study is to build a theoretical-methodological concept of conciliatory critical teaching. The FL classroom is seen as a space traversed by ideological conflicts affecting students' learning, both in the negative sense, with poorly-resolved conflicts, which can impair their performance, and, in the positive sense, in which the appropriate treatment of conflicts, given by the teacher, can lead students to discover the charm of learning an FL and arrive at the blameless pleasure of knowing the culture of the other. To demonstrate how this objective can be achieved, the theoretical-methodological concept of conciliatory critical teaching is constructed: (1) we start from Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (1989, 2001, 2003), which induces conflict emergence, with the promise of removing the student from an undesirable state of alienation; (2) we resort to the concept of Peace Cultures (GALTUNG (1969, 1995, 2003; OXFORD, 2014), in which conflict is resolved by a dialogue between elements of culture, while trying to give CDA a more positive critical perspective; and (3) we conclude with the use of Elective Affinities (FUSTER GARCÍA, 2009; GASPAR, 2009), inventorying possible contact points through the breaches that are open between antagonistic ideologies. For the analysis and discussion of the corpus, we return to CDA under the bias of Elective Affinities, to demonstrate CDA rupture potential with crystallized discourses, opening spaces for reconciliation alliances with antagonistic discourses.

**Theoretical underpinnings**

We divided our theoretical framework into three progressive links: (1) absence of conflict, (2) conflict emergence, and (3) conflict resolution. To characterize this evolutionary chain as succinctly as possible, we first need to define some terms used in this study, including what we mean by "ideology", "enunciation" and terms derived from these words. The polysemy embedded in these terms needs to be undone, albeit in an *ad hoc* manner, for the specific purpose of facilitating exposition. For this purpose,

we face the challenge of resorting to various authors and theories, seeking for more conceptual affinities than differences, making syntheses, reframing some terms, and clarifying the selected meanings. It is an endeavor of an essentially integrationist and transdisciplinary nature, in the perspective of Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010).

We define "utterance" as a segment of language that makes up a unit of meaning, be it a sequence of sentences, a simple sentence or even a simple word (HURFORD; HEASLEY, 2004), used in oral and written form (MACKAY, 2000). Other relevant terms are "enunciator" and "enunciatee", imported from language studies (BAKHTIN, 1990; BENVENISTE, 1989; DUCROT, 1987), and used here to facilitate exposition: (1) "Enunciator" is the one who speaks or writes, producing utterances, and (2) "enunciatee" is the one to whom one speaks or writes. Both enunciator and enunciatee have a "locus of enunciation" (RIBEIRO, 2017), where they produce, distribute, and/or consume their utterances. It is not always easy to define these loci, especially that of the enunciatee, who is often hidden: the enunciator seems to be addressing someone in front of him when in fact he is addressing someone who is very distant, as in the typical example of a member of the House of Representatives, apparently talking to colleagues, but aiming at the voter on the other side of the camera. What follows are some examples of utterances, produced by enunciators from different parts of the planet, as a possible sample of Elective Affinities, selected on the basis of a non-violence criterion: "An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind" (Gandhi, Indian leader); "The first human gesture is the hug" (Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer); "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind" (John Donne, English poet); "I exist because I see myself reflected in your eyes" (Free translation of the word "ubuntu", from the Zulu language). Goethe's own definition of "elective affinity" can be another example: "Working together is like dancing together: if you keep in step you become indispensable to one another. Mutual goodwill must necessarily develop". (GOETHE, 2015, p. 40).

Ideology is understood as "a body of ideas characteristic of a certain group or class", according to one of the possible definitions offered by Eagleton (1991, p. 1), and which is implicit in what is said or written by someone. A sentence like "The United States is a rich country because its people are honest and hardworking" can reflect an ideological position built on the assumption that other countries are poor because their people are dishonest and indolent. The famous words expressed by General Porfírio Diaz, ex-president of Mexico – "Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States " – can pass the ideology that the wealth of the first world is built on the supply of cheap labor, slave workforce and general subservience of the third world underclass to the interests of multinationals. The notion of ideology, as a body of ideas, is not committed to a common, generalized, and universal truth. These are different ways to see the world, from an alignment to a subaltern's magical realism – the feast of the day of the dead in Mexico – to the positivist belief that pragmatic people are more concerned with life than death, aligning themselves with Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism (WEBER, 2004) and, therefore, producing more wealth and

well-being. In this line of positivist thinking, the poor of the third world can even be seen as being poor by choice, having renounced material goods, distributed them to the needy, if they had any, and more probably, despised as people who dislike work, or see it as punishment. The fusion of religion with capitalism, on one hand, and the contempt for material goods, on the other, reflect two important ideologies, in the notion we give to the term here.

Let us now see how conflict absence, emergence and solution are linked. In FL teaching, conflict absence is characterized not only by alienation, whether from the teacher, the student or both, but also by a kind of naive wonder at the culture and language of the other, which occurs uncritically (MOITA LOPES, 1996; COX; ASSIS-PETERSON, 2001) and normally without sustainability conditions, which can end up in disenchantment with the culture of the other (PAVLENKO; BLACKLEDGE, 2004). FL teachers, especially in the case of hegemonic languages like English, are in danger of becoming mentally colonized, turning into colonizers in their own country (MOITA LOPES, 1996), acting at the level of naive conscience (FREIRE, 1979), without realizing that they are innocently adopting the colonizer's discourse, denying themselves and silencing their own voices (SALOMÃO, 2017).

Conflict emergence occurs with the problematization of crystallized discourses (DUBOC, 2012), alerting to the naturalization of hegemonic discourses (WODAK, 2003) that are presented as certifiers of what is fair and correct, but that surreptitiously end up legitimizing different forms of violence (GALTUNG, 1995). Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989; RESENDE; RAMALHO, 2006; COTS, 2006; DUBOC, 2013; RORATO, 2016; MAGALHÃES; MARTINS; RESENDE, 2017) is a theoretical-methodological approach that includes the dimensions of social, discursive and textual practices, which we summarize below, incorporating a more conciliatory realignment, considering "a purposefully porous and integrationist orientation to research methodology that privileges trans-disciplinarity over rigor" (CHOULIARAKI; FAIRCLOUGH, 2010, p. 1218).

In the social dimension, discourse is seen as an example of social practice (OLIVEIRA; CARVALHO, 2013), a resource that people use when they try to understand and act on society, transform the world or, more commonly, keep it as it is. We seek to discover how text, through words and images, contributes to produce a certain representation of the world, the ideology that underlies that representation and who benefits from it, considering power groups, races, social classes, professions of greater or lesser social prestige etc. The example, given by Bhabha (1998, p. 111), about colonial discourse, clearly demonstrates this view and how the colonizing action can be justified for the benefit of the colonizer: "The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction".

In the discursive dimension, the choices are made from the immediate context, related to the role that the enunciator assumes not only in relation to the enunciatee, but also in relation to other utterances. Barão de Itararé's aphorism, "God gives sieves

to those who do not have flour", probably refers to the Portuguese proverb, "God gives nuts to those who do not have teeth". The enunciator plays the role of a humorist here and assumes that the enunciatee knows the original proverb to appreciate the humor that is superimposed on the text. The enunciation context will also show if it is just a humorous take, criticism against those who are unable to take advantage of what they were endowed with or even a scathing censure on resources wasted on ungrateful people. On this interaction with the enunciatee and other utterances, we have an example of discursive practice, assuming a literate subject who can understand and produce different social practices related to reading and writing.

In the textual dimension, finally, we analyze, inter alia, aspects related to lexical, syntactic, and semantic choices that we must make when we talk or write to people we want to persuade, influence, or mobilize. "I need your signature here" will have a different effect if we replace it with "Please okay this and date it"; corporate and professional jargon can be used to demonstrate power and exclude the other; biblical phrases will have a greater appeal to a religious audience. In the textual dimension, as we can see, the effect on the other emerges from the choice of textual elements made by the enunciator. This is discourse as text.

The CDA division into three dimensions – social, discursive, and textual – is done here only for didactic exposition reasons. In fact, they occur simultaneously.

CDA, for its ability to develop critical awareness, is used not only as a means by which we understand the functioning of society, but also as a resource that we can use to protect ourselves from the booby traps that authors, consciously or unconsciously, insert into their texts to induce us to see some prejudices naturalized as legitimate social practices, as if they were normal in human interaction. This CDA feature, which we can describe as a critical awareness instrument, which is essential for understanding language as a resource for social action, has, however, been used more frequently to highlight negative aspects of language use, with an emphasis on communication failures, misunderstandings and conflicts (OXFORD, 2013). For this reason, without ignoring the theoretical and methodological support provided by the CDA, we felt the need to look further, seeking for the concept of Peace Cultures, based on Galtung (1969, 1995, 2003) and complementing it with the notion of Elective Affinities, by Weber (2004). We see the need to move away from polarized activism, in which language is seen more as a system that generates conflicts, to enter a conciliatory world, through a non-violence path, where language emerges as a possible instrument for reconciliation between different ideologies. Unveiling the conflict, as CDA does, is necessary, but not sufficient. Seeking subsidies in the basic principle of Critical Theory (HORKHEIMER, 1989) – considering that in addition to describing reality it is also necessary to transform it – we propose that critical awareness development should not be limited to conflict acknowledgment, but also include a solution. Considering that trying to resolve conflict by violence only intensifies it, we propose a solution through a conciliatory route, although realizing that the struggle for a peaceful solution is more desire than reality. We understand that there is no room for being naive here when we

consider that out of four great pacifists in history – including Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and John Lennon – three were murdered, victims of the violence they were fighting against.

Galtung (2003) alerts us to the need of seeing peace as an abstract concept that does not exist in the world we live in. The author uses the stock exchange metaphor to explain that the word "peace" is like an asset that has lost its value, representing a portion of our linguistic capital that has been eroded by overuse and inflation. Investors/users of the language have lost confidence in the word "peace" because it has no credibility from those who use it and the purpose for which they use it. Also, according to Galtung, peace is not there to promote peace, it is not a peaceful and non-violent representation of reality, but a way to solve the conflict. To this end, he proposes to replace the abstract concept of the word "peace" with the concrete concept of "actuated peace culture". People involved in the conflict must believe that if they respond to violence with violence, the conflict will not be solved; it is necessary for them to behave in a creative, flexible, and non-violent way to reach a solution. Actuated peace culture is built on a special kind of empathy (not how I feel being in other people's shoes, but how they feel being in their own shoes), reversibility (avoid doing something irreversible) and flexibility (make possible futures feasible). "Violence is so terribly irreversible. Only in cartoons (...) do flattened beings, (...) rise from the dead, given new life by their creator (...). In real, empirical life not" (GALTUNG, 2003, p. 8).

The concept of peace culture was also taken up by Oxford (2014, p. 5), who defines it as "a dynamic, active process which includes the development of harmony", not only dismissing the idea of peace as a simple conflict violation, but also paving the way for practical solutions, as a viable option to transform the world, based on small cultures of peace that may develop in the classroom. Among the resources proposed by the author in her edited book on conflict resolution, we highlight the search for values, ideas, practices, and artifacts that can be shared by members of different cultures. Jews, Christians, and Muslims, all united by the common thread of the same historical heritage, are cited as examples. Peace cultures can also be fostered and have more value when they emerge in entrenched antagonistic groups, such as factions in a prison, gangs of rappers, or countries separated by wars, but still capable of using some aspects that can be shared in their practices.

Finding a common sustainable trait that can be shared between participants from two antagonistic systems – whether individuals, groups, or countries – is probably the biggest challenge in solving conflicts that emerge when we adopt a critical approach to FL teaching. There are extremely sensitive issues we must deal with, especially those from an ideological nature, involving problems of hegemony and power relations. To overcome these barriers, we will use the concept of Elective Affinities.

Elective Affinity, based on Löwy (2011), is the process by which two cultural forms come into active convergence and produce a cultural symbiosis. We can list religious dogma, political attitude, or economic behavior as cultural forms. It is a reciprocal process, initiated by search, leading to an encounter, and resulting in union,

fundamentally producing a symbiosis of two forms. The discovery of certain meaning analogies and a close connection between the two cultural forms contributes to this fusion. The term comes from medieval alchemy, passing through Literature, with Goethe's novel, under the same title, and arrives at Sociology with Weber (LÖWY, 2011). In Middle Ages chemistry, Elective Affinity was the force that produced the fusion of two elements, generating a new substance. Goethe used this concept as a metaphor to explain the passion between a man and a woman who undo their previous ties to recreate a new type of connection between them. Weber (2004) imports the term from Literature into the scientific sphere to explain the fusion between the Protestant work ethic and the spirit of capitalism with the emergence of certain affinities shared both by religious ethics and the economic behavior of the time. The author argues that the spiritual values of religion, based on work ethics and savings, together with the material values of the economy, converge to produce a common result, which is the accumulation of wealth and material goods.

Löwy (2011), in his analysis of Weber's writings, lists ten examples of Elective Affinities, three internal, when they are created within a given social sphere, and seven external, when they cross different social spheres, which we will describe below, adapting them to the contemporary world and bringing examples that are more suitable to the theme that we develop here. Internal Elective Affinities refer to examples from religious, economic, and cultural spheres. A possible example in the religious sphere could be the choice of appropriate Bible verses to be read by the minister for the commissioning of the body at a funeral, which would be different verses from those used for the baptism of a child, in order to respect, on one hand, grief and loss of a beloved one, versus joy and hope, on the other. In the economic sphere, the union leader, depending on the attitude of the audience, the means of communication being used, employers' maneuvers, among countless other aspects, will have to change his speech, the tone of his voice or the direction of his gaze, to create the most appropriate affinity with his audience and reach the desired results. In the cultural sphere, we face a broader perspective, with greater diversification of affinities, typically multiplying in innumerable artifacts, including printed books, computer algorithms, social networks, planetary musical shows, online dating sites, big data etc. Success in finding a partner on a dating site, for example, involves the ability to seek affinities that can be shared with each other. The more exclusive these affinities, the stronger and more lasting the bonds between the partners, considering that an affinity shared with many weakens the bonds. An adult who strongly believes in the existence of unicorns is more likely to create stronger bonds with another adult who holds that same belief than with an adult who derides the idea.

Considering the seven external Elective Affinities, the classic example, as seen above, is that of Protestant ethics, in the sphere of religion, with the spirit of capitalism, in the sphere of economics. Other examples, in addition to religion and economics, involve social classes, political issues, bourgeois thinking, lifestyles etc. In the area of Applied Linguistics, we have an analysis of Martin Luther King's speech, made by

Kramsch (2011), from the perspective of symbolic competence. Although the author does not mention "Elective Affinities" in her text, she actually uses the concept when showing how King fused in his speech, with a lot of symbolic competence, the resources of African-American rhetoric, typical of black sermons, with the discourse of the white elite, showing the speaker's ability to select the closest analogies between two different cultural forms, creating new figures of speech and thus captivating both blacks and whites who made up his audience.

In the survey conducted by Löwy (2011), the most relevant aspects for this study are those related to different elements of the human activity spheres that afford the emergence of these Elective Affinities, and show how these elements behave in the merging process. Among them, summarizing Löwy, we highlight:

- The need for spiritual kinship, congruence, and adequacy between two cultural forms for the merging to begin.
- Awareness that the similarities between the two forms create the possibility, but not the need for active convergence.
- The possibility that affinity involves levels of approximation and merging, starting the convergence of initially separated structures until reaching the cultural symbiosis between the elements, producing a solid and close unity.

In FL learning, external Elective Affinities occur between more distant cultural forms, to the extent that they emerge not only from different social spheres, but also from different cultures, often hiding and hindering access to the affinities that are sought, either by simple geographic distance or by other more complex factors. Sometimes the culture of the other closes itself within an isolating breastplate, demanding necessary and patient work to find cracks in that breastplate to reach on the other side the affinities needed to resolve the conflict. The Elective Affinities themselves contribute to widen these access cracks.

All learning presupposes participation that starts in the periphery, but gradually gives the learner all the skills and attitudes necessary to integrate him or her into the new community, as a legitimate member and with a sense of belonging (LAVE; WENGER, 1991). When learning a hegemonic language, the student is usually unable to complete this journey from the periphery to the center. Due to the extreme difficulty of enjoying a legitimate peripheral participation, he or she may end up as subaltern, marginalized before the hegemonic language and culture of the other, in spite of having acquired all the skills and attitudes that characterize them, as demonstrated by Kumaravadivelu (2016) in his predominantly autobiographical text. The use of Elective Affinities emerges here as an option that can be tried to create cracks in the barriers and walls that arise between different cultures, providing at least the possibility of sustainable links between individuals and groups on either side. Below, we show how we can do it.

**Methodology**

This investigation is qualitative in nature, guided by a sociological approach, based on the notion of Elective Affinities, as proposed by Weber (2004), using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a tool, to unveil the conflicts frequently covered up by the dominant discourse, and resorting to actuated Peace Cultures, based on Galtung (2003) and Oxford (2013, 2014), to solve the problem.

What we propose to do here, seeking affinities between distant cultural forms, whether they are separated geographically by walls built between countries and/or ideologically by barriers between antagonistic discourses, is to survey utterances in tune with the concept of actuated Peace Cultures (GALTUNG, 2003) that offer the possibility of producing a breach in the protective breastplate used by nations, ethnicities, languages and cultures – either dominant or subordinate. These barriers can be built to block both entry and exit – as we can see, for example, with the wall between the United States and Mexico, built to prevent entry, and the Berlin wall, built to block the way out.

The corpus for this investigation is drawn from utterances generated in the world press that followed the September 11 attacks in 2001, which we have summarized below. On the morning of September 11, a Tuesday, 4 passenger planes were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda militants to attack, in suicide missions, 3 strategic targets in the United States: (1) the Twin Towers, symbol of the economic power of the United States, including 2 110-story buildings, in the financial center of New York; (2) the Pentagon, headquarters of the United States Department of Defense in the Washington District; and (3) a third target, probably the US Congress or the White House building, which failed because the pilot and passengers reacted against the hijackers and the plane ended up crashing en route to Washington. The greatest damage was done to the Twin Towers, hit by two planes, which resulted in 2,606 deaths, against 125 in the Pentagon, hit by one of the four planes. No passenger on the planes managed to survive. In addition to the lives lost and the more than 6,000 injured, there were also financial shocks on the New York Stock Exchange, in the order of tens of billions of dollars, the immediate extinction of thousands of jobs and, from a political point of view, the approval of the Bush administration, which rose to 90%, the declaration of war on Afghanistan and the approval of the PATRIOT Act, a law that allowed the American government to intercept telephone messages and e-mails without a court order. In the six days following 9/11, fires, acts of vandalism, assaults, shootings, police chases, and a homicide were reported in various places in the United States.

The emotional impact of the attacks generated many expressions of both disapproval and solidarity with the kidnappers and victims' relatives, not necessarily in that order. Anti-Americanism surfaced in different countries, including Brazil, with declarations of approval for the kidnappers' gesture, seen as heroes of a third world country that managed to shake the foundations of the American empire (ALMEIDA, 2011). Solidarity with the victims and the United States was more restricted to official pronouncements. What follows is a small, highly selective sample of utterances that reflect pronouncements

and demonstrations that stood out in the world press news in the days following the September 11 attacks. The criterion for the selection of this small corpus was the very discourse that each of the selected texts creates, based on the idea that this discourse, due to context impositions, also generates expectations about what can be said.

Roughly speaking, the demonstrations on 9/11 are either more aligned to the left, seeing the attack as a retaliation by subalterns against the empire, or more aligned to the right, in solidarity with the American government. For many, including known figures like linguist Noam Chomsky, the September 11 attacks were afforded by numerous acts of terrorism from the United States against other countries, including the coups d'état in Brazil, deposing President João Goulart, elected by the people, and in Chile, overthrowing the elected government of Allende, coincidentally on an 9/11, and appointing dictator Pinochet, responsible for the death and torture of thousands of people. From examples that reflect a discourse ideologically more aligned with the left, we can highlight the statement delivered by Congresswoman Luciana Genro, member of the Brazilian Labor Party at the time: "... this tragedy is the responsibility of the American government, because the United States promotes state terrorism worldwide" (ALMEIDA, 2011, p. 26-27). It is the same idea found in the official manifestation of the Iraqi government, in a statement read on Iraqi television on September 12: "American cowboys are reaping the fruits of their crimes against humanity". What follows are two examples from the opposite side, aligned with a reactionary locus of enunciation, the first in an Israeli newspaper: "America has been attacked not for what it has done wrong, but for what it has done right, and for being the hope of the entire world." (Jerusalem Post, September 12); the second, from General Colin Powell, then Secretary of State: "You can be sure that the American spirit will prevail over this tragedy." The need for a common enemy to unite the people is also used: "America is united" (President Bush, September 12); "True patriotism hates injustice in its own land more than anywhere else." (Quote repeated after the attacks, from Clarence Darrow, a famous American lawyer who died in 1938). In general, the statements on the left demonstrated a tendency to look at the past, trying to justify the attacks, while the statements on the right tended to look at the future, erasing the past and exalting feelings of patriotism.

About 200 utterances were initially collected, including statements from famous personalities, street demonstrations, comments on mailing lists, popular at the time, and official statements by authorities from different countries. The content of these official statements varied little from one country to another, but what stood out were expressions of solidarity with the Americans, even from countries with a history of disaffection against the United States. The respect imposed by the loci of enunciation seemed to lead enunciators to say what should be said, rather than what they would really like to say. Afghanistan itself, where al-Qaida training camps operated without any restrictions, said verbatim, in the voice of its foreign minister: "We denounce this terrorist attack, whoever is behind it."

After inspecting the 200 initial utterances, we created a second list with 20 utterances, not only eliminating redundancies and repeated content, but mainly focusing on those

that did not adhere to the expectations imposed by their loci of enunciation, both left and right, and thus allowing for some blending between them. The statement made by the British writer Martin Amis, commenting on the 9/11 in The Guardian newspaper, serves to illustrate this integrationist perspective, in which a more distant point on the horizon is sought for, beyond American patriotism, possibly encompassing both left and right: "Our best destiny, as planetary cohabitants, is the development of what has been called 'species consciousness' – something over and above nationalisms, blocs, religions, ethnicities" (AMIS, 2001). Of the 20 utterances selected to compose this second list, we prepared a third one, limited to only 3 utterances, shown in Table 1, where we believe it is possible to identify some crossings between left and right, displaying breaches for the emergence of the Elective Affinities we are looking for.

**Table 1** – Utterances produced in the context of the 9/11 attacks

| Utterance | Enunciator |
|---|---|
| If we learn nothing else from this tragedy, we learn that life is short and there is no time for hate. | Sandy Dahl, wife of Flight 93 pilot Jason Dahl |
| We completely condemn this very dangerous attack, and I convey my condolences to the American people, to the American president and to the American administration, not only in my name but on behalf of the Palestinian people. | Arafat, then Palestinian leader. |
| But don't forget one thing: there are people all over the world who are kind and caring. Let's stop and think about the hatred that generates such a tragedy and let's decide to do everything we can, every day, so that there is more respect and understanding in the world. | *Project Wisdom*, American educational site, in a message to be read to students in schools participating in the project. |

**Source**: Authors' elaboration.

## Analysis and discussion

For the analysis of the utterances, we prepared a questionnaire based on Fairclough's (2003) Analytical Model, incorporating what was developed later by other researchers (COTS, 2006; OXFORD, 2013, 2014; RORATO, 2016). The model segments the analysis into three levels: (1) social practice, (2) discursive practice and (3) text. Table 2 summarizes the proposed instrument. We conclude the analysis with a discussion of Elective Affinities that permeate enunciators and enunciatees at these three levels of practice.

**Table 2** – Questionnaire for analyzing of the utterances

| Analysis level | Questions |
|---|---|
| Social practice | What is the enunciator's immediate context? <br> What beliefs are behind the utterance? <br> What are the possible consequences of the utterance? |
| Discursive practice | What is the relationship between enunciator and enunciatee? <br> What is the enunciator's role? <br> What is the enunciatee's role? |
| Text | What was said? <br> What was silenced? |

**Source:** Authors' elaboration.

The analysis involves utterances produced by subjects and institutions that are related to the September 11 attacks and that had in common the objective of resolving, via non-violence, the conflict generated by the incidents. We look for the enunciators' and enunciatees' loci of enunciations, and the strategies the enunciators used to reach their objectives. The separation between social, discursive, and textual practices is made for the purpose of exposure; in reality, in any communicative event, these three levels occur simultaneously.

**Social practice**

In this section, we will analyze the enunciators behind the texts, trying to summarize: (1) their immediate context; (2) the beliefs underlying the utterances; (3) and the possible consequences of the utterances.

From the point of view of social practice, the chosen utterances refer to three quite different enunciators in terms of their social identities. Sandy Dahl, a tragedy victim, was 40 at the time, married to the pilot for five years, flight attendant, American in nationality and linked to the Christian Science sect. Arafat, a 70-year-old Muslim, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1994, Palestine Liberation Organization leader, politically aligned with the militants who carried out the attack. Project Wisdom was an American educational project linked to the training of primary and secondary school students, producing educational materials for affiliated schools, without a defined religious sect, but tending to Christianity. In sum, we have different people and institutions in all aspects, including nationalities, exercised activities, and professed beliefs.

In relation to convictions behind these utterances, something we notice initially is a kind of rapprochement between the enunciators, simultaneously resulting from the sharing of ideas and the distance between enunciators and the immediate context from which they speak. Instead of an alignment with certain cultural values, common in times

of crisis – such as an appeal to patriotism, cultivation of hatred and even campaigning for war – what emerges from the three enunciators is a shared affront to these values. The pilot's wife's plea that there is no "time for hatred", the Project Wisdom statement that "there are people all over the world who are kind and caring" and even the condolences "on behalf of the Palestinian people", sent by Arafat, of whom we must remember that he was Nobel Peace Prize holder to correctly evaluate the credibility of his words in this context – are all aspects that bring together enunciators that are so diverse in their identities. What they say points to the conviction that it is possible to build another world, based on diversity acceptance, fostering possible Peace Cultures, looking for something that hovers beyond retaliation.


**Discursive practice**

Among the countless possibilities of analysis, offered by CDA in relation to the discursive practice, we will adhere here to the enunciator's and enunciatee's loci of enunciation, and mainly to what the enunciator is trying to achieve with the utterance he or she is producing. In other words, let's summarize for whom Arafat, the widow and Project Wisdom are talking to and what kind of cultural values they are trying to pass on.

The most delicate locus of enunciation is that of Arafat, who has as the enunciatees of his message not only the Americans, but also the Palestinians, who are his followers and historical opponents of the United States, besides people from all over the planet, both left and right-wingers, all interested in hearing what he would say. Around Arafat, Palestinians protest on the streets with signs like "For us every day is 9/11"; not far away, in Israel, the press proclaims that the United States is the hope of the world. Arafat, in the crossfire between two opposing worlds, chooses to ignore both, discards neutrality and, in simple and direct language, playing with the prestige he has over his followers and leaders on the planet, strongly condemns the attack. He does it not only in his name, but also in the name of the Palestinian people, calling on them not to ignore the conflict, which is there, but to resolve it non-violently. Unlike some leaders who incite their people to war, sometimes even inventing enemies, Arafat seems to be the type of leader who tries to calm down his people's fury against an enemy, that is real, trying to find some breach through which he can introduce a negotiation perspective, believing that the desire for peace is universal, even for people accustomed to war.

The widow's locus of enunciation is that of the victim, who momentarily gains a voice for having participated in a tragedy that shook the world and especially for having tried to take from there, with her husband's death, a life lesson: "(...) we learn that life is short and there is no time for hate". That is, if there is no time for hate, there will be time for love, for what unites people, not for what separates them. There is a biblical stance in her speech, reminding and even questioning the Ecclesiastes that for every activity under the heavens there is a: "Time to love and time to hate; time for war and time for peace" (3.8). For Sandy, there is no time for hate or war. She retrieves John

Donne's poem, who claims that we are part of humanity. What she said was spontaneous, without any pressure, being a common and unknown person in a comfortable locus of enunciation, having no commitment to her countless enunciatees, but producing a message that made headlines in newspapers all over the world.

Project Wisdom, on the other hand, has a more imposing locus of enunciation, speaking from an institutional space, with a collective voice, but having a well-defined enunciatee, with an appeal specifically addressed to students in the schools affiliated to the project. To make the appeal, it uses the imperative mood, either in the second person singular ("Don't forget"), speaking directly to the enunciatee, or in the first person plural ("Let's stop and think"), in this case, not talking to, but with the enunciatee. Enunciator and enunciatee are not in opposition, but sharing the same space, without any patriotism appeal or inventing a common enemy to promote and maintain this union of interests.

## Text

We will analyze the text verifying the utterances' content, considering what was said and what was silenced. Sandy, using the first person plural ("we learn") silenced everything she could have said about her husband, who apparently fought with the hijackers and contributed, along with the passengers, for the plane to crash before reaching the congress building; but she was also silent about the indignation she must have felt as a victim of the attacks. Regarding her husband's death, we would expect Sandy to highlight his spirit of patriotism, the heroism of his gesture, reiterating that he gave his life for his country. She could have made an appeal for the United States to avenge the death of its countrymen. However, of everything she could have said, she chose to talk about the brevity of life and its incompatibility with hate, erasing everything else. This erasure, hiding what she could have said and did not say, seems to have contributed to amplify the impact of what she said.

Arafat chose to speak both in the first person plural ("we condemn this attack", "in the name of the Palestinian people") and in the singular ("I convey my condolences", "in my name"). Throughout the sentence, we notice that he starts speaking in the plural, moves to the singular, assuming his leader position and ends in the plural, producing, at the same time, a gesture of union and confrontation with the people he leads and who are on the streets, supporting the attack. He obviously knew the plight of the Palestinian refugees, with their homes destroyed and countless deaths to mourn. He could have taken the opportunity to tell the world the tragedy of his own people, greater than the American tragedy, but he preferred to be silent, to let others do it. When he conveyed his condolences he did not seem ironic because he showed that he knew what he was talking about: he was more ambitious, looking further and seeking for a greater value, beyond the impossible dream of an immediate peace. He had to use simple, objective, and direct language, without appealing to pacifying metaphors. He may have wished that his words were small seeds thrown in the wind and that they would fall and germinate

somewhere, producing Peace Cultures as fruit, but obviously he could not speak in those terms and the desire to do so, if it existed, had to be silenced.

The text is even simpler in the message sent to students by the Project Wisdom: the verb is in the imperative and asks the enunciatee to see the tragedy in a different way, with respect and understanding for other people in the world. There is a lot of erasure in what is requested, without criticism on either side, without calling for patriotism, heroism, or raising of the flag in front of the house.

## The conciliatory attitude

The affinity that brings Arafat closer to the widowed wife of the American pilot and to the Project Wisdom generates two antagonistic consequences, at the same time separating and connecting the enunciators. The immediate consequence is that of separation, which occurs between enunciators and their communities: the widow's friends may be surprised at her appeal against hate; Arafat not only knew that the attack on the United States was dangerous, but also that the Palestinians, celebrating on the streets, would not like his words; the message sent to schools by Project Wisdom would probably not be read to students.

On the other hand, it is this distancing from the communities of origin, denying the easy solution of creating a common enemy and seeking for a culture of peace, which brings together enunciators that are so distant and distinct from each other. The closer they get to one side, the more they move away from the other, sometimes creating the need for a reinforced personal guard for the leader to walk among his people, as if he needed to be protected by a breastplate offering greater or lesser visibility.

The other expected consequence, although extremely remote, is that utterances of this type, sharing a conciliatory nature, may produce breaches in countless ideological and geographic barriers interposed between countries, sects and ethnicities, create possible bonds between them, and generate cultures of peace. The impact of the message sent to schools on the day after 9/11, with less than 10 hits on Google, was still minor; Arafat's demonstration, with about 250 hits, is more significant; the declaration of the pilot's widow, repeated on more than 10,000 websites, created after 9/11, shows that there is a repressed longing for peace, that has been perpetuated over time.

The search for a culture of peace in the three utterances is made by an initial rupture with values approved in the immediate locus of enunciation, transgressing expectations of retaliation, which are condemned, to approach a reconciliatory locus of enunciation, seen as having a greater cultural value, which is perpetuated. The role of each enunciator – Sandy as a victim, Arafat as a suspect, and Project Wisdom as an American institution – contributes to legitimize this bid for peace.

What follows is a suggestion of how the use of Elective Affinities in the teaching of a hegemonic language like English, could be contemplated by the language teacher. Two aspects should be highlighted. The first is that we are not offering a teaching proposal,

but only an attitude, specifically defined here as a critical conciliatory attitude. The second aspect is that an elective affinity is not necessarily associated with a particular cultural value; it is just an option, out of many possible behaviors, that we may wish to develop, be it peaceful, violent or of any other kind, although, obviously, we are interested in non-violent choices.

Two relevant aspects in the proposal of a given elective affinity is to define what to look for and where to look for it. For this purpose, the utterance, the enunciator and the enunciatee must be considered, along with social, discursive, and textual practices. Our most ambitious goal is not only to have students develop critical awareness, which shows the artifices of hegemonic discourse to legitimize undesirable values, presented as correct, but also, and mainly, build a conciliatory critical awareness, capable of enabling a sustainable solution to conflict through a non-violence path.

What is sought, then, are conciliatory elements, possible alliances, capable of approaching and joining antagonistic cultural forms, including religious, racial, social values, and mainly, components of the power relations between hegemonic and subaltern cultures. The three utterances above are examples of these reconciling components. Other classic examples include texts (e.g. the speech "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King), songs (e.g. "Imagine" by John Lennon), commercials (e. g. the ones shown annually by Coca-Cola in the Super Bowl), and films (e. g. "Gran Torino" by Clint Eastwood). They are conciliatory examples because they offer students the possibility of developing cultures of peace in places where violence and discord are the norm.

Having defined what to look for, the second relevant aspect is to define the enunciators' loci of enunciation and the possible relations that can be found with the enunciatees in these utterances. To the extent that the teaching of an FL, in authentic situations of use, involves mainly interaction between subjects from different countries, the possibilities for creating Elective Affinities are usually of the external type, involving distinct cultures.

An example, offering the possibility of promoting the emergence of this type of external affinity is the film "Grand Torino", directed and produced by an American filmmaker, in which the two main protagonists are placed at both extremes of the sociological scale, from hegemonic to subaltern. On the hegemonic extreme, we have Walt Kowalski, the typical retired war veteran American, associated with masculine, white and heterosexual values, characteristic of the western dominant ideological positioning (PENNYCOOK, 2017). On the subaltern extreme, we have Thao, an immigrant yellow Chinese teenager, caught when trying to steal Kowalski's car in his initiation into the world of crime. The encounter between the two characters, raised and indoctrinated to hate and despise each other, had all the ingredients for a tragic outcome, but then the opposite happens: a relationship of mutual respect is developed and maintained between them, consolidating friendship and displaying hilarious scenes like the one where Kowalski tries, unsuccessfully, to teach Thao how to speak like a man. Looking closer, we realize that what looks like an apology for machismo, showing American heroes standing behind their war rifles, exposes breaches, through which we

can see, behind the blockades, an opening for human solidarity. From where we least expect, a conciliatory message can emerge, with the possibility of creating Elective Affinities where we need them most, including north/south and west/east relations. Gran Torino, like so many other examples from cinema, music, literature, advertising, and arts in general, offers language teachers this possibility.

**Conclusion**

The idea of FL teaching and learning as part of a universal brotherhood enterprise should certainly be a relevant aspect for language teachers, but this does not imply that conflict would not emerge between different ideologies circulating inside and outside the classroom. Conflict is part of human relations and any attempt to deny it is a naive attitude leading to alienation, especially when teaching a hegemonic FL. The search for a conciliatory attitude, based on the notion of universal brotherhood, can be another trap of the hegemonic discourse, if not approached from a critical perspective. On the other hand, some critical approaches lean to an irreversibly negative view of teaching as concerns hegemonic languages, sometimes to the point of stating, for example, that English teachers typically adopt the ideology of oppressor and act as colonizers in their own country, which precludes a conciliatory proposal. What we attempted here, by offering alliances, was to merge two opposite perspectives, sharp criticism with conciliatory attitude, so that language teaching ceases to be an instrument of alienation to be an instrument of peace.

Complying with the idea that denying conflict is alienation, we propose, at first, the need to recognize it through problematization, which was done via CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis). Secondly, for the solution of the conflict, we looked beyond CDA, resorting to Galtung (1969, 1995, 2003) and Oxford (2013, 2014) and endorsing their ideas on Peace Cultures, seeking solution through non-violence. Thirdly, to consolidate Peace Cultures, we propose the development of a critical conciliatory attitude, using Elective Affinities. In spite of government's truculence in some hegemonic countries, armored behind walls and frightening subalterns with increasingly sophisticated weapons, what we propose is the possibility of opening breaches in these walls, so that contact points between people and entities can be established, creating alliances with the Elective Affinities available on both sides of the wall. There are conflicts all over the world, as there are people all over the world who wish to resolve conflicts peacefully, including people in hegemonic countries.

LEFFA, V. J.; BEVILÁQUA, A. F.; KIELING, H. S. O ensino da língua estrangeira em conflito: a busca de atitudes críticas conciliadoras. **Alfa**, São Paulo, v. 65, 2021.

▪ *RESUMO: A aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira pressupõe não apenas o domínio das dimensões sistêmica e funcional, mas também o desenvolvimento de uma atitude crítica, considerando aspectos como a consciência dos inúmeros conflitos que subjazem ao estudo das línguas e as inúmeras tentativas de solução já apresentadas, seja por meio do confronto ou da conciliação. O objetivo principal deste trabalho é investigar a possibilidade de uma solução conciliadora para esses conflitos, propondo, para isso, uma metodologia com base nas afinidades eletivas. A fundamentação teórica vem da Análise Crítica do Discurso, que induz a emergência do conflito, e passa pelas Culturas de Paz, que tentam resolver o conflito pelo diálogo. Os dados são coletados do que foi publicado pela imprensa mundial em 12 de setembro de 2001, sobre os ataques às Torres Gêmeas em Nova York no dia anterior. A conclusão é de que a solução do conflito pela via da atitude conciliadora implica, da parte do enunciador, uma ruptura provisória com seu contexto imediato para construir vínculos mais duradouros com interlocutores de outras culturas.*

▪ *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Linguística Aplicada Crítica. Análise Crítica do Discurso. Culturas de Paz. Afinidades eletivas.*

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