



Racialized Emotions in Language Teaching: A Case Study with Black Female Teachers

Emoções racializadas no ensino de línguas: um estudo de caso com professoras negras

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ABSTRACT: In this text, we seek to discuss issues on a topic a little debated in Applied Linguistics - the emotions of black English teachers. Since the advent of the affective turn, studies on identity and emotions have increased exponentially, both in Brazil and abroad (ARAGÃO; BARCELOS, 2018). However, there is still a lot to investigate regarding studies between emotions, power relations, and race (AHMED, 2004, 2009; BOLER; ZEMBYLAS, 2003). In this sense, this work aims to investigate how the emotions of black English teachers are racialized in different contexts. Therefore, in this case study semi-structured interviews were used and the narratives of three black teachers were analyzed. We conclude that the emotions of these teachers are discursively constituted, influenced by the colonial heritage, producing emotional labor.

KEYWORDS: Emotions; Race; English

RESUMO: Neste texto, buscamos debater questões a respeito de um tema pouco discutido na Linguística Aplicada – as emoções de professoras negras de Língua Inglesa. Desde o advento da virada afetiva, estudos sobre identidade e emoções têm aumentado exponencialmente, tanto no Brasil como no exterior (ARAGÃO; BARCELOS, 2018). Porém, ainda há muito a se investigar no que tange aos estudos entre emoções, relações de poder e raça (AHMED, 2004, 2009; BOLER; ZEMBYLAS, 2003). Nesse sentido, este trabalho se propõe a investigar como são racializadas as emoções de professoras negras de Língua Inglesa em diferentes contextos. Para tanto, no presente este estudo de caso foram utilizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas e foram analisadas as narrativas de três professoras negras. Concluímos que as emoções dessas professoras são discursivamente constituídas, influenciadas pela herança colonial, produzindo trabalho emocional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Emoções; raça; Língua Inglesa.

Introduction: Emotions and race matter

Everyone is familiar with the slogan “The personal is political” — not only that what we experience on a personal level has profound political implications, but that our interior lives, our emotional lives are very much informed by ideology. We ourselves often do the work of the state in and through our interior lives. What we often assume belongs most intimately to ourselves and to our emotional life has been produced elsewhere and has been recruited to do the work of racism and repression

(Angela Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, 2015).

We begin our paper reflecting upon Angela Davis’ thinking on the epilogue. The famous black writer, activist and feminist claims that what is personal is also political and, therefore emotional. The constant violence and racism endured by a segment of the population, recently embodied by the atrocious case of George Floyd¹, reveals that racism remains an element that defines social relations in society. Movements such as Black Lives Matter have been pivotal in stimulating the problematization of racial issues on a global and academic scale.

According to Davis (2015), the violence faced by black women is constituted by multiple layers, those being gender, class and race. In the educational field, these intersections appear when we analyze teachers’ identities – more specific black female. These women are frequently obliterated and undervalued in their positions, and their legitimacy is often questioned (HOOKS, 1995; 2001). Furthermore, they face challenges to build their teachers’ identities while part of a racialized system, based on representations of a white native English speaker (MATOS; JUCÁ; JORGE, 2019; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

Studies about emotion related to racial issues are still scarce in Applied Linguistics and Language teaching. Our research on well-known journals in the area failed to show discussions about black English teachers and their emotions. It is our understanding that it is urgent to talk about concerns on racism and emotions of black female English teachers, considering how our society is heavily built on colonialism, patriarchy and imperialism (DAVIS, 2015).

Teaching entails being connected to the profession socially and politically. From Freire’s (2005) standpoint, which conceives teaching as a transforming force

¹ In May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by two police officers during an arrest in Minneapolis, USA. After his death, protests against police brutality, especially towards black people, quickly spread across the United States and globally.

against inequalities, our motivation to this research involves problematizing racial issues and emotions, in order to deconstruct the dominant western hegemony which reinforces the stereotype of the native teacher (RAJAGOPALAN, 2003) as a white person and his/her superiority (PENNYCOOK, 2001).

In this sense, through the lens of critical emotions and emotional labor (BENESCH, 2017; OLIVEIRA, 2021), this paper aims to question how emotions are racialized in the teacher identity of black female English teachers. We intend to identify, during different moments of teacher training and education, possible intersections between their emotional labor and language teaching racialization, as well as its effects on identity construction processes and pedagogical practices.

This article is organized in five sections. In the first section, we present the theoretical background for emotions, discussing critical perspectives and concepts such as emotional labor. In the second section, we turn our conversation to racialized language teaching, focusing our discussion on social identities and emotions. The following section clarifies our research methodology and in section five we analyze our data based on the theoretical foundations previously presented. Finally, we have our remarks about the relevance of the study and possible contributions to the Applied Linguistics field and to language teaching in the Brazilian context.

2. Theoretical views of Emotions

For a long time, research on emotions had little evidence in many academic fields (BOLER, 1999). The reason for that may be related to the representation of the world in a Cartesian's point of view, which conceives reason as the center of the universe (ZEMBYLAS, 2003), as well as to the heritage of patriarchal discourses, in which emotions are seen as feminine, therefore, primitive and inferior (LUTZ, 1990). According to Lutz (1990), modernist theories, as part of the enlightenment project, see emotions as insignificant, standing up for rational thinking over "irrational" emotionality.

In recent years, this perspective has changed. There has been a growing interest in the fields of Education and Applied Linguistics (BARCELOS; ARAGÃO, 2018). In addition, areas such as Psychology, Geography, Social Sciences and Multidisciplinary Studies have also turned their attention to emotions (BENESCH, 2017). Ruohotie-Lyhty et al. (2016) state that in Teaching and Language Education, more specifically, research on emotions has been

influenced by varied theoretical perspectives, building many ideas to understand emotions. To those authors, concepts like

Goleman's emotional intelligence, Hochschild's emotional work, Hargreaves' emotional geographies, affective events, emotional contagion and crossing theory are just some of these concepts (Ashkanasy, 2015; Becker, Goetz, Morger, & Ranellucci, 2014; Goleman, 1995; Hargreaves, 2001; Yin, Lee, Zhang and Jin, 2013) (RUOHOTIE-LYHTY et al., 2016, p. 01).

Each of those concepts are molded from a cognitive psychological theoretical to a sociological dimension, as highlighted by Hargreaves (2001), when discussing emotional Geographies in teaching. In relation to its meaning, some authors postulate that emotions are seen as active, interactive, socio-culturally and discursively constituted (BARCELOS, 2013). Zembylas (2003) conceives them as subjective experiences and discursive practices. To Aragão (2011), emotions are “corporeal dispositions for situated action”, which “represent a variety of ways of acting in relation to the dynamics of the immediate environment” (p. 302).

In general, Benesch (2017) highlights that research on emotions encompasses three major approaches: biological, cognitive and discursive / post-structuralist, concurrently interpreted as innate and universal; present in conscious and unconscious assessments of emotional events; or represented in the speeches of the individuals, that is, in their doing. On this last perspective, we will make a brief explanation below.

2.1. Critical Perspective of Emotions

This paper follows the critical perspective, since we intend to discuss black teachers' formation of emotional labor, taking into consideration political and cultural factors. This view shows the relationship between language and power in the constitution of emotion, incorporating a political, social and cultural perception in its formation (BENESCH, 2012, 2017; ZEMBYLAS, 2003; 2005). Thus, emotions are experienced as performances, being felt in their social environments (*ibidem.*). Some emotions, such as hatred, anger, love, shame, desire and empowerment are experiences performed by individuals, which it is not only biologically inherited (ZEMBYLAS, 2003, 2005). According to Ahmed (2004, p. 04), emotions “shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others”. Additionally,

emotions have a specific political framework of social structures, particularly in how they are negotiated, understood, felt and expressed (*ibidem.*).

Zembylas (2005) points out some general ideas to better explain this critical concept: 1) emotions are not private or universal, not as well impulses that simply occur to individuals in a passive way; 2) emotions are constituted through language and refer to a broader social life; 3) emotions are part of power relations, which shape the expression of emotions, allowing us to feel some emotions while forbidding others; 4) emotions can demonstrate social and political resistance. “This view is not related to any notion of emotions as personal, but it emphasizes how its internalization is integral to self-education.” (ZEMBYLAS, 2005, p. 26). As reported by Zembylas (2003, 2005), the critical view may encourage individuals to challenge the dominant social structures, destabilizing the hegemonic ideologies and, consequently, the emotions built by them, such as shame (LIYANAGE; CANAGARAJAH, 2019). Furthermore, exploring emotions from a political-cultural view helps us to understand how some teachers’ emotions highlight some neoliberal and colonial discourses, and their potential to be contested in their social environment (BENESCH, 2017).

Boler (1999) claims that emotions are a powerful influence to stimulate social practices in favor of the dominant discourses, under the veil of neutrality and universality. However, emotions may trigger resistance to the prevalent structures, by contesting their truth regimes. This author states the modern and secularized society has increasingly become a government of bodies, in which individuals are regulated and disciplined through internalized rules that become habitual. “We are taught to internalize rules of self-control and discipline, which I argue that occur primarily through emotional structures.

Furthermore, Lutz (1985) states that individuals use their “emotions to understand the situations in which they find themselves” (p. 65). For this reason, they are historically situated, socially performed and culturally generated and reproduced. The meanings attributed to emotions in different contexts have political and social implications, covering a wide range of discourses (LUTZ, 1985). It suggests that emotions are no longer seen as an inner phenomenon, detached from bodily experience, but are intertwined with beliefs and ways of being in the world (BARCELOS, 2015). The emotion of anger, for instance, may seem something internal, individual; however, it is also historically and socially formed. After Paulo Freire, anger alerts us that something is wrong, responding to the injustices brought from the neoliberal system on the oppressed. Freire (1996, p. 15) declares

[h]ence the permanently present criticism in me of neoliberal wickedness, the cynicism of its fatalistic ideology and its unyielding refusal to dream and utopia. Hence my anger, legitimate anger, which surrounds my speech when I refer to the injustices to which the ragged of the world are subjected. Hence my no interest in, no matter what order, assuming an air of impartial, objective, secure observer of facts and events. At no time was I able to be an impartial 'grayish' observer, which, however, never removed me from a strictly ethical position.

Although Paulo Freire believes that schools must be a place that stimulates emotions of love and hope, anger should not be suppressed in his point of view, once it appears as a form of resistance and contestation against social injustices. In the next topic, we will discuss the concept of emotional Labor.

2.2. Emotional Labor

In the 80's, a sociologist called Arlie Hochschild – one of the pioneers in the study of emotions in the field of Social Sciences – introduced the term emotional labor, referring to the regulation of the individual's emotions, as a work demand (HOCHSHILD, 1983). In her most known book "The Managed Heart: commercialization of human feeling", launched in 1983, Hochschild (1983) discusses the emotions of female flight attendants, who were instructed to modify their emotions to comply with the clients' demands, increasing their emotional exhaustion.

Under the influence of the dramaturgy² and alienation³ theories, Hochschild (1979, apud OLIVEIRA, 2021) claims that the culture of emotions is constituted by emotional rules, that is, social and cultural rules, which define how people should feel in different social environments. Hochschild (1979, 1983) also states that in a post-industrial society, individuals/workers were seen as a commodity, whose labor was sold in exchange for their salary. Therefore, due to the demands of the companies, the workers manage their emotions under their

² The theory of dramaturgy refers to the analysis of everyday life, through Erving Goffman's principles of dramaturgy and social interaction. Hochschild (1979) uses these principles in the study of emotions in women's lives and in the working relationships of a contemporary capitalist society. The theory of dramaturgy sees culture as a factor in generating emotional rules that must be enacted by social actors (HOCHSHILD, 1979).

³ Based on the Marxist conception of alienation, Hochschild (1979) explains that "emotional labor" can lead the individual to alienation in his workplace, insofar as the worker is required to perform a certain emotion to meet the demands of the company, placing him/her in a vulnerable situation.

managers' control, aiming to preserve their jobs. As a result, it generates a lot of job dissatisfaction, as they cannot express how they actually feel whenever being exploited at work (HOCHSHILD, 1983).

However, some authors do not conceive the emotional labor only as negative, but as productive, since they build multiple subjectivities (BENESCH, 2017). According to Benesch (2017), although this concept is related to the idea of emotional dissonances, due to the tensions and conflicts that cause feelings of discomfort to workers, the emotional labor may promote transformations in the teachers' workplace. For example, when students exhibit little knowledge of academic literacy, it is necessary to take actions, in order to reduce social injustice. In this scenario, emotions, such as frustration and the feeling of not belonging may arise and teachers may have the opportunity to reflect upon the cultural, historical and social issues around these emotions (BENESCH, 2017).

In essence, according to Hochschild (1983), the emotional regulation emerges when conflicts between a false and a true self happen. This conception reinforces the notion of a universal self that becomes a false one. However, as mentioned by Benesch (2017), the power relations regarding the construction of emotions are constantly (re) created and translated through speeches of power. Such an argument meets the view of this study, which aims to investigate the ways in which power restricts certain subjectivities and reinforces others, and how these forces affect individuals emotionally (*ibidem.*).

Some authors argue that in the classroom context, teachers often perform emotional labor due to the nature of teaching (BENESCH, 2017, ZEMBYLAS, 2003, 2005). Caring, for instance, may be influenced by the culture of teaching, defining how teachers should feel and behave (ZEMBYLAS, 2003a). For Shultz; Zeambylas (2009), the culture of teaching encourages some types of emotions in the classroom, having a straight relationship with historical factors, as well as providing social norms.

The norms are relevant to better understand the concept of emotional labor. Thus, research a post-structuralist view explain that some emotional rules presented in the emotional displays of employees in different jobs are formed by institutional, cultural and social norms (ZEMBYLAS, 2005, BENESCH, 2017, OLIVEIRA, 2021). For Zembylas (2005), currently the emotional rules in education are less rigid and formal, becoming more subtle, varied and complex. In addition, it also involves self-regulation and self-reflexivity (ZEMBYLAS, 2005; OLIVEIRA, 2021). In other words, teachers usually self-regulate their emotions in order to “assume a certain type of teacher, in consonance with their beliefs and

experiences, as well as “through self-reflection [...] understanding where their ways of resistance come from and developing strategies to manage their emotions more consciously (OLIVEIRA, 2021, p. 88). The latter involves an active perception of self-regulation and emotional rules. In the next topic, we will discuss the racialization of language teaching and teachers’ emotions.

3. Racializing language teaching: emotions and teacher identity

In order to understand how language teaching is racialized, it is necessary to look back at the colonial period. In the colonies, physical features were the criteria for categorizing individuals as inferior or superior. Thus, the notion of race was established and deployed in the process of legitimizing European conquests and the exploitation of other populations (QUIJANO, 2005).

Therefore, the racialization process initiated in colonization times had consequences not only to the economic structure, but also to many other societal instances, since the racial social classification affected the entire distribution of power among the world’s population, including work, cultural and subjective relations (QUIJANO, 2005). In this sense, we understand race as a social, historical and political concept, unrelated to any biological definitions whatsoever, built with the main goal of dividing and constructing hierarchies of oppression (KUBOTA; LIN, 2006).

English as a hegemonic language was established by notions of race. According to Pennycook (1998, p. 19),

[t]he history of the ties between ELT and colonialism has produced images of the Self and Other, understandings of English and of other languages and cultures that still play a major role in how English language teaching is constructed and practised: from the native speaker/non-native speaker dichotomy to the images constructed around English as a global language and the assumptions about learners’ cultures, much of ELT echoes with the cultural constructions of colonialism.

We find that English teaching entails complex power relations, fed by the differences created by the social concept of race, and sustained by racialized representations of teachers, students and language speakers (MATTOS; JUCÁ; JORGE, 2019). These power relations affect all subjects involved in the teaching and learning process and we are able to perceive them from class materials (FERREIRA, 2019; MATTOS; JUCÁ; JORGE, 2019) to the idealized

representation of the native speaker as a white individual from the global north (OLIVEIRA, 2020).

In undergraduate curricula, racialization effects are perceptible by the absence of marginalized and subaltern voices. The syllabus, in general, privileges so-called canons from the United States and England and it is rare to see any structural changes (FERRAZ, 2019). It's common to encounter students who are unaware of black authors in the field, mostly because academia places their intellectual production at the margins of the legitimate discourse (MUNIZ, 2016; KILOMBA, 2019). Therefore, we cannot understand academia as a neutral space, but as a reflection of a colonial social order which perpetuates violence by systematically disqualifying black intellectuals through arguments which position their work as subjective instead of scientific (KILOMBA, 2019).

In turn, class materials reproduce representations of the native speaker as white person from countries of the global north. This way, countries such as India and Jamaica are ignored and so is the existence of non-white native speakers (MATOS; JUCÁ; JORGE, 2019; OLIVEIRA, 2020). Thus, we realize how racialization perpetuates the legacy of colonialism, in the sense that it assumes a cultural hierarchy (KUBOTA; LIN, 2006).

As the racialization of language teaching influences subjects, we claim that it also interferes with the construction of teacher identity and hence with emotions. Discussing non-native English teachers, Song (2018) explains that emotions such as insecurity, anxiety and shame derive from hegemonic discourses about English, establishing unbalanced power relations and complicating the construction of a positive self-image. The author says that emotions are not just psychological traits, but they are constituted by social, political and cultural elements. Thus, she understands that emotions should not be associated with teaching competence.

According to Amin (1997), racialization affects the interplay between students and teachers to the extent it strengthens or weakens student's confidence on the teacher's work. The author argues that "this association of the native speaker with ownership of English and good pedagogy disempowers the non-White teacher, who, I have indicated, is constructed as a nonnative speaker on the basis of race" (AMIN, 1997, p. 582).

To Kohli (2014), black teachers' experiences are heavily affected by trauma. The researcher argues that black teachers need to fight internalized racism, a consequence of an oppressive education. Describing these teachers' experiences, Kohli (2014, p375) explains

[t]hey revealed a deep connection between repeated experiences with racism and feeling racially inferior. From intellectual inadequacy, to an embarrassment of their family, to wishing they were white, many women told heartbreaking accounts of internalized racism from elementary school through college.

We understand how emotions relate to identity construction and how identities are multiple, complex and interconnected. Racialized discourses challenge individuals in diverse domains of social life, turning emotions into a social feature that surpasses individuality.

In this sense, we can see in the studies of Harlow (2003) how racialization of English teaching manifests itself on emotions and, therefore, on teaching practices. Harlow (2003, p. 350) stresses

black professors' identity performances may involve providing "proof" in any number of ways to justify their presence in a high-status position.[...] The findings presented here show that race affects the amount of work professors do in the classroom; negotiating a racial stigma creates emotion work and labor for African American professors beyond that required of their white peers." (HARLOW, 2003, p. 350)

We can infer that what the author calls competence proof can be recognized as a silencing mechanism of the racial elements of the teaching practice. We question, for instance, how the need for listing his/her curriculum is not about showing qualifications, but rather a movement that indicates how black people are required to prove and guarantee their belonging to certain positions, to show they are just as worthy as their white peers.

In the case of black women, the demand for reassurance is even stronger. To them, racialization imposes how they should deal with emotions. Lin et al (2004) argue that black female teachers are frequently perceived as excessively emotional and untrustworthy. According to Percy et al (2019, p. 5),

[a]s women of color teaching English teachers, they were forced to foreground their identities and autobiographies in their pedagogies as teacher educators from their first teaching moments under the form of questioned legitimacy and non-normativity, closing off the possibility of teaching in a way that left a consciousness of their teacher educator identities at the door.

We can discuss that the identity foregrounding would have the purpose of escaping the angry black woman's stereotype which has been haunting black women since slavery times. This stereotype comes from the interplay between representations of feminist women, named killjoy feminists, and black women, who are diminished and silenced (AHMED, 2009). Thus, the bodies of black women symbolize the tension responsible for breaking an alleged harmony of an overwhelmingly white environment. As pointed by Ahmed (2009, p. 49),

[i]t is not just that feelings are 'in tension,' but that the tension is located somewhere: in being felt by some bodies, it is attributed as caused by another body, who thus comes to be felt as apart from the group, as getting in the way of its enjoyment and solidarity. The Black body is attributed as the cause of becoming tense, which is also the loss of a shared atmosphere. [...] To speak out of anger as Black woman is then to confirm your position as the cause of tension. Black woman's anger gets in the way of the social bond; it injures or hurts the feminist group.

Black women are then seen as aggressive when they are actually being assertive and they have their gestures and body language linked to a racial caricature, enforcing on these people a form of symbolic violence against their bodies and racial belonging. It is not rare to see these same caricatures in the media as entertainment, in an apparent case of recreational racism.

As a consequence of those representations, black female scholars are frequently assigned to labor-intensive administrative work and teaching duties. Because of that, they rarely have the opportunity to share their experiences with the academic community (LIN et al, 2004). It is interesting to highlight that even when these scholars have the chance to theorize on their experiences or on racial issues, they are questioned about the legitimacy of their research. The most common allegation is that such topics (race, racism and social justice, to name a few) are not scientific, but passionnal contents. Therefore, we understand how racialization also serves the purpose of erasing certain bodies and subjectivities and constructions related to them, invalidating their knowledge and emotions.

After carefully discussing racialization and emotions, we move on to our data. First, we are going to present our methodological approach and the categories deployed for our analytical goals.

4. Methodology

4.1. Methodology

This research was carried out in an English teachers' professional course in Brazil, following a qualitative approach. According to Muylaert et al. (2014, p. 198), a qualitative research is characterized by "addressing issues related to the singularities that are specific to the field and the individuals surveyed". In addition, it provides a descriptive study, as it privileges the description of the phenomena through a holistic view, in which the participants are observed as a whole (GODOY, 1995, p. 62).

A case study method of investigation was chosen, since it allows a detailed observation of a context, an individual or specific events, in order to understand the complexity of a social phenomenon (YIN, 2001), such as the emotions of black English teachers in a teaching environment. Based on Meirinhos; Osório (2010), the case study creates a logic of knowledge that incorporates the researcher's subjectivities. These authors also argue that as far as the investigation advances, the researchers may reformulate the initial questions, in a progressive process.

The data was gathered during the master's degree research, developed in⁴ 2019 by Oliveira (2020) which aimed to investigate the racial identities of black English teachers. However, we emphasize that the analysis undertaken in this article is not the same one carried out in the thesis, since, as stated in the research objectives there are different points to be investigated. Moreover, in this study, we seek to analyze the data in the light of another theoretical contribution, which was presented in the previous sections.

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used for data-gathering. The questionnaires were chosen to outline the profile of the participants and context. According to Nunan (1992), the questions must be elaborated based on the research objectives, as well as aiming at the effectiveness and validity of the answers, which was done. The questionnaire was applied via Google Forms. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by Skype, owing to the availability of the teachers.

⁴ This research was financed by federal agency CAPES and has the approval of the Ethics Committee (COEP). Identification number CAAE: 22132919.4.0000.5149.

4.2. Data analysis and Participants

In order to analyze the data, we adopted the Content Analysis procedure. According to Bardin (2011, p. 42), Content Analysis is

[a] set of communication analysis techniques aiming to obtain, by procedures, systematic and objective description of the content of the messages, indicators (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge related to the production / reception conditions (inferred variables) of these messages.

Moraes (1999) claims that the interpretation of the data is not entirely neutral since the perception of the researcher is taken into consideration. Moraes (1999) also stresses that the process of interpretation is not sequential and linear, but cyclical. Therefore, there is a necessity for going back to the data, refining the categories and looking for explicit and relevant meanings. In addition, Bardin (2011) explains that the process of underpinning interpretation in Content Analysis is related to categories, which correspond to units of analysis. In this article, we chose the theme as a central category, consisting of a complex unit of meaning that is naturally freed from a text under analysis, in accordance with the criteria related to the theoretical assumptions applied (BARDIN, 2011). In brief, the theme is the appropriate unit for “studying motivations for opinions, attitudes, beliefs, trends, etc.” (BARDIN, 2011, p. 106).

The categories are presented as follows: 1) academic background and racial issues; 2) individual perception as a black English teacher; 3) racial issues and pedagogical practices. In the next section, we present the research context and a brief profile of the teachers participating in this study.

4.3. Participants

Teacher Ana

Ana is 46 years old and is from Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais. Her mother is a housekeeper and her father is an elevator operator. She finished her primary education at a municipal public school and majored in Languages. In addition, she attended a master's degree in Linguistics at UFMG. She has been working for over ten years as an English teacher. Nowadays, Ana teaches elementary groups at a municipal public school and also an undergraduate course in Languages at a state public university. Self-declared black, Ana belongs to an interracial family, consisted by a white father and a black mother. The racial issue in her family was

present since her childhood. In Ana's point of view, expanding knowledge about race and building an affirmative black identity made it possible to reflect on facts of her trajectory that before seemed natural.

Teacher Julia

Júlia is 28 years old and is from Rio Piracicaba, localized in the countryside of Minas Gerais. Her mother is currently unemployed, but her last occupation was an assistant in a municipal school. Júlia finished her basic education at a municipal public institution and majored in Languages at UFMG. At the time of the research, Júlia was not teaching, but instead occupying a leadership position in the administrative sector in Maranhão. Self-declared black, Júlia's contact with racial issues began in childhood, through living with her mother's family, composed mostly of black people. According to her statements, the mother's posture was one of the references for her understanding of what it is to be a black woman, as her mother had broken several taboos. For Júlia, it is important to think about racial issues in course books in the process of teacher training.

Teacher Rafaela

Rafaela is 33 years old and is from Barbacena, Minas Gerais. Daughter of a secretary and a mechanic, she completed all her basic education in state public schools. She moved to Juiz de Fora in order to attend an undergraduate course at a federal university. She graduated in Literature at UFJF (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora) and she also took a master's degree in Linguistics. At the time of the data-gathering she was at the third year of her doctorate in Linguistics. For personal reasons, Rafaela was unable to complete her doctorate, but she intends to restart her studies as soon as possible. Rafaela has been an English teacher for over ten years. She teaches at both regular and private schools, where she prepares her teaching material. Self-declared black, Rafaela had contact with racial issues in the undergrad, through literature courses, because, in her family environment and in basic education this topic was totally ignored. Rafaela expressed interest in participating in the research due to the possibility of contributing to a discussion considered relevant by her and the opportunity to critically reflect on her experiences as a black teacher.

5. Discussion

Our discussion will be presented in three categories divided according to our research questions, which are as follows: how does racialization in English

teaching affect emotions of black female English teachers? How do emotions stimulate or affect pedagogical actions?

Considering our aims, in the interview the questions focused on three main categories: academic background and racial issues, individual perceptions about being a black female English teacher and educational practices regarding racial issues.

5.1. Education and teacher training: emotions in conflict

The first question of our interview aimed to understand how racial issues were approached during teacher education in college. We identified and problematized the emotions concerning this initial moment of their professional life. Next, we present a passage of teacher Ana's interview:

So what were the rumors? People who studied English were the rich, preppy⁵ girls, mostly white girls... a black student, who studied one the English subjects, started to present difficulties because... I didn't feel a lot of support back then towards students who had difficulties, so this person who had a hard time using the language, writing, speaking was left out here at the university. And I noticed that in the Portuguese classes things were completely different, I felt way more welcomed and supported in those classes... Either you showed potential as an English student or you would be left out too, that's for sure. I hope things have changed! [laughing] ANA

Ana reports, by and large, her first experiences in the Languages course. We can establish connections between beliefs about English teaching and Ana's emotions in this initial phase. Barcelos (2017) understands beliefs as representations of reality, linked to thinking, cognition and perception. Through a sociocultural bias, beliefs can also be understood as tools to mediate human activity, such as learning new languages (LIMA; CÂNDIDO-RIBEIRO, 2014). The so-called rumors about English students reveal there is a belief about who should be at those places. Thus, the belief expresses racialization processes of English language teaching, since it places the rich, preppy/white girls as the supposed holders of that position, whereas Ana/ the black woman would be the outsider.

The post-structuralist/discursive perspective assumes that emotions are built by discourse and, therefore, affect people (AHMED, 2004). Ana felt the discursive effects of racism that were current in the language course. The feeling

⁵ In this paper, the word preppy is used as synonym for rich, privileged people.

of exclusion due to her race reinforces the performance of colonial heritage in language teaching. For a long time, language teaching was grounded on cognitivist and uncritical bases, solely focusing on communicative abilities. In this context, the native speaker symbolizes the ideal model of speaker, bearing the racial stereotype of the white-European teacher from the global north (MATTOS; JUCÁ; JORGE, 2019). The fact that Ana felt more accepted in the Portuguese classes indicates how English language classes are mostly dominated by white hegemony.

In the outlined scenario, beliefs evoke emotions of discomfort, trouble and not-belonging. We could argue that the preppy girls embody the other inside an unequal and racialized power relation. In racialized social systems, race is what determines the ones who can access and benefit from certain positions of power. The hegemony of English was produced by colonial discourses, hence, racialized discourses (PENNYCOOK, 1998; SONG, 2018). Therefore, in the English teaching contexts, race operates as conditioning factor for student failure or success in language learning and positions individuals according to the existing power relations. Foreseeing an encounter with the hegemonic figure destabilizes the teacher, who sees herself helpless in contrast to her peers.

Continuing the interview, Ana illustrates how race and class are interwoven in her experience:

Anyway, it was hard for me studying here, being here, I already had a job so I studied in the morning and worked in the afternoon... not much time left to study, because I used to get home late at night, back then there weren't enough computers for everybody with internet available, so it was even more complicated to write, to study... I didn't have any money to travel during midterm break [For example] oh, I need to develop my proficiency, so I need to go the US or Canada... it was something from another world to me, I mean, I knew it could be a great opportunity but my family wasn't able to afford this trip. And it was something evident in that group [people would say] "I'm saving for an exchange program, my parents are helping me" and I would go that's great that your parents can do it for you. I didn't feel unqualified for not doing these things, I understood that my parents couldn't provide for me in that sense. And that's why I used to believe that studying languages in college wasn't for everyone. ANA

In Brazil, we can affirm that race and class are inseparable social factors, particularly for black people. The less fortunate lack time and resources to study, which is not true for the richer parts of the population. As it is shown in the

excerpt, Ana had to work and was not able to dedicate herself entirely to her studies. Furthermore, the social issue also entailed problems regarding technology, since, at that time computers were expensive and rarely available.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, Ahmed (2004) claims discourses produce emotions, and distances people from certain objects while bringing them closer to others. Ana felt she didn't belong to that universe, because discourses reinforced the belief she wasn't capable of being in such a prestigious position. Consequently, we can discuss the impact of racialized discourses on the teacher's emotions. Why would Portuguese classes be more welcoming and supportive? Why were English classes not for everyone? We can argue that while first language classes constituted an accessible, friendly space, language classes represented the opposite, symbolizing a place where people should stand out in order to get proper attention.

In this line of reasoning, we highlight the reduced number of black students in language courses in our context, since in our society learning languages still remains a privilege of the upper class. Thus, the emotions expressed by Ana, such as helplessness and pressure to be an outstanding student, reflect how power relations interfere on teaching and learning processes.

In teacher Julia's report, we envision another side of the relations between racialized English teaching and emotions. Questioned about her contact with racial issues during her undergraduate period, Julia realizes the conversation would always stem from black professors:

Yeah, in some specific subjects and it was mostly mentioned by a black professor, mainly in the subjects from the major in Education, like didactics, politics... in sociology classes we would have more passionate arguments about gender and race... and also in some foreign literature classes. JULIA

We notice how black professors feel responsible for starting and conducting conversations about racial issues in class. However, we need to question the roots of such emotions. After all, what are the possible repercussions of positioning these subjects as accountable for conducting the racial debate? To what extent is positioning a personal choice and not a consequence imposed by power relations and discursive constructs concerning racism? As stated by Harlow (2003), the racial factor affects teachers' work and how they negotiate meanings and emotions. The scholar highlights students tend to feel more confidence in discussions about race led by black teachers and professors, once they believe black people's experiences provide the required legitimacy to speak. Therefore, we can claim that

emotions frame pedagogical practices and produce consequences for the social identities, be it teacher identity or racial identity.

On the other hand, we observe that black professors feel responsible for bringing racial issues to class because they are in a marked discursive position. Racialized discourses position subjects in a hierarchy and stipulate topics which these subjects are allowed to be discussed by them. Therefore, we are able to understand emotions as social constructs which affect different social groups in different ways, since white teachers and professors generally don't express the same pedagogical concerns from a racial standpoint (HARLOW, 2003).

Regarding this perspective, we can also outline some parallels between the outcomes of racism and emotions. As it happens with racial issues, there is a belief that emotions only belong to the individual domain. Yet we understand that emotions are part of an intersubjective and social phenomenon shaped by power relations (OLIVEIRA, 2021). Black people are aware of the relevance of racial issues to teacher education and to developing students' identities, because they understand the processes involving the construction of a positive racial identity. As a result, black people become the main actors in the fight against epistemic racism. Since emotions are fundamental to teaching practices focused on social justice, we further notice how the interviewed teachers reproduce this behavior.

Still regarding Julia's report, our attention is drawn to the presence of a false dichotomy: reason versus emotion. The teacher recounts that racial issues were mostly discussed during sociology and politics classes, but when she recounts her language classes, she states that the same discussions took place only in Literature disciplines. So, two problems arise: the perspective of language as a code and racialization of emotions.

Concerning racialization of emotions, we are able to find theoretical foundations in the core principles of coloniality, seeing that it placed black people in the realm of irrationality (QUIJANO, 2005). Black scholars are constantly confronted by an alleged dichotomy between subjectivity and science when they share results of research focusing on racial issues. Black and non-white people in general are retained to the domain of passion, of opinion, of identity. White people retain the domain of reason, universality and science. Just as we verify in the colonial line of thinking, racial issues are judged as some kind of folk, non-knowledge, related to individual experiences and with no scientific background.

In the previous excerpts, we stressed the negative emotions from a racialized perspective, in an early moment of the teacher education process. This same moment, though, can create positive emotions as well:

Oh yeah, in college yes. We have another perspective about this topic. Literature, especially, kind of directs our view to matters of blackness, African culture and it does that very tenderly, showing these things through a different lens... So I always looked at it in warm way, because they were showing us the power of black people... I felt empowered.
RAFAELA

I love the university environment, it's a place that, despite all the challenges I appreciate, I appreciate my education, I learned a lot, difficulties and all, there was a lot of good stuff. And maybe I'm a little bit smug about it as a teacher, [because] I say I'm graduated from UFMG, I feel very confident regarding my education... comparing to my peers, I notice some are really insecure about their own knowledge, their attitude as teachers, sometimes I notice very superficial discussions about education in general, because education is not just about specific language skills. ANA

Brazilian universities, federal ones in particular, didn't use to have an expressive number of lower-class students for a long time, since universities were created to meet the needs of white elite groups (ELÍCIO; COSTA; RODRIGUES FILHO, 2019). Starting fifteen years ago, the students profile has begun to change changing with the creation and increase of affirmative action policies and new openings in various institutions (ELÍCIO; COSTA; RODRIGUES FILHO, 2019). This shift in the educational scenario enabled a portion of the society to have access to academic discussions previously ignored, thus broadening the scope of audience and subjects. Concerning Rafaela's description, we observe how the university also constitutes a place for identity construction. Once again, literature classes appear as where racial issues and emotions are frequently addressed. We analyze emotions are not just personal, individual traits, but they are built and rebuilt throughout interactions. The new approach regarding race and racial issues enables the teacher to negotiate new meanings for her experiences and for racial identity.

In Ana's case, university also represented a changing milestone, in spite of the challenges it posed. Ana emphasizes that her critical teacher education in a federal institution has given her confidence to do her work. In this respect, we could reflect on the status federal institutions hold in our society. Even though Ana considers her education and training fulfilling and adequate, we cannot possibly deny the discourses behind such statement, which in our landscape, places federal college education as superior and creates certain animosity. Therefore, we are able to see one more time how power relations affect emotions and how they vary according to specific contexts.

In this passage of Ana's interview, we can also point to a concept of language oriented to the social element. English cannot be deemed only as a communication tool; it has also denoted symbolic capital, essential to domination mechanisms (MATTO, JUCÁ; JORGE, 2019). We can sustain that Ana understands the role language plays in processes of social transformation.

Proceeding, we have another excerpt from Rafaela's interview:

So after I went to college, even personal matters, like religion, spirituality, everything, I started to realize that no, wait! I cannot try to label or to use euphemism for this, you know? That's not what I want... Now I feel very comfortable to say I'm a black woman. RAFAELA

We are able to confirm how personal matters are, in fact, discursive constructions. Through critical education, Rafaela was allowed to construct a positive racial identity for herself. We are constituted by social discourses; identities are multiple, fluid and complex, being constructed throughout processes of identification and resistance. Although she wasn't completely aware, Rafaela contested the invisibility imposed to her existence in that environment, exercising critique and challenging predominantly racist social discourses. As noted by Ferraz (2018), critical perspective consists of problematizing what is considered universal knowledge. In this sense, being critical means "fighting against social injustices using education as a tool" (FERRAZ, 2018, p. 63)⁶.

In Rafaela's case, we can argue her statement confronts not only racial discourses in general, but also the racialization of the language. Rafaela understands the university and the language through a social perspective, considering they allow questioning aspects of social life.

In this section, we emphasized the ways teacher education and training are moments that provoke conflicting emotions. While the teachers feel misplaced in the academic environment due to the lack of black peers and to social and economic factors, they also identify with the studied themes, once they point the approach given in classes to racial issues as a pivotal moment in racial awakening.

In the following section, we analyze the ways in which emotions appear in the intersections between teacher identity and racial identity of in-service teachers.

⁶ Translated from the original text in Portuguese, as are other quotes in this article.

5.2. Black female English teachers: racialized emotions

In the second part of our conversation, we asked the interviewees about their perceptions on being a black female English teacher. Our goal was to identify possible connections between emotions and the construction of social identities. In the following excerpt, Ana describes how her students perceive her and compares public school to college:

As a black female English teacher, it's a position where I always have to guarantee to my students that I know what I'm doing. The first class, when I get in the room, in front of the class... mostly undergraduate class, not at public school... at public school acceptance is natural, it feels like I'm with my people, so I don't see any problems... But with undergraduate students yes, it's a place where I have to be like: look, I'm here, I obtained this position, I know what I'm doing so calm down, you will have a good (black) English teacher. Because there's this strangeness about a black woman being an English teacher. Obviously nobody has ever said anything straight to my face, but then people ask: "where did you go to school?" And then you have to narrate you entire curriculum, so the student feels confident and for the student to be like: "Yeah, my teacher is black BUT she's qualified". So maybe, as a black teacher, I sense I always have to show more than my other peers who aren't black. ANA

At first, we note the strangeness about having a black woman as an English teacher. What is the origin of such complex feeling? Here, we observe once again beliefs fostering a racialized perspective of language teaching. Since there is a common belief that the native speaker is white, students are not used to seeing a dissonant image from the ideal model. Therefore, we can evaluate the strangeness as a consequence of the rupture of expectations created by the internalization of beliefs.

Furthermore, we agree with Costa (2018, p. 6-7) when she states that "repetitive discourses generate some sort of productive power, which dictates rules, social places, identities and emotions to certain controlled and dominated bodies". In this sense, the bodies of black women are undermined and suffer from lack of legitimacy when occupying positions of power.

Strangeness produces other emotions, such as insecurity and internal and external pressure. We observe Ana believes she needs to make a bigger effort to gain her students' confidence and show competence, regardless of her qualifications. Song (2018) suggests race reinforces power relations between oppressor and oppressed

and influences how emotions are created and expressed. Thus, emotions in language teaching are not individual, but belong to a social structure (SONG, 2018).

Concerning the statements about strangeness, we can also identify a conflict in Ana's description. The public school represents a place of support, where she finds herself with her people, whereas college constitutes a confrontation space. Official data⁷ shows us only 18% of black youngsters between the ages of 18 and 24 are enrolled in college, despite the progress achieved in the past years. Moreover, black students are mostly in public schools in poor neighborhoods. Data from School Census in 2018 shows that one in every ten students enrolled in private schools is black⁸. In face of the facts, we understand the belonging expressed by Ana comes from the racialization not only of language teaching, but of the educational system as a whole a system that reproduces and perpetuates inequalities.

Regarding the construction of teacher identity, black teachers frequently have to prove competence and justify their rank (HARLOW, 2003). Their effort to negotiate racial stereotypes is constant in order to oppose negative misconceptions. When Ana says she needs to present her entire curriculum, we can claim that this movement is not only an attempt to ease her students about her competence, but it is also a movement that aims to appease the students concerns regarding all black teachers. Since racialization detaches subjects from their own bodies and individualities (HARLOW, 2003; GOMES, 2019), as a black woman Ana carries the burden of representing an entire group of people.

Similarly to Ana, Julia also describes how insecurity was part of her pedagogical practice:

I've always felt like I had to do cooler things than the other teachers did. I felt like I had to be extra careful when talking to parents on the phone and at school. I felt like the administration demanded a lot of me, there were always people around, asking about what I was doing in my classes, how my lesson plan was going and I noticed that these things didn't happen to other teachers. And for a while I kept thinking: well, I just got here so people want to know how I work, but things kept happening you know? I always felt they were observing me, but in a bad way, all the time. JULIA

⁷ Data from Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica e Aplicada (IPEA) released in August 2020. Available in: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2020-11/cresce-total-de-negros-em-universidades-mas-acesso-e-desigual>.

⁸ Data from Brazil's Education Ministry. Although the research was conducted in the city of Ribeirão Preto (SP), we can consider the data to be a good sample of the national scenario.

Beyond insecurity and pressure, we realize Julia faced a dilemma concerning how to face and express her own emotions. According to Costa (2018, p. 15):

As subjects of discourse, black women take to themselves emotions build from other emotions, such as shame reacting to repugnance, and also as a way to shield themselves from sexism and racism. For this reason, black women are constantly sensed as aggressive or angry from an emotional perspective.

Therefore, we understand why Julia worried about being careful when talking to her students' parents. Black women are prompted to conceal their emotions, since displaying these emotions would distort their image, turning them into aggressive, untrustworthy and emotional unstable individuals (LIN et al, 2004). This way, Julia intends to dissociate her image from the racial stereotype of the angry black woman, whether inside or outside her classroom, and conditions herself to silence her emotions and aspects of her pedagogical practice.

In the passage, we also confirm how emotions orient the teacher's work. According to Harlow (2003), teachers who are able to solely focus on the professional aspects of the job tend to express more positive emotions. So, we can problematize if Julia's classes would be different if she weren't a black woman under constant pressure.

In this section, we analyzed the ways in which emotions manifest in the intersections between teacher identity and racial identity of the teachers in service. We commented on how emotions influence social identities and orient pedagogical practices. In the section ahead, we will further our reflection upon the latter topic, problematizing the ways in which emotions stimulate pedagogical actions towards social justice.

5.3. Pedagogy: emotions in action

Emotions are an essential part of social justice teaching (CHUBBUCK; ZEMBLYAS, 2008). As argued by Song (2018, p. 464),

[t]eachers' own understanding of the social, cultural, and historical contexts of their emotions will provide opportunities for critical reflection on anxiety and feelings of inequality and strengthen their resolve to develop emotional resistance to hegemonic discourse and unfair practices. This in turn will lead to new questions and challenges to social inequalities. Critical reflection on emotions will become a potential foundation for self-transformation.

Emotions are directly connected to social constructions. In this way, the pedagogical practices of black female English teachers of our study represent their experiences in their language classrooms. Inquired if racial issues were addressed in their English classes, the women shared their experiences and pedagogical actions:

Wow, all the time. And I won't forgive myself if I don't put this topic in my English classes. So the songs, if I prepare a listening activity [I ask] "so guys, who are we picking? Let's get a rap, let's sing..." And the singers too and it's so easy because my students, at least at school, they see this in their daily lives, but with the undergrads I have to push the discussion. ANA

For sure and it appeared a lot. So much so I was fired because apparently I told a black student, the only black student in class, there were skin tone⁹ crayons other than white. [...] In private schools, even how I dressed, my necklaces, my hair – I've always loved my hair very voluminous – it gets attention... these are silent expressions that, although people don't say it directly, you feel they notice it, you feel it bothers them... And my students (especially kids and teens) used to talk about me a lot. So I enjoyed teaching a lot, because at the beginning I was a bit insecure about what I could say, how far I could go. But after a while I was like: you know what? I AM responsible for my classroom, I will take care of my stuff... JULIA

From a post-structuralist perspective, emotions relate to identities and power. In the passages above we are able to observe some of the ways in which these relations can be manifested. Somewhat the teachers reenact the behavior they witnessed during college. We could question if this fact is actually a problem, since the women are using their voices to fight social injustices in a significant manner. Nevertheless, our discussion focuses on the emotional labor such practices require and its effects for the subjects.

In this sense, we agree with Lin et al (2004, p. 494) that

[w]omen of color are frequently expected to sacrifice for the larger good, and when they protest against being treated unfairly, they are frequently accused of being unreasonable or emotional, and thus they are pushed to the margins and silenced.

⁹ In the Brazilian educational context, there is a common (and arguably racist) habit of calling tones such as nude pink and light pink *skin tone colors*. This naming is also commonly employed in make-up and clothing.

Regardless of the results, the teachers shoulder the responsibility of bringing racial issues to light in their classes, as a form of asserting their racial identities and also reassuring their commitment to the social, cultural and political dimensions pertaining the construction of the referred social identity.

Pedagogical actions symbolize an opportunity to transgress. In Julia's report, we comprehend how body and hair are relevant and symbolic expressions of racial identity (GOMES, 2019) and, in this context, expressions of emotions. We evoke that emotions and identities are parts of individuals. In spite of dubbing her acts as silent expressions, her garments are tools to assert her antiracist positioning and exist in that place of power. Therefore, we can consider the teacher's movement part of her pedagogical practices.

In the following passage, we see an example of how racial issues bring to light in students' minds negative racial stereotypes and emotions:

Now that we're talking I remember two episodes involving kids... I remember this one time, they like making drawings of us, right? So in the back of an exam one kid drew me and showed me. He drew me with a very dark crayon, then looked at me [and said]: "teacher, look, I'm sorry, but I didn't have light brown, only this dark brown crayon" and I said "honey, that's ok, no problem, I'm that color too" because it was really dark. So he was scared... It's what I say, sometimes everything you say might be offensive, so he was afraid of offending me. But that was it, not much happened after. RAFAELA

In the face of an embarrassing situation, the teacher chooses to approach the issue in a subtle manner. Here, we recall Julia's statement about being cautious while talking to parents. Even though Rafaela was cautious for she was dealing with a child, we cannot neglect the fact this type reaction is what is expected and demanded from black women in general.

Moreover, it is important to question the child's fear. Why would using a dark crayon to draw the teacher be offensive? Through emotions, we see how negative racial stereotypes are embedded in our subconscious by social constructs, as it was also illustrated in Julia's case by the episode with the infamous skin-tone crayon

Final remarks

"Love is profoundly political. Our deepest revolution will come when we understand this truth."

(bell hooks, *Salvation: Black People and Love*, 2001)

We decided to end (for now) our discussion with this quote from another famous black activist and scholar, Bell Hooks. In her studies, Hooks emphasizes the ways love can be revolutionary for black people, a population that has long endured negligence of governments and structural racism. In a similar way, we intended to show with this article how emotions can encourage a revolution in education.

This paper aimed to discuss how emotions are racialized in the teacher identities of black female English teachers. Using semi-structured interviews, we searched to identify possible relations between racialized language teaching, emotions, the construction of social identities and pedagogical practices. Our discussion illustrated that emotions and identities are not only individual traits, but are mediated by social interactions and power relations. We argued that the first moments of the teacher education process can produce conflicting emotions and that these emotions change throughout service. In addition, we saw the ways in which emotions are connected to racial issues in language teaching and the influence racialization has on the identities and pedagogical actions.

By problematizing emotions from a pedagogical and critical perspective, we understand, first and foremost, that education is made by people and for people. Just as we have discussed, it is impossible to separate emotions from social life, since the former are constructed by the latter. In this sense, we believe this study informs how emotions need to be a part of teacher education and language teaching practices. Moreover, we consider that further studies focusing on race and emotions also need to be developed, taking into account our country's educational context and how race is embedded in social discourses.

Concerning the racialization of language teaching, we reaffirm how this process needs to be considered in teacher education in order to inform the practice of not only black teachers, but teachers from various ethnicities and backgrounds in order to promote social justice teaching, challenge bias and reduce racial violence. It is imperative for the Brazilian educational scenario to envisage teaching practices that embrace our local realities and encourage activities which question the gears of the perverse system that has maintained inequalities for so long.

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Authors' contribution

This paper was a collaborative effort. Since data was generated for a masters dissertation, I, Layenne Oliveira, was responsible for this part of the process. I also wrote section 3 whereas Ana Cláudia wrote section 2. We wrote together the remaining sections, the abstract and the references. Revisions and alterations were made by both authors.

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