

THE PLURILINGUAL *KAMISHIBAI*: ITS POTENTIAL IN EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The 1990s were marked by a set of socio-economic transformations which altered social dynamics, enhancing interconnection and interdependence, mobility, overcoming borders, reducing space and time, and the flow of information that opened new possibilities for access to cultural diversity. This set of perplexities challenges our time, requiring a renewed role for the school and the application of a new paradigm of identity and citizenship. It is important to develop a wide range of competences (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) that can allow greater interaction with people who are linguistically and culturally different from us. This contribution intends to discuss the benefits of promoting understanding and respect for cultural differences in educational contexts by using the plurilingual *kamishibai*.

KEYWORDS

plurilingual *kamishibai*, multiculturalism, interculturality, intercultural education, learning

AS POTENCIALIDADES DO *KAMISHIBAI* PLURILINGUE NA EDUCAÇÃO PARA A DIVERSIDADE CULTURAL

RESUMO

Os anos 90 ficaram assinalados por um conjunto de transformações de carácter socioeconómico, que alteraram as dinâmicas sociais, potenciando a interligação, a interdependência, a mobilidade, a superação de fronteiras, a redução do espaço e do tempo e o fluxo de informação, abrindo novas possibilidades de acesso à diversidade cultural. Todo este conjunto de perplexidades e de desafios marcam o nosso tempo e exigem um olhar renovado sobre o papel da escola e a aplicação de um novo paradigma de identidade e de cidadania. Daqui sobressai a importância do desenvolvimento de um leque alargado de competências (capacidades, conhecimentos e atitudes) que possam permitir uma maior interação com pessoas que são linguística e culturalmente diferentes. Com este contributo pretende-se aquilatar sobre os benefícios de promover a compreensão e a aceitação das diferenças culturais em contextos educativos através da utilização do *kamishibai* plurilingue.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

kamishibai plurilingue, multiculturalismo, interculturalidade, educação intercultural, aprendizagens

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovative teaching and learning techniques have no limits in the educational community, which has always seen the introduction of pioneering strategies and forms of learning.

Involving students emotionally in the learning process has been noticeably essential for their deeper understanding (Fonseca, 2016). The introduction of the *kamishibai* (“paper theater”) in education follows this trend. Its use is certainly an attempt to involve children, physically and emotionally, in the study of issues related to society, health, or well-being (Casas, 2006), and in this case, culture and interculturality. Questions around linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity, which the present reflection echoes, have become widespread. The main purpose of such questions is to demonstrate the importance of working on issues raised by cultural plurality at the school level, highlighting the problems and the reality associated with them (Beacco & Byram, 2007; Menken & García, 2010).

It seems consensual that ethnic-racial relations inexorably underline the daily life of modern societies, marking the dynamics of social relations, from which the school is not isolated. Considering the mechanisms of social transformation that education entails and the role played by teachers in the context of intercultural mediation, it would be important to probe the educational potential of the *kamishibai*, especially about the integration of diversity and dialogue at school, stimulating the construction of an environment conducive to solidarity, fraternity and mutual respect (Martins et al., 2017).

Based on the above considerations, a research project was set up at the Department of Education and Psychology of the University of Aveiro to understand a didactic tool recently introduced in Portugal — the plurilingual *kamishibai*.

This work aims to reflect on the benefits of promoting an understanding and appreciation for otherness in educational contexts using the plurilingual *kamishibai*. It thus produces knowledge about a didactic tool promoting a praxis that encourages the acquisition/development of intercultural competences (IC) at school.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. THE ORIGINS OF *KAMISHIBAI*

Kamishibai, a Japanese term that means “paper theater”, is a millenary art form (initially with scrolls) used to tell stories. The practice allegedly originated in the ancient Buddhist temples of the 8th century, its main objective being reporting events to illiterate audiences, but with an eminently moralistic intention (Nash, 2009).

Although the early days of the *kamishibai* may be unknown¹, we can find references in journals to this art form around the 1930s as a street theater (*gaitô*²) practiced in neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Tokyo — *Shitamachi* (Nash, 2009). Apparently, the

¹ Japanese researchers came up with a wide range of possible historical precursors for *kamishibai*, ranging from scrolls of parchment with images — the *emaki* — to shadow theatre to mechanized puppet shows (*nozokikarakuri*).

² The *gaitô kamishibaiya* (itinerant storyteller) was just one of the many manifestations of popular theatre that flourished in Japan in the years leading up to World War II.

kamishibai finds its genesis in the *etoki* (pictographic explanation)³ or the art of interpreting images, references to which can be found in *emaki* (painted roll) manuscripts of the 12th century, namely in the famous *Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga*, a set of four paintings exhibited in a Buddhist temple in Kyoto, authored by a Buddhist monk — Toba Sōjō (1053–1140).

The *emaki* or *emakimono* is a silk or paper illustration, arranged in rolls (*makimono*), dating back to the 8th century (Nara period), depicting, among other things, stories with fantastic animals (with human forms), great battles or novels.

Kamishibai as manga/*mangaka*⁴ became particularly appreciated during the Japanese 1929 crisis and World War II. At this time, there was an explosion of *kamishibaiya* (outdoor storytellers) in Tokyo (about 2,500), who performed every day (several times) to an audience of several dozen children and were estimated to have involved about 1,000,000 people (McGowan, 2015).

That was one of the most fruitful and exciting eras in the history of the *kamishibai* in Japan, designated as the “golden age” of *kamishibai* (Orbaugh, 2015, p. 58). A strong publishing industry flourished around comics and, on its margins, driven by the search for cheap entertainment, there was also a great boom in *kamishibaiya*.

The *gaitō kamishibaiya* (itinerant storyteller) would stop their bicycles at familiar street corners and bang their *hiyogoshis* (pieces of wood) to announce their presence, thus starting the show, somewhat reminiscent of Molière’s famous blows hit on the floor of the stage with a stick.

When the children gathered around, they would sell them sweets in return for admission to the show, which was their main source of income. The *kamishibaiya* used a *butai*, a small wooden stage, where they slid, one by one, as the story unfolded, the illustrated cardboard story cards (Moriki & Franca, 2017). The stories would always start with *mukashi mukashi*, meaning “once upon a time...”, thus dramatizing the stories with great talent, using hand-painted coloured cards while producing sound effects that gave life and colour to their unscripted narratives — creating an atmosphere of suspense around them.

The *kamishibai* is a narrative technique that “combines text and image, theatricality and creativity” (Faneca, 2019, p. 361) and that stimulated Japanese society for decades, thus becoming a powerful and captivating way to illustrate stories⁵.

Although the ancient art form of *kamishibai* has faded over time, its meaning and contribution allowed it to endure to the present day successfully⁶.

2.2. THE KAMISHIBAI AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

The features of the *kamishibai* enable it, to this day, to be used in modern multimedia presentations for the most varied purposes (for example, in audits, engineering, and

³ Japan has a long tradition of interpreting images.

⁴ The Japanese name for “comic book”. Outside Japan, this term refers to comic books produced in or under Japan’s influence.

⁵ The Japanese work *Genji Monogatari* (The Tales of Genji) was considered a masterpiece of Japanese literature. Written by Murasaki Shikibu in the early 11th century, it is generally regarded as the world’s first novel.

⁶ The International Kamishibai Association of Japan was created in 2001 to promote international appreciation and awareness of this art form. Most of its members are Japanese — over 700 — however, there are also members from all over the world.

production management); however, what makes the *kamishibai* especially useful for storytelling is its unique format. Large cards with colourful illustrations give the storyteller the opportunity to offer narratives with a strong visual component to the audience.

“The school of the future will perhaps not be a school as we understand it today - with seats, blackboards, and stage for teachers - it can be a theatre, a library, a museum, or a conversation” (Tolstoi, 1850/1988, p. 140). The providential tone of this statement, written more than 1 century ago, has now become a reality. Today, we find an increasing receptivity towards these ideas, with more means and resources dedicated to educating young people and children (International Kamishibai Association of Japan, 2019). One of those processes is precisely the theatre (Eisner, 1979).

The dramatic expression as a teaching tool is not something new. Historically, it has long been recognized as a medium with great potential for education and teaching (Courtney, 2003). In fact, only at the end of the 20th century was it possible to glimpse the real impact of this notion on public education. For many, it was questionable whether theatre and dance were an integral part of a young person’s education (Spolin, 1978/2005) as indeed music, sports, and the visual arts.

Thus, this paper aims to show that the school has an essential role in promoting attitudes and values that form the basis of students’ civic education — as a counterpoint to prejudice and discrimination (Martins et al., 2017).

2.3. THE PLURILINGUAL KAMISHIBAI

Plurilingual *kamishibai* can be seen as an evolution of the traditional *kamishibai* when its pedagogical potential in linguistic and cultural terms is acknowledged.

In 1930, Imai Yone (1897–1968), a Japanese Christian missionary, developed a religious *kamishibai* that she used to teach the catechism to the children of her parish. She had noticed children’s interest in traditional *kamishibai* stories and started adapting some biblical narratives to this resource (McGowan, 2015).

Impressed by Imai Yone’s success, Gozan Takahashi (1888–1965), a publisher of children’s magazines, created *Zenkōsha*, introducing the educational *kamishibai*. The publisher started publishing *kamishibai* stories based on Buddhist plays and Disney movies, for which he used different methods of illustration (Moriki & Franca, 2017). Imai Yone’s technique, used for educational purposes, inspired several authors, including Matsunaga Ken’ya (1907–1996), who would go on to create “the type of interactive *kamishibai* that allows and fosters public participation” (Carreño, 2012, p. 5). In 1938, Gozan Takahashi also founded the Japanese Educational Kamishibai Federation to promote Japanese culture (Lucas, 2009). Since then, the *kamishibai* has often been used in public education institutions and libraries to stimulate teaching and learning and preserve the country’s cultural heritage. From the 1970s onwards, it also became widely used as a didactic resource in Europe (Jiménez, 2005).

In 2015, the D’une Langue à L’Autre Association (From one Language to Another; based in Montreuil, France; <https://www.dulala.fr/>) held the first edition of a plurilingual

competition for collaborative writing and illustration of cardboard cards, that is, the construction of a plurilingual *kamishibai* (Pedley & Stevanato, 2018).

The versatility of the *kamishibai* form promotes communication and cooperation between children, from its creation to the moment of its presentation (Faneca, 2021). In this sense, it also enables various approaches, including linguistic and cultural activities, namely the integration of linguistic and cultural diversity. Thus, the *kamishibai* can be used to stimulate the personal and social development of children and support work across subject content areas and children's creative expressions. Consequently, developing these competences through the plurilingual *kamishibai* enables children to improve their intercultural communication and interaction.

Due to its educational potential and its multimodal characteristics, the plurilingual *kamishibai* in a school context can promote the valorisation of the others, their languages and traditions, and the development of literacies. Among the tools for teaching languages and learning to read and write through storytelling in kindergartens, the *kamishibai* occupies a special place. (Faneca, 2020, p. 225)

The stories of the plurilingual *kamishibai* should integrate at least four languages, seeking to mirror the reality (diversity) of the languages spoken by students while still safeguarding, as far as possible, the general understanding of the narrative.

Creating a *kamishibai* using multiple languages leads to a reflection concerning the languages used in the school. It is also a great way to enable the learning of other languages used by children, families, or teachers within the school.

In the plurilingual *kamishibai*, the languages also contribute to the construction and development of the story. The challenge is to design a coherent narrative using a set of languages that will appear during the telling.

Thus, the plurilingual *kamishibai* emerged, gaining a plurilingual and intercultural dimension focusing on plural approaches (Candelier et al., 2010). That means that the plurilingual *kamishibai* incorporates the characteristics of a traditional *kamishibai* while adding various languages and cultural aspects to the narrative and illustration.

2.4. DRAMA AND THEATRE

Drama and theatre can come together with mutual advantages to find appropriate solutions to conflict resolution. Recently, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Comissão Nacional da UNESCO, 2006; Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura, 2000a) advocated teaching and learning of visual and scenic arts as part of the construction of a culture of peace while also emphasizing the need to consider new types of education — more balanced, which meet the requirements and needs of the 21st century. These are, notably:

- promoting the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

- instilling in children the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- instilling in children the respect for their parents, their cultural identity, language, and values, for the national values of the country in which they are living, the country from which they may originate, and for civilizations different from their own. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, p. 9, Art. 49)

Creative drama, such as kamishibai, is deemed a powerful educational resource to improve children's communicative and cognitive skills (Barret, 1993). It aids children to develop their critical skills, creativity, communication as well as their writing and speaking skills.

Creative drama fosters students' imagination and desire to learn, whether in (serious) action or in (play) acting, to reinforce their emotional, interpersonal, and educational objectives. Indeed, creative drama shows students how to be appreciated and to understand the needs of others, which will enable them to make value judgments and develop a critical attitude.

3. INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION

In a modern society characterized by various types of mobility and a plurality of identities, there is an increasing need to interact linguistically and culturally with others in a suitable way. Thus, multicultural education should be complemented by acquiring intercultural skills (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006, p. 17). That implies the development of a range of factors (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) that will allow children to interact with people from different cultures, always maintaining an appropriate dialogue without offending sensibilities — in absolute respect and consideration for their “right to the city and to difference” (Sandercock, 2004).

The contemporary society we live in, complex and paradoxical, is marked by the dynamics of the constant intersection between nations, communities, and people, which is reflected in cultural plurality. Thus, it is very likely that, in some way, we may be faced with situations where the mastery of a wide range of skills⁷ is required to understand cultural differences as a challenge and as a possibility of enriching personal experiences.

Several international organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Council of Europe, and the European Union itself, have reflected on this issue and how the development of these skills might contribute to the promotion of world peace and the prevention and management of current conflicts. To this end, a series of guiding documents for the educational system has been launched (Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura, 2000b). They seek to lay the foundation for a peaceful understanding among all through the development of knowledge, attitudes, and competences that equip us to interpret an event or document in an intercultural context — to acquire, autonomously, new knowledge about other cultures — and to develop an acute cultural sensitivity towards our current society and its

⁷ An open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds, based on mutual understanding and respect (Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 2008).

values and practices (Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 2008). That makes it possible for us to navigate markedly complex environments filled with various peoples and lifestyles and grasp the richness that cultural diversity brings to our personal experiences.

4. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: RESEARCH QUESTIONS, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. METHODOLOGY

This study may be characterized as an exploratory qualitative investigation of the pedagogical and didactic aspects of the plurilingual *kamishibai* in terms of the awareness/creation of IC in elementary school children aged between 6 and 9 years old (Lei n.º 85/2009, 2009).

To outline the object of study and the research plan, its analytical purposes, and the corresponding methodological strategy, we draw on the techniques recommended by Coutinho (2013).

The choice for the qualitative research paradigm was based on the dynamics of contemporary society and the fact that such a paradigm provides greater flexibility and reflexivity throughout the research work, that is, it allows authors to highlight the descriptive, interpretative, and comprehensive character of social reality and to reflect on the issue of cultural diversity and interculturality within the field of education. Thus, following a qualitative methodology supports better structuring of the research effort and the treatment and analysis of the collected data.

The merits of teaching/learning IC in school using the plurilingual *kamishibai* offer a pragmatic background — simple, clear, and concise — thereby enabling a critical reading of reality. It establishes the causal link between the object of study and the knowledge and its theoretical conceptions, intending to provide an objective explanation that facilitates the entire process, thus creating the epistemological basis for elaborating the theoretical and empirical corpus of the study.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the potential and what are the limitations of the plurilingual *kamishibai* in promoting and enhancing IC?
- How can educational resources that contribute to the acquisition/development of IC be developed?
- How can the plurilingual *kamishibai* become an instrument that facilitates dialogue and inclusion in school?

To this end, seeking to verify the plurilingual *kamishibai*'s potential for the development of intercultural competences in an informal educational setting, the following elements were analysed:

- four plurilingual *kamishibai*, produced in a non-formal educational context of curricular enrichment activities by 1st and 2nd-grade elementary school students in the context of the 2020/2021 plurilingual *kamishibai* contest (Faneca, 2021);
- the representations of the teachers expressed in the logbooks that accompanied the production of the competing plurilingual *kamishibai*;
- a survey of 62 children.

4.2. PROJECT STAGES

The project was divided into four stages involving: literature review and design of data collection instruments, collecting and organizing data, interpreting data and analysing information, and writing the final report with recommendations.

The results presented here are part of a broader research project intended to emphasize the importance of the *kamishibai* in stimulating in students the necessary mental structures for the acceptance of difference and plurality and integrating them into the daily life of schools, thereby contributing to suitable intercultural communication and the creation of a sense of common belonging.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This work was developed in the context of non-formal education within an area designed as curricular enrichment activities. The elementary school chosen belongs to a town in the school cluster of the district of Santarém (Portugal). In partnership with the University of Aveiro, an innovative science education project is being developed there, and the school is responsible for designing, planning, and promoting several workshops, including one on plurilingual *kamishibai*.

5.1. SURVEY

5.1.1. CHARACTERIZATION OF THE STUDENT PROFILE

The answers discussed below stem from a survey to 62 elementary school students in the context of a curricular enrichment activity. The survey included 27 questions divided into three sections. The questions in the first section (general information — “me and the world around me”) sought to outline the profile of the students and collect data to assess the importance of the project, namely regarding its potential in raising students’ awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. The questions in the second section referred to the relationship between school/and family. The third section included questions on the students’ intercultural learning from their involvement in producing a *kamishibai*.

The questions in the first section were open, closed in the second, and mixed in the third. This approach aimed to provide a diversity of answers. We can thus highlight the following:

- The students in this survey (62) are mostly female (38), and their age ranges between 6 and 8, with 26 students aged 6, 25 aged 7, and 11 aged 8 years old.
- The students attend the 1st and 2nd grades of elementary school, with 37 students in the 1st and 25 in the 2nd year.
- Regarding the fathers’ educational qualifications, the majority (26) only have secondary education, whereas the majority of the mothers hold a bachelor’s degree (29) or even a master’s degree (23).
- Regarding parents’ professions, as the data on educational qualifications indicates, they are from the upper-middle class, for the most part.
- A majority of the fathers (22) are aged 40 to 45, and only four are aged 25 to 30. Of the mothers, 21 are in the 35–40 age group, with only four mothers in the 25–30 age group.

5.2. THE CULTURAL REALITY

The survey also included questions looking at participants' cultural realities. These aimed to understand the contribution and implications that intercultural education can have on students' personal and social development by verifying and identifying the traits of the school community regarding the cultural processes to which children are subjected. With this in mind, we highlight the following:

- The students' understanding of other people and cultural realities is balanced; that is, 33 are aware of the multicultural environment around them, and 29 are not. Thus, most respondents answered affirmatively to the question related to their knowledge of people from other countries/cultures. On this occasion, the number of those who do not know people with other origins is significant (29). The students referred mostly to the knowledge of other cultural realities through people from Brazil (11), China (eight), and France (six), while the remaining students (37) referred to several other countries.
- On how people from other cultures should be treated, the vast majority (61) stated that they should be treated with education and respect. Only one student felt that they should be treated aggressively.
- We noted that 36 parents have friends from other nationalities.
- From the sample, only seven children reported that their parents had prohibited them from interacting with people from other cultures, namely Brazilians (four), Chinese (two), and gypsies (one).
- However, 49 students think it is important to interact with people from other cultures.
- In another group of questions, subordinated to cultural questions, the respondents are divided equally into particular aspects of culture, like habits, education, diet, art, writing, and religion, prioritizing education (16).
- The idea that the relationship between people from different cultures is important was once again emphasized (45).
- The list of countries whose cultures students would like to know more about is quite diverse, with Brazil (20), France (16), and Italy (seven) standing out. The remaining choices (19) are divided, among others, between England, Luxembourg, China, and Angola. This choice has to do with these countries' economic preponderance and international projection (38).
- It is noteworthy that most of the respondents have many friends (57) and take that to be a very important aspect of their lives (62).
- Students choose their friends according to companionship (16), friendliness (15), fun (13), and protection (12), with issues of race, religion, and gender being relegated to the background, mentioned by only one student. However, many students would like to have friends from other cultures (54) and assume that it is easy to interact with them (49).
- This feeling of ease in interacting with people from other cultures is confirmed by the percentage of students who have no problems approaching new students from other cultures in school (49).
- Nineteen students have witnessed schoolmates being mistreated due to cultural aspects in the past. According to these students, the best way to report these incidents would be through the teacher (eight) or their parents (five). However, it is worrying that three students would have ignored these incidents.
- Once again, the importance of interacting with people from other cultures is reiterated, affecting one's understanding of the world around them, learning new languages (19), understanding and accepting differences (14), or even learning new ways of seeing, thinking, and acting (13).

5.3. FAMILIARITY WITH THE PLURILINGUAL KAMISHIBAI

In this group of questions related to the knowledge and experience with the *kamishibai*, the answers are unequivocal. They emphasize their appreciation for this

resource and their willingness to work on constructing and arranging a story. That may be due to their previous experiences and participation in the plurilingual *kamishibai* contest, promoted by the Laboratory of Language Education of the University of Aveiro as part of the *Plurieduca* project (analysis and construction of plurilingual competence — didactic paths for language education). This annual contest aims to encourage children aged 3 to 15 to develop a story using the *kamishibai* format, integrating four different languages into the narrative, including the school language. It is an occasion to incorporate multiple cultural aspects, usually ignored in the school setting.

We believe that, despite the socio-economic status of families and the privileged environment of the school, actions should be implemented to blur some of the figures presented, namely those that relate to a better understanding of difference and cultural diversity. In this case, we take advantage of the means provided by the plurilingual *kamishibai*, namely the promotion of intercultural competences in students and their emotional, social, and cognitive development, thus giving them greater self-confidence, imagination, empathy, cooperation/collaboration, concentration, and communication skills, among others.

The *kamishibai* has a pedagogical potential that can be applied to multiple situations, successfully mobilizing students' thinking schemes for the learning process⁸. At the same time, as children get involved in theatrical and artistic activities, this promotes the acquisition of other types of knowledge and competences, according to several authors (Boal, 2005; Spolin, 1978/2005; Vygotsky, 1991/2014).

The answers to the survey show that the students' involvement in the design, construction, and installation of the stories in a *kamishibai* format and the respective cards, takes them into a world of fun — humour, irony, and entertainment. The questions and answers regarding the stories, discussions, comparisons, and the creation of their own narratives and characters show that, in addition to enhancing orality and writing, participation in the *kamishibai* activity fosters the creation of the necessary mental structures for accepting difference and plurality, and their integration into the daily school life, thus contributing to good intercultural mediation.

6. ELABORATION OF THE PLURILINGUAL KAMISHIBAI

The elaboration of the *kamishibai* considered the recommendations of the Kamilala network. The works should be developed in four stages, which unfold in several sub-stages, according to certain objectives seeking to develop intercultural values/attitudes/competences (Faneca, 2021). The four stages are:

- stage of discovery;
- stage of language use;
- stage of realization;
- stage of performance.

⁸ Reading, writing, observing, experimenting, proposing hypotheses, solving problems, comparing, classifying, ordering, analysing, and systematizing.

In the first stage of *discovery* (awareness of context languages), identical works are read and presented — with subsequent analysis and discussion. The underlying idea is to raise students' awareness of the multiplicity of languages and cultures around them, but also the resources they can mobilize for the task of producing a *kamishibai*. The next stage — *language use* — is intended to provide students with knowledge about the languages of other children/people with whom they share the same space, whether in their neighbourhood, street, or school. The *realization* stage (creating the *kamishibai* itself) — creating the story, setting, illustrations, and card arrangement, requires a division of tasks between participants; the production cycle ends with the final stage: *performance* (telling the *kamishibai*: the plurilingual show). Here, the children display the show they have produced, splitting the work, once again, into multiple tasks, such as narration and playing a musical instrument, among others.

6.1. THE PLURILINGUAL KAMISHIBAI: A STIMULUS TO COOPERATION

As has been shown, a *kamishibai* story fosters collaborative work among children from creation to execution since it engages them in:

- selecting the subject;
- selecting the characters, space, and time;
- defining the setting and the plot;
- creating the story;
- writing the texts;
- deciding on the rhythm of the narrative, and the transition of the cards;
- elaborating the storyboard;
- distributing the roles;
- creating the illustrations;
- defining the sound design;
- reading/representation.

The following steps were taken to answer the research questions and understand how the activities around the *kamishibai* can raise students' awareness of linguistic diversity and cultural issues, involving 62 children aged 6 to 9 years old, within the scope of curricular enrichment activities:

- development and analysis of a survey;
- analysis of the representations of the animators/educators expressed in the logbooks;
- analysis of four *kamishibai* competing for the 2020/21 edition of the plurilingual *kamishibai* contest.

This contest was under the theme “the world is changing faster than we had imagined”, and its main objective was to encourage educational actors to develop projects open to linguistic and cultural diversity through the creation of plurilingual *kamishibai* cards, thus contributing to the development of intercultural education (Faneca, 2020). The four *kamishibai* produced for the contest were:

- *Plim! Plim! Tudo a cores!* (plim! Plim! All in colors!);
- *O mundo mudou!* (the world has changed!);
- *A máquina do tempo* (the time machine);
- *Mensagens mágicas* (magical messages)-

During the elaboration of the projects — from design to production — several steps were followed: coming up with a story (subject, title, development, choosing the characters, etc.); ideas regarding the illustrations; and choosing the keywords for the story and the languages used (when possible and depending on the subject chosen). That allows us to regard the plurilingual *kamishibai* as a pedagogical resource that has the power to develop intercultural values/attitudes/competences. These refer not only to the collaborative aspects of the design and creation process of the *kamishibai* but also to the reading and dramatization of the topics addressed. The public presentation of the work also confirms initial assumptions that highlight the advantages of (successfully) exploiting dramatic activities to address multicultural issues in a school context.

6.3. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE TEACHERS/ANIMATORS

The teachers/animators' representations in the logbooks (identified by "LB" and by a respective number) are associated with the four *kamishibai* competing in the 2020/21 plurilingual *kamishibai* contest. Their analysis shows that the participation in this project was initially motivated:

by the willingness to develop a project that involved linguistic and cultural diversity, but above all because it involved the newly arrived children who spoke other languages, thus promoting all languages in use, the respect for differences, sharing, and cooperation in the project's co-creation. (LB4)

Perhaps the main question expressed in the text is what this project can bring that is new and challenging to the group of children. The fact is that "we are increasingly citizens of the world, and there is a need to expand our knowledge of it, embracing differences" (LB1). Also,

for the adults in the group, it was a very rewarding challenge, not only to witness the joy of children participating and their evolution but also to witness how beneficial it is for them and their development. This work also takes a different perspective on how languages can be approached and explored and the development and acquisition of captivating and facilitating strategies and tools to make activities more dynamic. (LB3)

It is certainly an "opportunity to involve all children and welcome their proposals, sparking their curiosity for the world's many different languages and cultures. In addition to being a captivating and creative experience, it promotes interest in reading" (LB1).

Thus, according to the results obtained, we can highlight the importance of this didactic tool in promoting an attitude of solidarity, open-mindedness, acceptance,

enrichment, and learning towards diversity and fostering a sense of hospitality, recognition, cooperation, and dialogue. Such characteristics enable the development of transversal competences in the curriculum that are essential to the learning process, not only at the school level but also at the social level (Pedley & Stevanato, 2018).

7. FINAL REMARKS

Results show that activities seeking to raise awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity through the plurilingual *kamishibai* can contribute to the development of intercultural communication competences and knowledge in different scientific areas. Additionally, the plurilingual *kamishibai* can lead to more positive behaviours toward linguistic and cultural diversity, as reflected in the answers to the survey, such as: “the fact that we can develop a project aimed at linguistic and cultural diversity and conceive of new teaching-learning strategies and resources” (LB2), or “involve newly-arrived speakers of other languages to promote all languages in use, the respect for differences, the sharing, and cooperation in the project’s co-creation” (LB3).

Therefore, the use of the *kamishibai* meets the challenges posed to educational agents, promoting a significant improvement in linguistic and visual understanding and the potential for its application in all the subject areas covered by the school curricula (McGowan, 2015). For McGowan (2015), building a *kamishibai* invites students to engage in collaborative work and think critically about the structure and production of the *kamishibai* according to their own experience and culture, adding innovation and diversity to the entire process. For an elementary school student, using the *kamishibai* makes things easier and more appealing, “allowing communication and cooperation of children, both during the creation and the presentation” (Faneca, 2019, p. 361). It is easier because it is more intuitive, allowing the student to build the story according to a structure that includes an introduction, an exposition, and a resolution of the problem through images. On the other hand, speaking about interculturality — and plural identities — at school points from the outset to the fact that multiculturalism needs to be discussed in a classroom setting in order to approach any existing prejudices so that children can develop a heterogeneous and plural perspective regarding social groups and respect differences.

The school is certainly among the places where cultural diversity is most clearly manifested, thus requiring greater attention from teachers to deal with these constraints using appropriate strategies.

Many studies (Aguilar, 2001; Arroyo, 2007; Dewey, 1900/2003; Fuegel & Montoliu, 2000; Spolin, 1978/2005) have confirmed the efficacy of creative drama as a teaching method in several educational stages. This approach leads students to find their inner strength and apply it (Arroyo, 2007). It emphasizes the importance of students mobilizing their own competences, intelligence, and imagination to help them learn through their activity. Using creative drama also supports the development of linguistic skills (reading and writing) and vocabulary while stimulating higher-level cognitive processes (Fonseca, 2016).

Teachers/educators may experience some difficulties implementing creative, innovative, and flexible strategies to support their work as education professionals in contexts of great cultural diversity (Candelier et al., 2010) and with students who present preconceived ethnic-racial concepts and images. We have thus intended to provide teachers, in their daily pedagogical practices, with diversified strategies to deal adequately with cultural heterogeneity — stereotypes and prejudices.

The school's social role as a privileged place for promoting a fairer and more egalitarian society is highlighted since it is where young people and children have the initial opportunity to start showing and developing their cognitive and social skills (Pintassilgo, 1998). Therefore, it is essential to develop activities that value interculturality in school through collaborative work creating and producing *kamishibai* stories, namely the process of choosing the subject, creating the story, assembling and designing the cards, and so forth. Such activities seek to amplify and strengthen actions that, to some extent, may combat prejudice and discrimination so that no form of intolerance or unequal treatment is allowed, both inside and outside the school. To tackle these challenges, the Portuguese educational system, under the *Projeto de Autonomia e Flexibilidade Curricular* (Project for Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility) for primary and secondary school education, grants the school community a greater centrality in the management of curricula (Despacho n.º 5908/2017, 2017). In this regard, several guiding documents were also introduced, such as the profile of students leaving compulsory education (Martins et al., 2017); the *Estratégia Nacional de Educação para a Cidadania e as Aprendizagens Essenciais* (National Strategy for Education on Citizenship and Essential Learning; Monteiro et al., 2017), among others (Conselho Europeu, 2008; Convenção Sobre a Protecção e a Promoção da Diversidade das Expressões Culturais, 2005). Together with the work developed by students in these plurilingual *kamishibai* projects⁹, they lead us to issues that concern citizenship, values, and sharing of ideas and opinions. Thus, it is possible to integrate a set of principles, areas of knowledge, competences, and values that equip students to respond to the complex challenges of this century and to face the unpredictability of the evolution of knowledge and technology (Martins et al., 2017; Monteiro et al., 2017; Tenreiro-Vieira & Vieira, 2000, 2013).

As seen, the potential of using the plurilingual *kamishibai* in teaching/learning spaces is unlimited. Indeed, as a form of oral/visual narrative, it provides a unique opportunity for students to broaden any research/reading/subject they are involved in, employing their own words and ideas. At the same time, using the *kamishibai* enables: “widening and enriching students’ visual and artistic experiences, contributing to the development of aesthetic and artistic sensibility, awakening, throughout the learning process, the taste for appreciation and enjoyment of different cultural circumstances” (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 1).

Raising children’s awareness of their place in the world and history using the plurilingual *kamishibai* may foster a greater understanding of how this resource can enhance

⁹ In the choice of subject; in designing the setting and the plot; in collaborative writing; in the storyboard; in the illustrations (Faneca, 2020).

learning and implement an approach to linguistic and cultural diversity within the school. School plays an essential role in promoting attitudes and values that form the basis of students' civic education — as a counterpoint to prejudice and discrimination since “the *kamishibai* provides a rich and genuine experience, improving the children's well-being, stimulating the motivation to learn and promoting a more committed engagement to learning” (Faneca, 2019, p. 373), — and in making students aware of their own imagination while also having fun.

This study offered a close look at the effectiveness of using the plurilingual *kamishibai* as an educational tool — its impact on the learning and teaching process, on children's self-development, their communication and thinking skills, but above all on the acquisition of intercultural competences — which is an uplifting and positive experience for all (Paatela-Nieminen, 2008). We believe that exploring the plurilingual *kamishibai* for educational purposes undoubtedly reinforces the relevance and visibility of education open to linguistic and cultural diversity.

Translation: Francisco Rocha (with revision of Filipe Jones Mourão)

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Francisco Rocha developed the conceptualization, the resources, the investigation and writing – original draft. He also developed the methodology. Rosa Maria Faneca participated in writing – original draft and writing – review and editing. She was responsible for the validation and supervision and also co-developed the methodology.

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