

# Paths of Discovery:

Highlights from UNESPAR  
Undergraduate Research in  
English language and literature

Francini Percinoto Polisele Corrêa, Aline Yuri Kiminami,  
Jefferson de Moura Saraiva, Tallyssa Izabella Machado Sirino, (ORGs.)

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## Universidade Estadual do Paraná

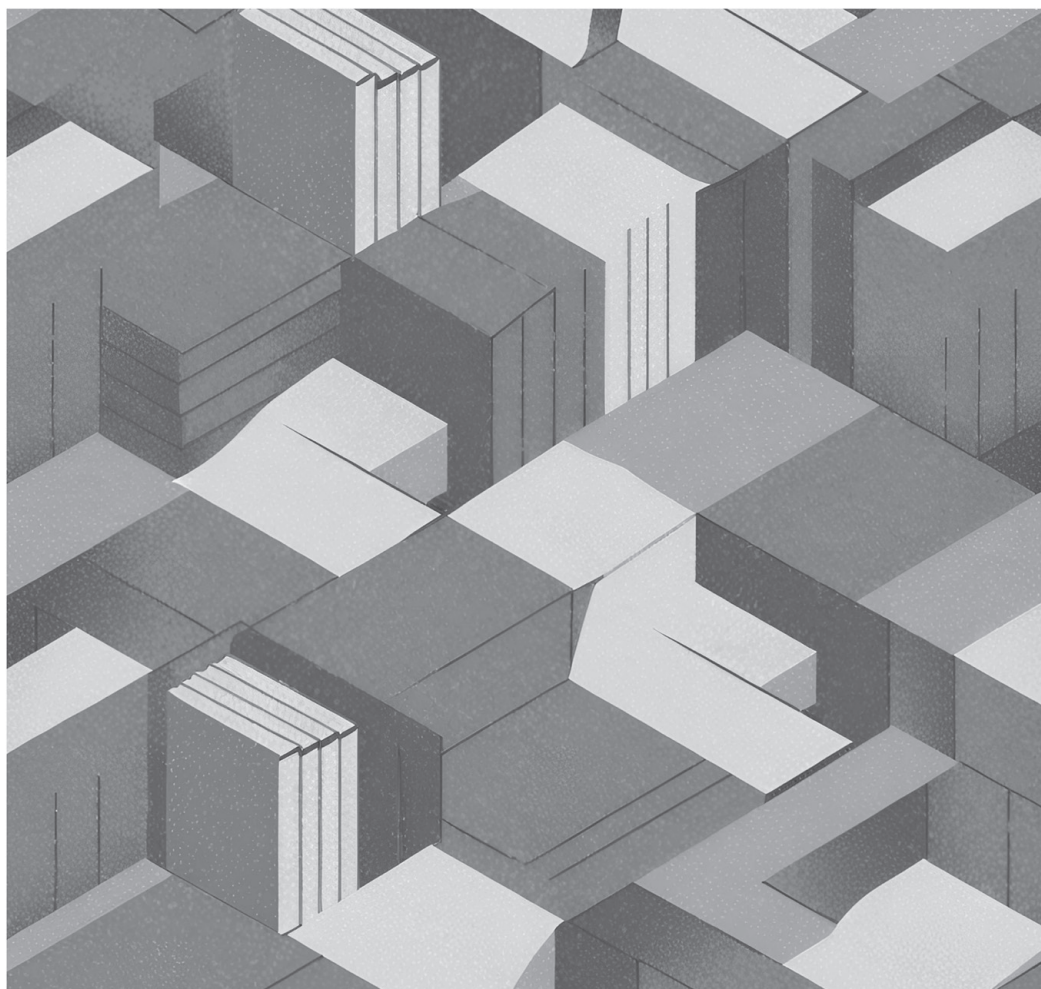
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### Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na publicação (CIP)

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P297 Paths of Discovery: highlights from UNESPAR Undergraduate Research in English language and literature [recurso eletrônico] / orgs Francini Percinoto Poliselí Corrêa. – Paranavaí : Edunespar, 2024.  
Recurso eletrônico (PDF).

Inclui bibliografia.

ISBN: 978- 65-6115-049-1

1. Linguagem e línguas. 2. Língua inglesa – Estudo e ensino – Brasil. 3. Literatura inglesa – Estudo e ensino – Brasil – História. I. Corrêa, Francini Percinoto Poliselí. II. Kiminami, Aline Yuri. III. Saraiva, Jefferson de Moura. IV. Sirino, Tallyssa Izabella Machado.

CDD23 : 428.24

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Bibliotecária: Priscila Pena Machado – CRB-7/6971



DOI: 10.61367/9786561150491

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# IMAGE AND GRAPHICS COMPOSITION LIST

<b>Graph 1</b> – English practice .....	26
<b>Table 1</b> – Audiovisual media types .....	26
<b>Graph 2</b> – Useful English for everyday life .....	27
<b>Table 2</b> – Useful English knowledge.....	28
<b>Graph 3</b> – Audio and subtitles in English.....	29
<b>Table 3</b> – Useless English knowledge.....	29
<b>Graph 4</b> – Advantages.....	30
<b>Graph 5</b> – Speaking aloud.....	31
<b>Graph 6</b> – Becoming fluent .....	32
<b>Graph 7</b> – Fluency helper.....	33
<b>Table 4</b> – Manners to get fluent.....	33
<b>Table 5</b> – Learning motivation.....	35
<b>Table 1</b> – Thematic units and objects of knowledge for 7th grade in the oral axis.....	68
<b>Table 2</b> – Categories and criteria for analyzing students’ participation.....	69
<b>Table 3</b> – Actions, actors and abilities explored in the class observed.....	71
<b>Image 1:</b> Genre-based teaching: a possible guideline for EAL.....	89
<b>Image 2:</b> Basic outline of the didactic sequence Source .....	91
<b>Image 3:</b> Resignification proposed by Research group.....	92
<b>Table 1</b> – Language capacities and its operations .....	96
<b>Table 2</b> – Correspondences between action capacities and guiding questions...98	
<b>Table 3</b> – Objectives, questions and analysis procedures .....	100
<b>Table 4</b> – Macrostructure of the DS .....	101
<b>Image 4</b> – Listen to the following song .....	103
<b>Images 5 and 6:</b> Did you know what is a lap book?/Let’s see some examples ...	104

<b>Image 7:</b> It is story time.....	106
<b>Image 8:</b> Create .....	107
<b>Image 9</b> – You will need.....	108
<b>Image 1:</b> Cover.....	131
<b>Image 2:</b> Summary/Content chart.....	132
<b>Image 3:</b> Summary .....	132
<b>Chart 1:</b> Lesson Plan #1 – Unit 3 – Overcoming Obstacles.....	136
<b>Picture 4:</b> Reading for Critical Thinking questions.....	140
<b>Chart 2:</b> Lesson Plan #8.....	142
<b>Chart 3:</b> Activities proposed by the lesson plans.....	147
<b>Chart 1</b> – Participants and their first experiences with the English language.....	164
<b>Chart 2</b> – Reasons for joining the project.....	165
<b>Chart 3</b> – Student’s feelings upon the project.....	166
<b>Chart 4</b> – How the participants conceptualize the notion of critical literacy .....	167
<b>Chart 5</b> – Is critical literacy in the classroom a must-do task? .....	168

# Summary

Research: an open-hearted and open-minded invitation .....	9
1. English Learning from Audiovisual Media: Survey Research with Unespar’s <i>Letras Inglês</i> Undergraduates.....	17
2. Discussing Abusive Relationship in an English as an Additional Language Intervention Project .....	41
3. Oral-practice in the Teaching of English as an Additional Language.....	63
4. English Language Teaching and Children Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Creation and Analysis of an Inclusive Didactic Sequence.....	85
5. Using the didactic book through a critical literacy-based approach: preparing, exploring and problematizing in English classes .....	113
6. The impacts of critical literacy in the practice of two English language pre-service teachers .....	151
7. Culture On Fire: A Semiological Perspective on Fahrenheit 451 (1953) .....	181
8. Chained To the Altar: Marriage as A Perpetuation of Women’s Submissive Role in “Bridgerton” (2020) And “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009).....	207





# Research: an open-hearted and open-minded invitation

Rogério Lobo Sáber

Contemporary teacher education, whose crucial aim corresponds to authentic personal and professional development, ought to take into account holistic and reflective practices that directly descends from John Dewey’s educational theoretical inventory—and, consequently, from his intellectual heirs. In a groundbreaking manner, in his 1933 work *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*, Dewey posited a vital distinction between “routine action” and “reflective action”, being this latter the undisputable objective and the most reliable scaffold of educational interventions that endorse the “heightening of awareness of social justice” (Creemers; Kyrikiades; Antoniou, 2013, p. 29). Nonetheless, any teacher who is interested in Dewey’s educational approach and philosophy cannot overlook his organic postulate regarding the importance of experience in the construction of meaning. Both experience and meaning are entwined, and such a Deweyan pragmatic standpoint is supposed to foster pedagogical approaches whereby young neophytes can meaningfully articulate creativity and rational strategies in order to solve daily problems. Accordingly, this is how we would encourage and promote authentic education aiming at conscious and humanized citizenship. By the same token, we should acknowledge the relevance of this academic initiative since the English course settled in Apucarana sustains practical and problem-solving interventions through which undergraduate students, following their path towards teacher development, can approach research contexts and experiences in order to explore academic topics broadly related to Applied Linguistics, Literature and Teacher Education, the three wide domains that guide the organization of this book.

Anyone who has committed themselves to the challenges and harvests of education must bear in mind that teachers are fundamentally researchers and that there is no possibility of evading such a truth, especially in our contemporary setting. At any rate, research allows us to be creative and to think of unexplored paths and opportunities; moreover, as Bert Creemers, Leonidas Kyrikiades and Panayiotis Antoniou (2013, p. 32) have emphasized in their study, research is mandatory in our contemporary setting for such an initiative, when well conducted and developed, grants us the chance to delve into multiple methods and strategies that are tangled with indispensable metacognitive skills. The route of research unfolds through constant movements of construction and deconstruction—mainly because scientific paradigms are unstable, as Thomas Kuhn claimed in his 1962 work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*—and research can be considered the most humanistic and the most reliable gleam of light able to guide us through the darkness of contemporary uncertainties and showdowns: “The postmodern society that we have entered is one in which clear-cut barriers and boundaries in so many areas of our lives have eroded or even collapsed. Our age is one of uncertainty, flux, and ambivalence, in which little seems absolutely certain or fixed” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 6). Such a claim was also supported by Denise Mifsud (2023, p. 3) for whom contemporary education cannot be disjointed from research inasmuch as ordered academic endeavors are the only way to shed some light on uncertainty of times and environments. Besides, since it is an unquestionable powerful creative force, research asserts itself as a compulsory resource to improve the quality of undergraduate programs, primarily of those forthrightly connected to knowledge construction, such as courses dedicated to teacher education. After all, “the quality of teachers and [initial teacher education] determine the quality of any nation’s education system” (Mifsud, 2023, p. 5). We oftentimes think that we have achieved an “open, flexible, tolerant, and free” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 7) society, but the truth is quite the opposite. Education still remains as a key changing force.

The practice of research should be primal throughout a course committed to teacher education chiefly because research enables us to

apprehend deep underlying connections and patterns that, usually, are shallowly perceived in daily life. Any teacher who devotes themselves to achieve a broader understanding of reality with the support of the scientific inventory of ideas and methods promotes an outstanding service on behalf of humankind. Also, one's willingness to come closer to what seems to be the thrilling roller-coaster of research confirms one's disposition to lay down, temporarily, their own ego, for the reason that, according to Creemers, Kyrikiades and Antoniou (2013, p. 36), "questioning of the existing teaching practice can be threatening to self-esteem". In devoting oneself to research and its sinuous highways, one recognizes—in a markedly Emersonian way—that the self is plastic and not permanently plastered. Many a person may not handle this essential truth in a very comfortable way; notwithstanding, contemporary education bids us to become reflective teachers since a pondering attitude of mind eases a meaningful construction of knowledge in a truly effective teaching and learning process.

Finally, we claim that research also encourages us towards self-knowledge and self-mastering (Creemers; Kyrikiades; Antoniou, 2013, p. 38): the more prepared the teacher, the more improved the processes that take place within an educational domain. In a world that has literally vanished in smoke, teachers are "key players" (Mafsud, 2023, p. 1) who still hold a humanistic task, that is, to help younger generations to discover and share their best assets with the world. In this sense, Elizabeth O'Brien (2023, p. 8) has decisively claimed: "Writing as research is an activation of the possible, an opportunity to challenge one's own understanding and so strengthen it". Researching is an active laboratory which allows all teachers to experiment ideas and to dilate their own perceptual framework. According to Howard Woodhouse (2023, p. 2), to research something new or to arrange things under a new pattern is a substantially creative initiative and it demands a philosophical immersion into our reality. This would be the most blatantly connection between research and philosophical issues. Research is also a sort of counterreaction since contemporary society has valued only what is marketable. Utilitarian knowledge has been praised because, somehow, it would "produce" something useful. Contrarily, research with a

meaningful amount of philosophy asserts itself as a mandatory attempt if we truly desire to overcome such an economical limitation. Freedom of mind—fostered by research-based initiatives—is the most authentic aim of teacher education today and it is utterly “necessary to avoid dogmatic and fanatical belief systems” (Woodhouse, 2023, p. 2).

Specifically in our current austere “economic apartheid” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 5) context, teacher education paths and perspectives have been under the yoke of several neoliberal mantras, such as those spread by the OECD, an international organization that has diffused contradictory speeches about schooling efficiency and equity (Mifsud, 2023, p. 6), insofar as the improvement of primary education conditions is supported by a belief that it only depends on the performance of good teachers. One cannot be so naïve since overall enhancements are not only connected to teachers’ interventions. Be that as it may, one cannot either disagree with the fact that “teacher quality as a result of teacher education [is] a key to successful economies” (Boath; Mio; McKinney, 2023, p. 689).

By means of a dialectical dynamics, we cannot fail to recognize that teachers and students correspond to two complementary protagonists in the same process and, as a philosophical proof of such an intrinsic bond, Denise Mifsud’s (2023, p. 2) claim goes straight to the point: “the calibre of teachers is the most considerable in-school determinant of student achievement”. That is to say that all processes regarding teacher education cannot be established in a vacuum since personal and professional growth, and improvement of undergraduate students coexist with more experienced teachers’ knowledge. All domains of science connect the experience of younger pupils to the experience of experts; nevertheless, in what particularly concerns teacher education, the established ties are unique inasmuch as the main possibilities for learning and improving depend on interpersonal exchanges, which may occur either through in-person initiatives (e.g. in the classroom) or through apparently *in absentia* connections (e.g. through research). Teacher education is essentially based on interactions and thereby the very process of constructing a course conclusion paper implies

professional and personal exchanges between advisors and advisees. This book would not have come to light otherwise.

Research springs up as a mighty resource which helps teachers to promote the principle of “lifelong learning” (Mifsud, 2023, p. 3) and, although this idea itself should not be considered an entirely unnecessary one, all of us should deliberately consider it *cum grano salis* because contemporary education has been altogether immersed in a neoliberal atmosphere. Mifsud’s (2023, p. 7) words highlight a rough truth: “teachers have been burdened by new tasks leading to more bureaucracy, while facing budget cuts that may lead to larger classes, higher pupil–teacher ratios, longer working hours, or fewer assistants in schools, [and they have not been supported] in their pursuit for further learning and development”. There is still much to be done and reshaped, mainly when we bring to the fore the fact that contemporary societies desperately need to review their educational teleology. Nonetheless, there is no way to overlook the importance of research–based initiatives and, if we are really committed to the improvement of primary education, appropriate formation in research methods is a suitable springboard that helps us with such an achievement. Universities ought to support research initiatives, even if we have faced harsh economical and ideological times, and even if we have to admit, grudgingly, that moments and opportunities for research have been gradually shrunk within our contemporary teaching context. UNESCO guidelines—learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be—seem like heaven–sent mottos in front of which any teacher should bow to. Teachers’ engagement and effective educational intervention are far more complex than one can notice in looking at the surface of events and situations. However, the suitable preparation for teaching work is mandatory and here is where research develops its beneficial role.

Two main critical issues are also developed by Mifsud’s (2023, p. 8) study: firstly, the researcher acknowledges, “the steering power of the OECD comes about through its publication of analyses, statistics, indicators, country reviews, and thematic surveys that revolve around the management of information.” Nonetheless, one needs to consider that statistics do not transparently

reveal the whole and they do not represent the plain truth. Secondly, our contemporary education has been firmly obsessed with homogenization: “shouldn’t we be concerned about this increased uniformity, or reduction of diversity in education thought and practice, as propagated by the OECD [...]?” (Mifsud, 2023, p. 10). What is the matter with difference? Once again, research demonstrates that diverse intellectual standpoints, as well as distinct aesthetic and linguistic perceptions of reality, are more than welcome. This diversification aim is wisely promoted by this compilation.

Shared all these previous considerations, we would really like to invite our reader to save some time and to sit down around us in order to attentively listen and to creatively dialogue with all these collective social reflections that are now registered in their best clean-cut form. All discussions herein will surely contribute with an educational outlook enlargement on behalf of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Teacher Education since their philosophical impact brings more clarity to those scientific domains. We would be greatly satisfied if all the research movements in this book transform into complementary creative ideas and insights, thereby forming another “original set of claims to illuminate the emancipative potential of education” (O’Brien, 2023, p. 2). This is our sincere open-hearted and open-minded invitation.

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# 1. English Learning from Audiovisual Media: Survey Research with Unespar's *Letras Inglês* Undergraduates

Carlos Eduardo de Souza Tavares  
Raquel Silvano Almeida

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that, in the technological world we live in, there are various ways to learn useful information through electronic and digital audiovisual tools. According to the Brazilian National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) (translated by the authors)<sup>1</sup>, “all material is a source of information” (translated by the authors).<sup>2</sup> The information can be propagated through print, electronic, or digital media. As “frequently used materials” (translated by the authors),<sup>3</sup> the media types are channels of information and communication, and the main objective is to make public informative contents related to the social context of the subjects (Brasil, 1997, p.104).

This research was aimed at audiovisual media<sup>4</sup> in all their forms. However, there was a particular focus on movies, TV series, and cartoons for the fact that those are the media that we assume that learners usually stick to in order to become fluent. Despite that, our research was also

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1 From the original in Portuguese: Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais.

2 From the original in Portuguese: todo o material é fonte de informação.

3 From the original in Portuguese: materiais de uso frequente

4 Audiovisual media can be defined as mass communication mechanisms that transmit their messages through channels that involve not only the sense of sight, as in traditional print media, but also that of hearing. Therefore, they essentially combine both visual aspects (still or moving images) and sound. It is available at: (<https://whatdoesmean.net/what-are-audiovisual-media/>). It was accessed on Nov. 10th, 2023.

directed at other forms of audiovisual media, as this is a general term that includes many other tools, which shall be discussed further.

Media such as movies, TV series, and cartoons are disseminated through streaming platforms such as Netflix and Disney Plus, among several others. These platforms constitute a huge audiovisual entertainment industry that has increasingly grown over the years and tends to expand even more in the future.

We have decided to develop this research with the university undergraduate students of *Letras Inglês*, as we assume they may have an English learning background. Thus, we aim to know how audiovisual media – with focus on movies, TV series, and cartoons – can help English language students learn the language.

Therefore, this analysis is based on these tools, which practically everyone currently has access to. We believe this research is very relevant for the English language teaching (ELT) area since it can show how audiovisual media can be used in the self-teaching and learning process.

Thus, one question must arise at the very beginning: *How can one learn English using audiovisual media?* This issue will be explored more deeply in this paper. Therefore, in order to investigate English language learning through audiovisual media, we established the following aims:

#### **General objective:**

To analyze how audiovisual media – with focus on movies, TV series, and cartoons – can help *Letras Inglês* undergraduates learn the language.

#### **Specific objectives:**

1. to interview *Letras Inglês* undergraduates from Unespar in 2023;
2. to examine the responses of *Letras Inglês* undergraduates;
3. to identify the communicative language skills, lexis, and grammar they learn or have learned.
4. to show how watching audiovisual media can motivate English students to learn.

In the next section, we shall present the theoretical framework this research paper. Subsequently, it will be explained the methodology,

nature, and method of my research. We shall then analyze the data collected. Finally, we shall conclude this work and show the references used in this paper.

## 2. THE USE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION

As for Almeida (2021; 2022), in the school environment, the media are present, above all, in the traditionally known materials as being of didactic use or as teaching resources. Among the materials, there are those produced for specific purposes. Those materials are oriented to be used for permitting educational actions in the school. One of the most – if not the most – frequently used media in Brazilian schools is the didactic book or textbook, considered the most influential media in this environment.

Saviani (1997, p. 68) points out that the textbook can be a significant component of the teacher’s actions, but it cannot be taken for granted as the “great instructor” in the school. Besides, the book cannot serve as a particular educational method for the promotion of teaching and learning. It is necessary to perform a critical analysis of the content present in the book, both by the teacher and the student. Thereby, students will relate the information in the book to the context of their lives and the actual conditions of society.

This critical reflection regarding the media can extend to debates in the class about the information obtained from the different media resources (from the traditional to the most sophisticated ones) that are present nowadays inside and outside the school. The National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) (translated by the authors)<sup>5</sup> say that “the use of diversified materials, such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, computers, movies, and so on, makes the students feel more inserted in the world around them” (Brasil, 1997, p. 104) (translated by the authors).<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the media must be used for purposes that are clearly defined. They cannot be seen only as “facilitators” of the learning process through

<sup>5</sup> From the original in Portuguese: Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais.

<sup>6</sup> From the original in Portuguese: a utilização de materiais diversificados como jornais, revistas, folhetos, propagandas, computadores, calculadoras, filmes, faz o aluno sentir-se inserido no mundo à sua volta.

its “enchantments”. The use of media must practice the mental abilities of the students, more specifically the ones related to reason and criticism. Besides, it is worth mentioning that the school is not the only environment that educates students. The family, church, friends, and media are all sources of educational influence that add to the education of the student.

In higher education, the educational experiences provided by using film productions show that “the educator can go beyond the expository presentation of topics in the classroom, promoting debate from the movie scenes, and deepening the issues with the students” (Christofoletti, 2006, p. 4) (translated by the authors).<sup>7</sup> Thereby, the use of cinema for educational purposes allows for its recognition not only as an art form of expression and information, but also as a concrete instrument to illustrate a situation. Therefore, those media productions can serve as “catalysts of discussion” (Christofoletti, 2006, p. 6) (translated by the authors)<sup>8</sup> for themes to be developed in class. The use of those resources must be guided by the teacher, who is a mediator in the teaching and learning process. Thus, using media in higher education can be innovative. In this regard, Castanho (2004, p. 78) asserts that the decision-making process for changes in teaching practices entails the investigation and collective work as a student task.

In the research entitled ‘Learning English through Movies: Adult English Language Learners’ Perceptions,’ Waheeb S. Albiladi et al. concluded that movies have several positive aspects in the learning process, as they state:

The participant teachers believed that movies can be used effectively to facilitate the learning process, enhance the learning atmosphere, and encourage more student-teacher and student-student discussions, and that helps in developing ELLs language skills (Albiladi et al, 2008, p. 1568).

Albiladi et al. (2008) acknowledge that in the process of learning through audiovisual media, students obtain more responsibility and autonomy in

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7 From the original in Portuguese: o educador pode ir muito além da apresentação expositiva dos tópicos em sala de aula, fomentando o debate a partir das cenas do filme e aprofundando as questões com os alunos.

8 From the original in Portuguese: catalisadoras de discussão.

their learning, whereas they are the ones who will teach themselves. They must select the relevant knowledge and decide how to use the audiovisual media to learn the target language.

Moreover, in the article named ‘Ensino Híbrido – Personalização e Tecnologia na Educação’, Lilian Bacich et al. talk about the responsibility of the student when using technology in the learning process, and they say:

The responsibility of the learning is now of the student, who assumes a more participatory stance, solving problems, developing projects, and, thereby, creating opportunities for the construction of his knowledge (Bacich et al, 2015, p. 23) (translated by the authors).<sup>9</sup>

In this perspective, one learning English through audiovisual media is an autonomous and responsible learner. It is noticeable that, during the pandemic, people have stayed home and mainly studied alone and on e-learning. This has fostered self-study practices after the pandemic times.

### 3. ENGLISH AND TECHNOLOGY IN BNCC

In light of the newly established Brazilian Curriculum Common National Base (BNCC) (translated by the authors)<sup>10</sup> there are two competencies regarding the use of media and technology in English learning. School pupils need to acquire competence in an additional language – English – in an intrinsic manner with a globalized digital culture, as can be seen in BNCC’s competencies numbers 2 and 5 below:

2. Communicate in the English language, through the varied use of languages in printed or digital media, recognizing it as a tool for accessing knowledge, for the expansion of perspectives and possibilities for understanding the values and interests of other cultures, and for exercising social leadership (Brasil, 2018, p. 9) (translated by the authors).<sup>11</sup>

9 From the original in Portuguese: a responsabilidade da aprendizagem agora é do estudante, que assume uma postura mais participativa, resolvendo problemas, desenvolvendo projetos e, com isso, criando oportunidades para a construção de seu conhecimento (Bacich et al, 2015, p. 23).

10 From the original in Portuguese: Base Nacional Comum Curricular

11 From the original in Portuguese: Competência 2: Comunicar-se na língua inglesa, por meio do uso va-

5. Use new technologies, with new languages and modes of interaction, to research, select, share, position, and produce meaning in literacy practices in the English language, in an ethical, critical, and responsible way (Brasil, 2018, p. 9) (translated by the authors).<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, audiovisual media can be effectively used or adopted in English learning as part of the current digital culture.

#### 4. LANGUAGE LEARNING FROM AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

Diane Larsen-Freeman (2000) has discussed the importance of using authentic materials when learning a new language. She says: “Students should be given opportunities to listen to the language as it is used in authentic communication” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 128). In doing so, English language students should make use of materials that simulate real-life situations for them to be able to handle similar situations in their everyday lives.

On Pearson Languages’ webpage article entitled ‘Using authentic material from the real world to teach English’,<sup>13</sup> it is said that “The materials [selected for English teaching] should reflect a situation that learners may face in an English-speaking environment – this will help them transition into a world where English is the norm.” Based on that, the authentic materials chosen for teaching/learning English do not only simulate real-life situations – as said earlier – but also reflect them in a way that allows students to have a “taste” of how the situation truly is in reality.

When speaking about the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, Diane Larsen-Freeman also talks about the responsibility of the student, she says: “Also, since the teacher’s role is less dominant than in a teacher-centered method, students are seen as more responsible

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riado de linguagens em mídias impressas ou digitais, reconhecendo-a como ferramenta de acesso ao conhecimento, de ampliação das perspectivas e de possibilidades para a compreensão dos valores e interesses de outras culturas e para o exercício do protagonismo social (Brasil, 2018, p. 9).

12 From the original in Portuguese: Competência 5: Utilizar novas tecnologias, com novas linguagens e modos de interação, para pesquisar, selecionar, compartilhar, posicionar-se e produzir sentidos em práticas de letramento na língua inglesa, de forma ética, crítica e responsável (Brasil, 2018, p. 9).

13 It is available at <https://www.pearson.com/languages/community/blogs/2023/02/using-real-world-materials-to-teach-english.html>. It was accessed on December 10th, 2023.

managers of their own learning” (Larsen–Freeman, 2000, p. 129). In this learning approach, teachers are no longer the protagonists of the process. Students play this role and become the builders of all their knowledge.

In addition, Larsen–Freeman states that “the social context of the communicative event is essential in giving meaning to the utterances” (Larsen–Freeman, 2000, p. 127). This means that communication has no significant meaning without a social context. Therefore, having a context is necessary for communication to occur significantly; otherwise, understanding the communicative event or situation will not be possible.

Thus, using authentic materials within a social context that reflects real life can be effective to teach and learn a new language. Since audiovisual media align as authentic materials and provide realistic social contexts for the students to have contact with, they can indeed serve as useful resources in learning English.

From the literature presented so far, it is evident that audiovisual media have the potential to be used by the students as effective learning tools. The scholars bring about relevant knowledge regarding the use of audiovisual media in English education. This knowledge will serve as the basis for further discussion when the analyzed data is addressed in depth.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

This research has a qualitative–quantitative nature since the results came from 13 open and closed questions, which the undergraduates of *Letras Inglês* of Unespar (Universidade Estadual do Paraná) answered. Once qualitative methods offer an effective way of obtaining information, we adopted a qualitative research paradigm, as we understand that the collected data are objects of social reality. Also, we expected they gather essential information about our research object, that is, English learning from audiovisual media.

Prior to undertaking the investigation, ethical clearance was obtained from CEP (Comitê de Ética da Unespar). We decided that the best method to adopt for this investigation was to perform survey research:

Survey research is a popular and powerful means by which to study people and organizations in society. It consists of a rich set of

techniques used to obtain information about individual attitudes, values, behaviors, opinions, knowledge, and circumstances. Surveys are also used to study organizations and institutions, for example, assessing their culture, policies, and finances (Rasinski, 2005).<sup>14</sup>

The survey was conducted through the application of a semi-structured questionnaire. The data were collected through Google Forms, a digital tool in which it is possible to have the results of each respondent in a very organized manner, consisting of graphics and tables. The previously designed semi-structured questionnaire consisted of six open questions and seven closed ones, totaling thirteen questions.

The estimated number of respondents was 59 undergraduates (24 from the first year of *Letras Inglês*; 18 from the second year; 8 from the third year; and

9 from the fourth year). The questionnaire was applied to the *Letras Inglês* undergraduates in the first term of 2023.

The undergrads were expected to answer it according to their perceptions of how audiovisual media have helped them learn English. The questionnaire also provided room for the respondents to express their opinions and beliefs as they wished through open questions.

## 6. CONTENT ANALYSIS METHOD

The method chosen to analyze the data is Content Analysis. For Rodrigues (2019, p. 12), this method seeks to go beyond the description of messages. Through interpretation, it is possible to reach a deeper understanding of the content of the messages (apud Batista et al., 2021, p. 55). This method allows the knowledge of the data from a qualitative and quantitative perspective, as it enables a variety of details and reveals aspects that are not explicit or visible in the text (Batista et al., 2021, p. 59).

According to Bardin (2016), Content Analysis consists of three steps: pre-analysis, which aims to the organization of the material; exploration of the material, a long stage that includes the codification of the data; and results

<sup>14</sup> It is available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/survey-research>. It was accessed on Dec. 11th, 2023.



processing, inference, and interpretation, which can include simple statistical operations in order to create tables and figures of results, thus potentially drawing inferences and anticipating interpretations (Bardin, 2016, p. 125).

In this research, the Content Analysis method was used to organize, encode, systematize, and interpret the data obtained from the questionnaires applied to the undergraduates. By utilizing this method, the information acquired was effectively examined and further discussed.

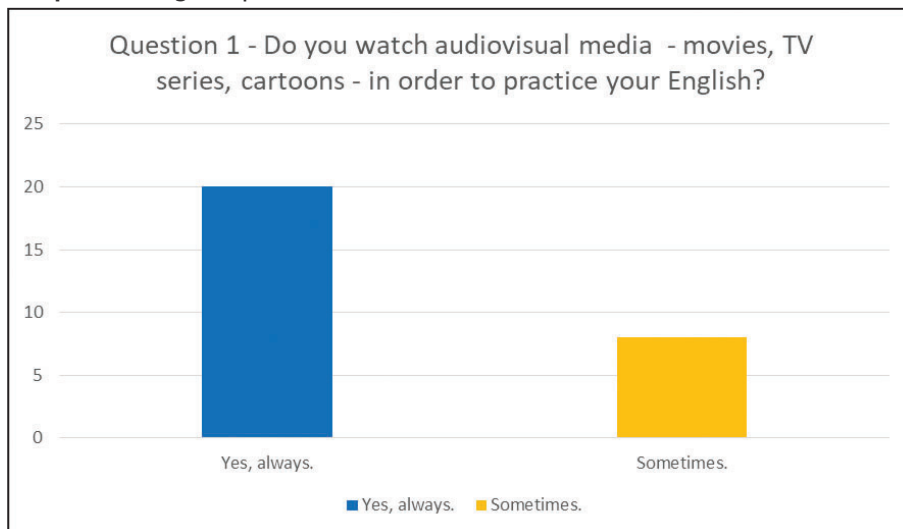
## **7. DATA ANALYSIS**

In this section, we will present the data obtained from the online questionnaires that were applied to the *Letras Inglês* undergraduates, through Google Forms, in the second half of 2023. Of 59 enrolled in the *Letras Inglês* undergraduate course, 28 answered the questionnaire. All the 28 respondents have agreed to participate in the research by signing a consent form at the beginning of the questionnaire.

To analyze the data under the Content Analysis method, we organized the information brought in the graphs, tables, and open questions into 12 categories as follows:

- 1 English practice;**
- 2 Audiovisual media types;**
- 3 Useful English for everyday life;**
- 4 Useful English knowledge;**
- 5 Audio and subtitles in English;**
- 6 Useless English knowledge;**
- 7 Advantages;**
- 8 Speaking aloud;**
- 9 Becoming fluent;**
- 10 Fluency helper;**
- 11 Manners to get fluent;**
- 12 Learning motivation.**

## Graph 1 – English practice.



Source: The authors.

The first question (Graph 1) concerns whether the students watched audiovisual media with the intention of practicing their English or not. While 20 respondents indicated that they always did, 8 said that they watched them with this purpose only sometimes.

The second question complements the first one and is related to the types of audiovisual media the participants listen to. The question is: What type of audiovisual media do you watch? As it was an open question, there was a wide variety of answers. Table 1 presents their responses organized by types of audiovisual media.

**Table 1 – Audiovisual media types.**

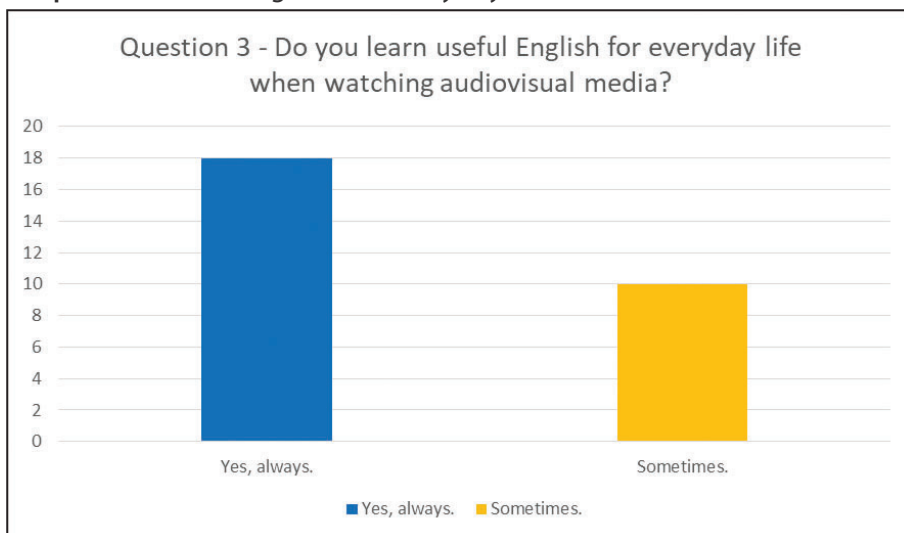
Types	Answers
Movies (Netflix)	23
TV Series / TV Shows / Talk shows (Netflix)	24
Cartoons	4
Podcasts	1
YouTube / Internet videos	8
Animes	3

Types	Answers
Sitcoms	2
Documentaries	1
Interviews	1
The news	2
“Do your self”	1
Music videos	1
Soap Operas	1
Video Games	1

Source: The authors.

It is evident, from these answers, that audiovisual media are indeed used by the undergraduates as a way to practice their English, as 24 responded that they watched TV series, TV shows, or Talk Shows; 23 answered that they watched movies; 8 said they watched videos from the internet; and 4 mentioned cartoons. Those are the types that were mentioned the most by the participants.

**Graph 2 – Useful English for everyday life.**



Source: The authors.

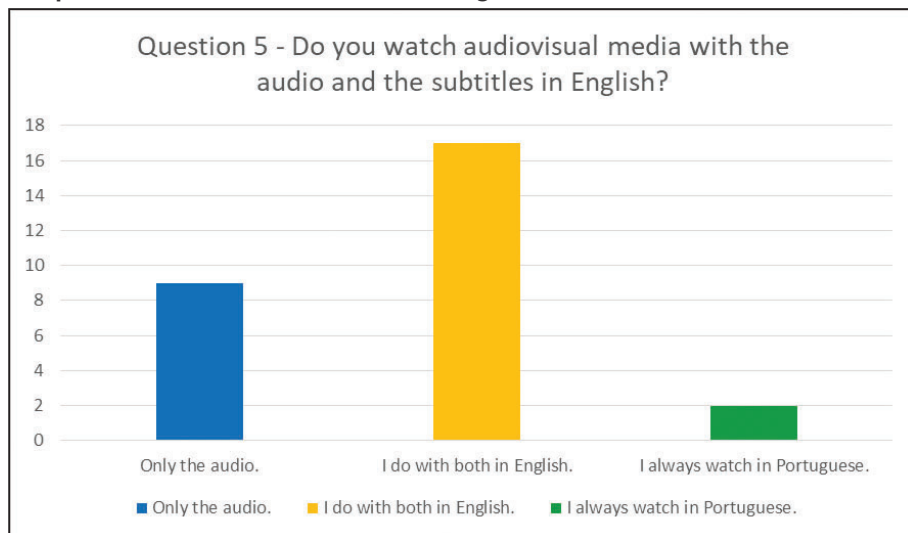
The third question (Graph 2) addresses whether or not the students acquire useful English when they utilize audiovisual media to study, while the fourth one is specifically related to what they learn. “Useful English” refers to knowledge that can be used in situations of daily life. In question 3, while 18 participants answered “Yes, always”, 10 responded “Sometimes”. Table 2 shows their responses to question 4 regarding the knowledge acquired, which they consider useful for everyday life.

**Table 2** – Useful English knowledge.

Pieces of knowledge	Answers
Idiomatic expressions	8
Vocabulary	7
Synonyms	1
Slang	6
Phonetic and listening aspects	8
Cultural facts/elements	3
Language in daily life situations	3
Grammar	2

**Source:** The authors.

**Table 2** represents the participants’ answers to the open question: *What useful English do you learn?* From the information presented in the table, it is noticeable that the participants do learn useful elements of English while watching audiovisual media. The answers were varied: idiomatic expressions and phonetic/listening aspects (both mentioned 8 times by the students), vocabulary (mentioned 7 times), slang (mentioned 6 times), cultural facts/elements and language in daily life situations (both mentioned 3 times), grammar (mentioned twice), and synonyms (mentioned only once).

**Graph 3 – Audio and subtitles in English.**

Source: The authors.

Question 5 (Graph 3) concerns whether the participants watch audiovisual media with the audio and or the subtitles in English. While 17 students indicated that they watched with them both in English, 9 responded that they only watched with the audio in English but not the subtitles. On the other hand, 2 undergraduates answered that they always watched in Portuguese, thus using neither the audio nor the subtitles in English.

In contrast to questions 3 and 4, question 6 is related to the knowledge the students may have acquired that they consider to be useless. Their responses can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3 – Useless English knowledge.**

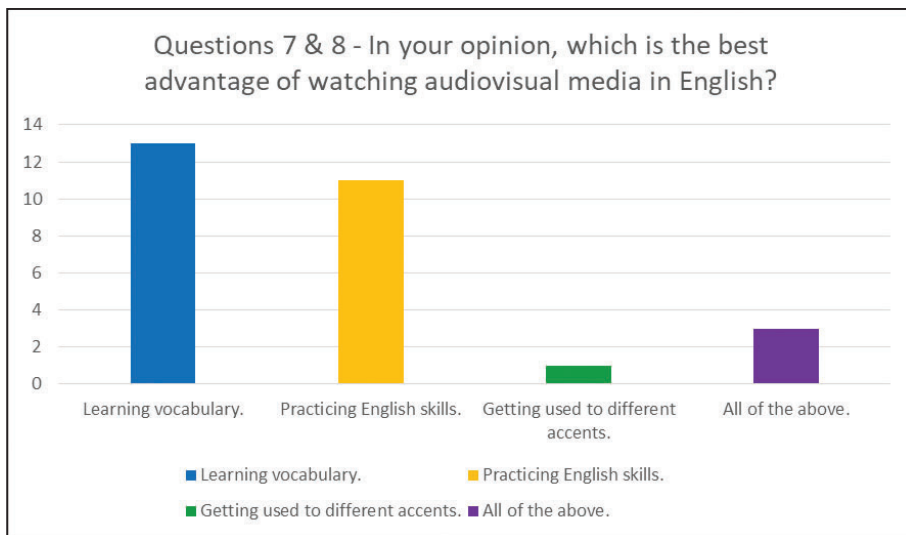
Pieces of knowledge	Answers
Nothing	11
Slangs	3
Phonological aspects	4
Contractions	1
Expressions	1

Pieces of knowledge	Answers
Specific words / vocabulary	3
Swear words	1
Uninteresting information	1

Source: The authors.

**Table 3** represents the answers to the open question: *What have you learned of English by watching audiovisual media that you find useless?* While most of the students affirmed that no knowledge is useless by answering “nothing” (11 participants), others mentioned some elements such as phonological aspects (4 participants), which refer to the pronunciation of some words and their characteristics; slangs (3 participants); specific words/vocabulary (3 participants); and even information that is not interesting for them (1 participant), which is rather subjective.

#### Graph 4 – Advantages.

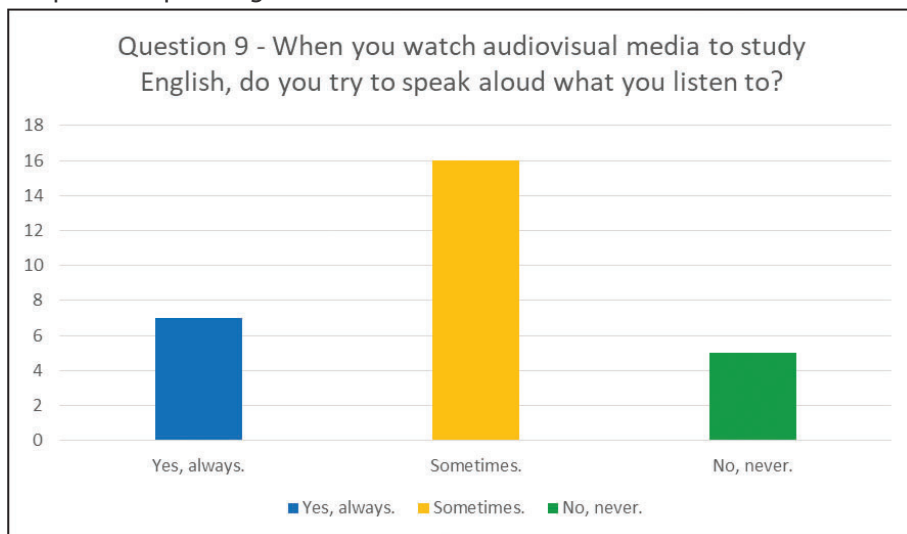


Source: The author.

Questions 7 and 8 (Graph 4) sought to investigate what the best advantage of watching audiovisual media is, according to the participants' opinions. The most selected answer was “Learning vocabulary” (marked by

13 participants), followed by “Practicing English skills” (marked by 11), “All of the above” (marked by 3), and “Getting used to different accents” (marked by 1 participant only).

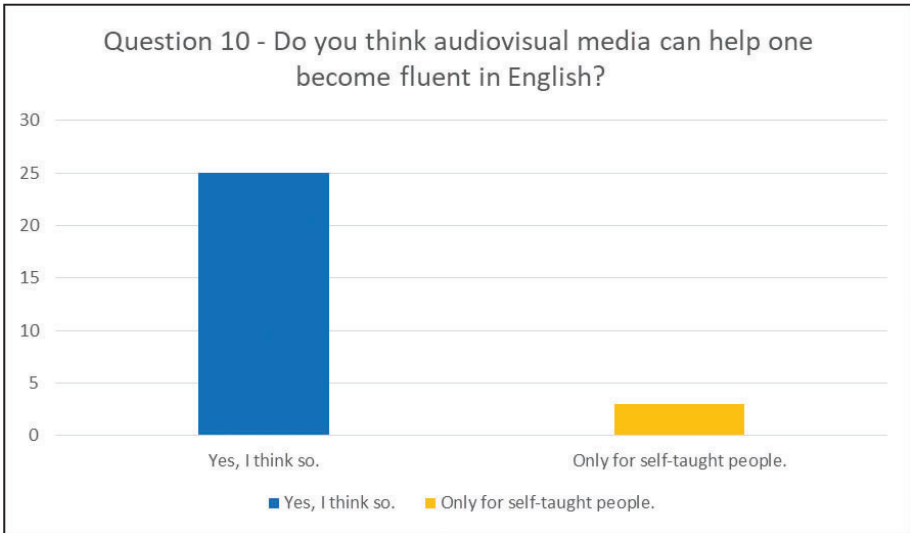
Graph 5 – Speaking aloud.



Source: The authors.

Graph 5 represents the participants’ responses to question 9, which addresses whether or not the students practice their speaking while watching audiovisual media to study by repeating what they listen to. The most selected answer was “Sometimes” (marked by 16 students), followed by “Yes, always” (marked by 7), and “No, never” (marked by 5).

## Graph 6 – Becoming fluent.



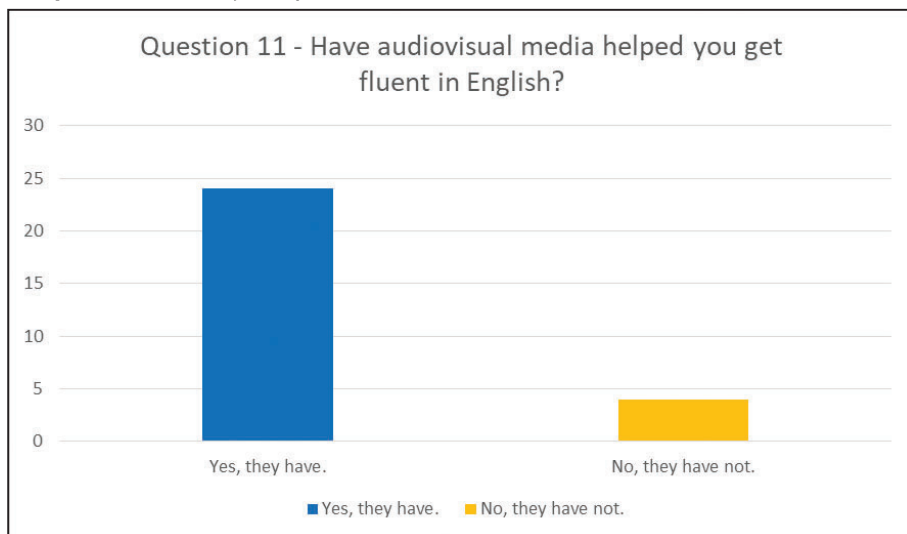
**Source:** The authors.

Question 10 (Graph 6) is related to the participants' opinions on whether audiovisual media can help one become fluent in English or not. The answers varied from "Yes, I think so" (selected by 25 students) to "Only for self-taught people" (selected by 3). A self-taught person can be defined as someone who has taught himself or herself a particular skill or piece of knowledge instead of acquiring it from a teacher or formal instruction.

In addition to question 10, question 11 concerns whether or not audiovisual media has helped the participants become fluent in English. While 24 students answered that audiovisual media have indeed helped them, 4 responded that they have not. The answers of the participants can be seen in Graph 7 below.



## Graph 7 – Fluency helper.



Source: The authors.

Question 12 is an open question, and it also complements the previous one. However, it is more focused on how audiovisual media helped the students become fluent, rather than whether it did or not. Thus, the participants who marked “Yes, they have” to question 11 should explain how this happened. The question is: *If audiovisual media helped you get fluent in English, explain how.* **Table 4** shows all the 22 answers to this question.

### Table 4 – Manners to get fluent.

<b>Help me</b> with new words, new expressions, sometimes new accents
I think that no one becomes fluent without <b>having immersed themselves</b> in the language and culture of a place, the media facilitate this exchange.
<b>Making me have</b> more time spent with a different language
You <b>get to practice</b> all the time, watching and interacting with other people ing blogs, Facebook pages related to the show you were watching.
<b>Improving</b> pronunciation, <b>expanding</b> vocabulary and <b>practicing</b> your listening and reading if you use subtitles
I think the audiovisual media <b>was very helpful</b> because <b>we can see</b> what they are doing and listening and and put things together and <b>understand</b> gestures and link to speech, as well as many drawings <b>are good to learn</b> , because the language is easier (my writing is terrible sorry :/)

My entire life I watched movies and I still do that, and as someone who likes to watch that type of media, **helped me** a lot with expressions and vocabulary

it **helped me** to be confident in speaking english

I used to be good at the reading-writing capacities but I really wanted to be good at listening and speaking. So I started watching movies, series that I already knew the story but this time in english, to **get the vocabulary and slangs** used. Also as I am a very strong pop culture fan, so watch interviews of the artists and listening to the songs checking the lyrics **helped me** so much as well.

Accents

Ainda não sou fluente.

When I was doing my English course, I used to listen a lot of music in English to **practice and learn** new words

**By being able to listen** to other people in movies and series having normal everyday conversations, I was able to get used to the sound.

Because **listening** other people talking It's more easy to lear the pronounce and to **associate** with the real life situations.

The final season of the series I was watching was only available with subtitles, so **I was forced to watch** with the original audio and after a while I liked and later on **started to learn**.

I always loved the EL, and since I was a kid i always **wanted to learn** it. And I didn't have money to pay for an english course, for this reason watching series and movies **helped me** a lot during the process of learning the idiom.'

It **helps me to improve** my listening as a consequence I **learned how to use** tenses and words complicated as "get".

As presented in item 4, we are being exposed to almost real situations of language use, therefore being inserted at a certain point in that context, we can observe how it is used, amply our vocabulary, etc. The video **helps the understanding** of strange words and constructions, as the subtitles can help on the link between sounds and words.

By **making me practice** some of my English. I was always interested in watching/listening to things in English. So consequently I've practiced my English in this manner.

I tried to imitate them at the beginning, searching the words that I didn't know, **getting** more vocabulary with the correct spelling

**It helped** me in the sense of getting used to different accents, how to hear, differentiate, identify and pronounce word, as well as body expressions when saying something.

I never had money to study in a language school, but in 2020 starting the Letras Inglês course, I **didn't have trouble to keep up** the texts and classes. I also worked with the english language some moments of my life and I believe that the main reason was because I grew up in contact with the language. the only resources I had in my life was media. I still remember my middle school when I used to share my doubts in english with my classmates and teacher, and they thought I was advanced, but it was only series and movies expressions....

Source: The authors.

Most students share similar experiences, stating that watching audiovisual media helped them improve their listening and speaking skills, besides expanding their vocabulary and exposing them to realistic situations. To present that in the answers provided above, we highlighted most of the verbs used by them to express how audiovisual media have impacted their learning.

Question 13 is an open question as well. It addresses whether and why watching audiovisual media can motivate someone to learn English, according to the participants' point of view. The question is: *Do you think audiovisual media can motivate one to learn English? If so, why? If not, why not?* Twenty-four students answered this question, and as in the previous one, their answers varied a lot. Their responses can be seen in the table below.

**Table 5 – Learning motivation.**

Yes, can motivate. People will probably study English for understanding what they watch
Yes, i do... the contact with the language show how different and beautiful is learn other cultures.
Yeah, because people usually wants to know what actors are talking for real, not just with the dubbing
Yes, because you are getting in touch with a language using something you enjoy
For me, I was motivated by really listening to the voices of my favorite actors and actresses and that also helped me to feel the emotions they were trying to express
Yes, some people who never wanted to know about the language might get interested watching a movie or listening a song
Yes, I Do. 'Cause we can watch what we like and this could help to learn a different language, me for example I always what the same movie many times and I already know the lines in portuguese, so this could help me in English. And I know so people who never make an English course and the are fluent. so audiovisual medias really could help someone to learn anykind of language.
I think yes, because like me, the person who normally got that type of media can learn more easily
for me it's a more relaxed and less overwhelming way of learning
Yes because watching a movie, or listening to a song in english, you are learning subconsciously, meaning that you don't realise you're really learning but when you see you can easily recongnize some phrases, vocabularies and idioms.
Sim, porque mesmo que seja difícil compreender o conteúdo assistido, cada vez mais que assistimos temos mais vontade de aprender. Nos filmes temos a língua nativa e com ela podemos ver a pronúncia correta das palavras para tentarmos fazer corretamente mesmo com o nosso sotaque.

Yes, because by audiovisual media you can perceive how cool and beautiful the English language is

Yes, because if you find a movie or series that you really like but can't understand, it would motivate you learn so that you can understand the whole context of it better.

I believe that's possible because I have friends that learned English through the movies, games. When I'm playing some games I'm always paying attention in the characters dialogues.

Yes, you can capture the emotion of the character better, you can understand what they mean exactly the way they wanted, since translation can distort a little some expressions and words, the sounds (most of the time) are better, and etc..

It can definitely motive people to want to learn it, they can take as influence the authors by their own. Like, "i want to be an actor in the future, so i have to learn the idiom". "If he learned the idiom, i can learn it too"..

Yes, because people can learn with something they like and fell interesting talking about.

Yes, I like to watch/read works in their original languages; therefore, it was an incentive to follow and learn other languages, English included. Also, it's a more accessible and more engaging activity than studying, so it can be more appealing to young learners.

Yes, many people learn in this way

Yes. It can be used as a way to engage students more and make them more dedicated to learning it

Yes, because audiovisual media is everywhere, it is a modern tool that we can use in order to help our apprenticeship.

I think so. We live in a society surrounded by the media so it can make people fell way more motivated to get to know "the other" as well as their culture, practices and ways of being.

Yes it can! People a lot of times wants to be part of this niche of society who has contact with another cultures, as English sometimes can be an excluding factor for those people. I believe language learning can change identities and with it promote morivation to people to change their lives.

Yes.

**Source:** The authors.

Based on the participants' responses above, there appears to be a consensus that audiovisual media can indeed motivate English learning, as all of them have provided affirmative answers. It was mentioned by the undergraduates that using audiovisual media can raise interest not only in the language itself but in other cultures as well. It was also stated that watching audiovisual media can be a relaxing way to learn. For this reason, it may serve as a motivation for people who do not want or cannot do an English course, for example.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Regarding the research question of this study (*How can one learn English using audiovisual media?*), it was possible to conclude that if English language undergrads play an autonomous role when they are watching audiovisual media – whether by repeating the words, reading the subtitles, or simply focusing and trying to understand what they listen to – they can learn the English language in a way that will contribute to their fluency and their curriculum subject studies in *Letras Inglês*.

As two of the specific objectives that were still to be concluded are to identify the communicative language skills, lexis, and grammar they learn or have learned and to show how watching audiovisual media can motivate English students to learn, it can be stated that they all have reached a conclusion.

It was possible to identify the communicative language aspects the undergrads have learned by watching audiovisual media. They included the learning of vocabulary, grammar, language in daily situations, and also the practicing of English skills, i.e., listening, reading, and speaking skills. Besides, it was also evident that audiovisual media can motivate English learning in several ways, including by providing enjoyable movies, TV series, and cartoons for the students to learn from and by showing the expressions and feelings of the original authors when playing their characters.

In sum, audiovisual media have shown several positive aspects regarding English learning. Most of the research participants – *Letras Inglês* undergraduates – have agreed that audiovisual media can motivate students to learn and serve as useful resources when learning a new language. They thus consist of an entertaining way to learn English.

Therefore, as the general objective of this research paper was to analyze how audiovisual media – with focus on movies, TV series, and cartoons – can help English language undergraduates learn the language, it can be concluded that this aim was successfully reached. It was possible to analyze the potential that audiovisual media have to aid English students in their learning process.

Finally, we acknowledge that this research has contributed to English language learning in the non-educational sphere (informal learning), as

this is an accessible manner of learning English that leads to a self-study environment. It has also contributed to the English language learning aspects, in general terms, and, mainly, to gather significant knowledge of Unespar's *Letras Inglês* undergraduates regarding their self-study practices and motivations to learn English. Furthermore, this work has contributed to the Applied Linguistics field and to further research within the scope.

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## 2. Discussing Abusive Relationship in an English as an Additional Language Intervention Project

Luis Fernando dos Santos  
Francini Percinoto Poliselí Corrêa  
Ana Paula Trevisani

### INTRODUCTION

Music has always been an important artistic expression to Humanity; it “was used in education from Ancient Greece, [...] to harmonize the human being, bringing them back to the healthier standards of thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions”<sup>15</sup> [our translation] (Lenharo apud Castro, Nascimento, War, 2011, p. 20). Castro, Nascimento e Guerra (2011, p. 115) also support the importance of music affirming that “children listen to music since they are little when they are cradled for sleeping listening to lullabies and they live with it for the rest of their lives”<sup>16</sup> [our translation].

Concerning the use of music as a tool to the teaching of English, Lem’s study (2001) asserts that “we can use music in the adult ESL classroom to create a learning environment; to build listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills; to increase vocabulary; and to expand cultural knowledge”<sup>17</sup> [our translation] (Lems, 2001, p. 1). Regarding adolescents, as

15 From the original in Portuguese: “A música era usada na educação da Grécia Antiga, usada para harmonizar o ser humano, trazendo de volta aos padrões mais saudáveis de pensamentos, sentimentos, emoções e ações.”

16 From the original in Portuguese: “As crianças ouvem músicas desde bem pequeninas quando são embaladas para dormir ao som de cantigas de ninar, e passam a conviver com ela por toda sua vida.”

17 From the original in Portuguese: “podemos utilizar música na sala de aula de ESL para adultos para criar um ambiente de aprendizagem; desenvolver habilidades de compreensão auditiva, fala, leitura e

Lenharo (2016) claims, “using music in the classroom can be a great ally of teachers in the arduous task of making learning more enjoyable and interesting, especially if the target audience comprises adolescents or a group of unmotivated individuals with school”<sup>18</sup> [our translation] (p.21).

Considering what has been presented previously and “based on the hypothesis that music is a motivational element for most students and easily accessible to teachers”<sup>19</sup> [our translation] (Lima, 2009 apud Murphey, 1992, p. 2), we believe that, besides using music for the teaching of a foreign language, we can also use their lyrics to discuss social problems. We support such a hypothesis because children and teenagers frequently (if not always) listen to and/or are exposed to foreigner songs every day. A considerable number of these songs address a variety of social problems that are not usually discussed in schools.

Supporting this view, Lima (2017, p. 6) states that planning language activities with the lyrics of songs help teachers develop the textual comprehension activities in the classrooms, because “music reveals traces of social life, represents ways of understanding the world and its phenomena, and thus is a vehicle of various meanings.”<sup>20</sup> [our translation] (Lima, 2017 apud Redding, 2010, p. 376). Besides, the theme of the songs can also help in the development of interdisciplinary activities and critical thinking if teachers desire to develop their students’ sense of citizenship. It is also important to mention that people sometimes sing and/or listen to an international song and do not know what they are singing/listening to, which it is important/vital/essential, as it develops our critical thinking about them in another language. So, the main aim of our action research reported in this chapter was to implement an English teaching project with the song

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escrita; aumentar o vocabulário; e expandir o conhecimento cultural”.

18 From the original in Portuguese: “utilizar a música em sala de aula pode ser um grande aliado dos professores na árdua tarefa de tornar o aprendizado mais prazeroso e interessante, principalmente se o público-alvo for composto por adolescentes ou um grupo de indivíduos desmotivados com a escola.”

19 From the original in Portuguese: “Baseado na hipótese de que a música é um elemento motivacional para a maioria dos alunos e facilmente acessível aos professores.”

20 From the original in Portuguese: “a música revela traços da vida social, representa formas de compreender o mundo e seus fenômenos e, assim, consiste em um veículo de significação diversa.”

“Pearl”<sup>21</sup> composed by Christopher Stewart, Katy Perry and Greg Wells and sung by Katy Perry. Our intention was to develop and implement a lesson plan to improve not only students’ language skills but also their critical awareness of a specific social issue: abusive relationships.

It is important to mention that the idea of this intervention project with such aim, came up as a result of discussions that took course in a Reading and Writing in English II class taught by professor Fernando Lima in the English Teacher Development undergraduate course of one of the authors of this chapter – Santos, at the time, a pre-service teacher. Supervised by professors Corrêa and Trevisani and being a student-member of PIBID<sup>22</sup>, Santos decided, at that occasion (2018–2019) to design a lesson using the genre song as a means to foster in students their critical thinking abilities.

In what refers to this chapter, the goal is to analyze: i) metaphors in the song “Pearl” and its potential to develop critical awareness on abusive relationships; ii) the results of the intervention project in relation to: a) the attainment of the intervention project goal – to develop students’ language skills and raise their critical awareness of a specific social issue: abusive relationships; and iii) the contribution of the reflective diary to Santos’ pre-service teacher formation.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, some benefits of using songs in the English teaching and learning process to children, adolescents, and adults are presented. We also bring some discussion on the importance of talking to students about abusive relationships.

### 2.1 SOME BENEFITS OF USING SONGS IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

At least one teacher has already heard some students saying that they are learning English through songs, and they (teachers) cannot overlook

21 Lyrics available at: <https://www.letras.mus.br/katy-perry/1731996/>

22 Scholarship Program for Teacher Development, supported by the Brazilian Coordination for the Improvement of Superior Education Personnel - CAPES, more extensively explained in section 3.

this opportunity for helping them in the classroom. Lima (2017, p. 380) points out that the song can be used for pedagogical purposes, not just for cultural appreciation. Exploring songs in a classroom can develop an interest in the students in learning a second language. Castro (2011, p.114) considers songs can develop and assist in the way of teaching. However, as noted by Lima (2017, p. 380), we cannot choose any song and request the famous “fill in the blanks” assignment; we need to prepare a lesson plan around the song exploring its possible enigmas, metaphors, and history. Therefore, teachers can use it in their favor in the English class.

Castro in her research developed in 2011 with students of a public school at Petrolina – (Pernambuco– BR) applied a questionnaire addressing students about their learning of English in the classroom when teachers used songs but the results were not positive. Analyzing the questionnaires carried out with the students, Castro noted that the activities proposed with songs did not include listening comprehension activities and grammatical topics. Songs were just used for fun; for entertainment purposes; and for translation activities (Castro, 2011, p. 118). Lima alerts that using songs just for translation activities is a waste of content. In his opinion “the song works as a/function as a ‘carrier’ of words and content that facilitates the learning of a new language by the fact that it often “glue” to the head people to try to sing the lyrics soon after hearing a few times”<sup>23</sup> [our translation] (Lima, 2017 apud Redding 2010, p. 380).

According to Medina (2003), songs can help in the learning process as “there is evidence that music facilitates unintentionally memorizing vocabulary, facilitates writing and is a viable means of acquiring a second language for both children and adults.”<sup>24</sup> (Medina 2003, apud Woyciechowski, 2009 p. 06). Medina (2003) and Lima (2004) draw our attention when they state that “songs in English teaching can also be used to teach listening, vocabulary,

23 From the original in Portuguese: “a música é uma espécie de “portadora” de palavras e conteúdo que facilita a aprendizagem de uma nova língua pelo fato de que muitas vezes ela “gruda” na cabeça, fazendo com que as pessoas tentem cantar a letra logo após ter ouvido algumas vezes.”

24 From the original in Portuguese: “há evidências de que a música facilita a memorização de vocabulário de uma forma não intencional, facilita a escrita e é um meio viável de aquisição de uma segunda língua tanto para crianças quanto para adultos.”

grammar topics, reading, speaking, text production and spelling.”<sup>25</sup> [our translation] (Medina, 2003, Lima, 2004 apud Woyciechowski, 2009 p.06). Nunes (2006) also comment the advantages of using songs to teach English due to the fact that “a song exerts magic on the people, it can bring memories, feelings; it enables people to relax, play, taking them to other places, distracting, connecting people and it also teaches pronunciation, grammar and oral comprehension.”<sup>26</sup> [our translation] (Nunes, 2006 apud Woyciechowski, 2009 p.06). In addition, we understand that teachers can also use songs to talk about social issues, as we will explain in another topic of this paper.

## 2.2 EXPLORING THE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASS

Talking about abusive relationships in classrooms is important not only in public but also in private schools. Mattes and Rocha (2016, p. 9) explain that talking about this theme during puberty is complicated (but necessary) because adolescents want to control everything and everybody, they want to control the life of their partner and because of that, jealousy increases: “The control runs through the clothes, social networks, places that they go and in the friendships that both maintain”<sup>27</sup> [our translation] (Minayo; Assis; Njaine, 2011; Nascimento; Cordeiro, 2011 apud Mattes; Rocha, 2016, p. 10). They also comment that in this period adolescents cannot identify when the relationship is abusive because at this stage of life, they cannot identify some feelings.

We can add another point when we are discussing abusive relationship with our students. We can talk about and reflect on human rights in the English class. A teacher can explain abusive relationships by using some articles from The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), such as:

25 From the original in Portuguese: “as músicas no ensino de inglês podem ser usadas também para ensinar: listening, vocabulário, tópicos gramaticais, leitura, expressão oral, produção de texto e ortografia.”

26 From the original in Portuguese: “a música exerce magia nas pessoas, pode trazer lembranças, sentimentos, serve para relaxar, brincar, levar para outros lugares, distrair, aproximar pessoas e ensinar pronúncia, gramática e compreensão oral.”

27 From the original in Portuguese: “O controle perpassa pelas roupas, redes sociais, lugares que frequentam e nas amizades que ambos mantêm”

Article I: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Article VI: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.”

Article V “No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Article XXX: “Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.”

The Human Rights (1948) concern the dignity of the human being and the person in an abusive relationship lose their dignity, freedom and sometimes is exposed to torture and cruel treatment or punishment, inhuman or degrading practices that go against Human Rights.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

As previously mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, this study was carried out as a result of the implementation of an English teaching intervention project with the song “Pearl” designed by Santos. The project was elaborated and supervised by Professors Trevisani and Corrêa (the three of them, authors of this chapter), while Santos was participating as pre-service teacher in *Programa Institucional de Bolsa de Iniciação à Docência (PIBID28)*. The aim of the intervention project, as we also have mentioned before, was to develop students’ critical awareness about abusive relationships through the genre song in an English as an additional language classroom. The target audience was 35 students between the ages of 15 and 17 from the first year of high school at a public school in Apucarana (Paraná-BR).

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28 The Programa Institucional de Bolsa de Iniciação à Docência (PIBID), supported by Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) allowing the insertion of undergraduates in the daily life of the schools of the basic education system, during the undergraduate period, so that they know better the routine of the rooms. BRASIL. Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior. Edital PIBID no.07/2018. Brasília, DF, 2018. Available at: <[http://www.capes.gov.br/imagens/stories/download/editais/Edital\\_061\\_2013\\_PIBID.pdf](http://www.capes.gov.br/imagens/stories/download/editais/Edital_061_2013_PIBID.pdf)>. Accessed in: October 29, 2020.

The intervention project started to be designed in 2018 and was applied by Santos in 2019. Data was gathered through Santos' reflective diaries about his implementation. Three lesson plans were designed to be applied (see appendices A, B and C) in November 2019. However, because of some unforeseen events in terms of time availability, Santos was only able to implement two of the three lessons planned<sup>29</sup>.

Machado (apud Corrêa 2015, p. 119) defends reflective diaries to be a rich and new research tool/instrument, which aims at the evaluation of educational action. With these reflective diaries' analyses, we expect to emphasize the positive and negative points about the intervention, as well as the reflection on the development or not of student's awareness about an abusive relationship. As an action research project, we also expect to point out what the pre-service teacher (Santos) perceives as a need of change in his practice in order to more fully achieve the aims of the designed intervention project: to improve not only students' language skills but also their critical awareness of a specific social issue: abusive relationships.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSES

In this section, the analysis presented is twofold. First of all, there is a brief overview about the lyrics of the song "Pearl" and its metaphors, which worked to support the pre-service teacher planning process. The second part presents a report of the implementation process intertwined with Santos's reflexive teaching diary notes.

##### 4.1 METAPHORS IN THE SONG "PEARL" AND ITS POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP CRITICAL AWARENESS ON ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Released on August 24, 2010, "Pearl" is the 10th of 12 songs presented in the third record album by the North-American singer Katy Perry. As we mentioned previously in this paper, the lyrics of this song contains an admirable number of metaphors that transmit the message of a person who is brilliant; however, there is another person who wants to turn her light off by keeping her in a shell.

<sup>29</sup> There was a strike in public schools, which hindered our intervention project to be fully applied.

We will present parts of the lyrics and analyze its metaphors, as well as the grammatical devices existing within the song:

She is a pyramid/ But with him she's just a grain of sand/ This love's too strong like Mice and Men/ Squeezing out the life that should be let in" (Perry, 2010, our emphasis).

In the first part of the lyrics we can start talking about the first metaphors presented by the singer that represents greatness and smallness: "pyramid" as opposed to "grain of sand". These metaphors exacerbate the differences between the physical dimensions, being both extended metaphors, that is, according to Sommer and Weiss (1996, p. 9), "a simple metaphor as one with a principal subject and a subsidiary subject." The composers of the lyrics use the word pyramid to demonstrate how big and important the person was because when someone thinks about pyramids the first thought that springs to mind is of something big; important; magnificent. On the following verse, when mentioning that with him she is just a grain of sand, we understand that the purpose was to show how much he was able to gradually decrease her greatness.

In the third verse of the first stanza, to describe the love between the woman and the man, she uses the adverb "too" followed by the adjective "strong", thus forming the adverbial phrase "too strong". This word "too" has a negative semantic meaning. When employed in a given sentence, it generally reads as something bad, grammatically speaking. As Murphy (1990, p.172) explained, this word (too) when/if employed with an adjective conveys the idea that the subject or object of the sentence obtained more than what they might have initially wanted or more than what was indicated. Then, by using similes -- which is nothing but a comparison between two unlike objects or ideas (Sommer; Weiss, 1996, p. 9) -- The composers of the song seem to compare their loves to the short story of John Steinbeck "Mice and Men" that tell the story of two men who are different but when together are strong; nevertheless, this strength is *too strong* which ends up being a bad thing after all.

We also observed in the second stanza of the song that each metaphor contains two concepts:



She was a hurricane/ But now she's just a gust of wind/ She used to set the sails of a thousand ships/ Was a force to be reckoned with (Perry, 2010, our emphasis).

In the case of the noun hurricane, there is the concept of greatness and strength. The hurricane is a very strong wind that can destroy everything, but when lyrics express that the song's main character is currently just a gust of wind, we can understand that the person has become something small, weak and insignificant when compared to a hurricane.

Another interesting thing in this stanza is the English grammatical structure “used to”. This expression is often used to talk about habits from the past, about things that were routine and are no longer done. We get this idea when the lyrics states: “She used to set the sails [...]”, as this expression was chosen to show us something that is not a habitual action anymore.

In the third stanza, the composers of the song use female figures to demonstrate how the song's leading/main character was important:

She could be a Statue of Liberty / She could be a Joan of Arc / But he's scared of the light that's inside of her / So he keeps her in the dark” (Perry, 2010, our emphasis).

When it is mentioned that “she could be a Statue of Liberty”, we see again that the singer uses something unforgettable as a historic landmark for the description of the woman. Then, the lyrics resorts to both architectural history (the Statue of Liberty) and historical agents (Joana of Arc) who were magnanimous. It is chosen a woman who had a historical representation, with an active role at the time that women had no voice. The reference to Joana of Arc shows us that a homage is being paid to the woman who managed to be great, which means that each word present in the song plays a specific function and role giving shape to the images brought by the metaphors.

Ferber (1999) holds the view of that light and dark “are probably the most fundamental and inescapable terms, used literally or metaphorically, in the description of anything in life Light and darkness or literature”. We can see an ambiguity in these metaphors because light and dark are making reference to the pearl and the woman. And we cannot forget that,

in this verse, we can see a metonym that, according to Sommer and Weiss (1996), is the replacement/substitution of the name or an attribute of one thing for the name of another. This literary device is occasionally used as a metaphor because, sometimes, the woman is shown in the song as being the very representation of the pearl.

In the fourth stanza and the last that we will analyze for the purpose of this chapter, Perry (2010) uses again the grammatical structure “used to” and mention two other metaphors:

Oh, she used to be a pearl, oh / Yeah, she used to rule the world, oh  
/ Can't believe she's become a shell of herself / 'Cause she used to  
be a pearl” (PERRY, 2010 – our emphasis).

As we have already pinpointed in this section, this grammatical structure is used to talk about habits from the past and when it was mentioned that the song’s main character “used to rule the world” we can understand what a strong and independent woman she was. “Pearl” and “Shell” are the main metaphors in the song because through them we can understand the main idea of the song. As Feber (1999) described in his *Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, the pearl is known for its beauty and rarity, which means that the abuser of Kate’s song might have been jealous of the main character’s beauty, rarity and shine and because of that this person is kept in the dark, in this case, which is represented by the poetic image of the “shell”.

Another interesting thing to be taken into consideration is that the pearl inside the shell does not have significance if nobody sees her beauty, rarity and shine. For this reason, the contraposition of light and dark metaphors is the main/most prominent literary device used in the song to represent the abuser and the abused subjects of the song.

As mentioned in our theoretical framework, there are many studies about the themes raised by the song’s metaphors and other literary devices and given the importance of discussing abusive relationships in the classroom, we designed an intervention project for students of a public school as we have mentioned previously in the methodology section. In the following topic we will analyze two of Santos’ reflexive diaries.

## 4.2 THE INTERVENTION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

As we have already mentioned in the methodology section, one of the authors (Santos – as a pre-service teacher at that moment) implemented an intervention English teaching project in a public school in Apucarana – Paraná in 2019. Afterwards, he took some time to reflect upon/analyze his practice through the reflexive diaries he wrote just after applying the lessons. In this section we describe how the project implementation took place and we also describe what, in our view, was promoted in the students from the public school after the implementation of the project.

In the first lesson, the main objective was having the students understand the theme of the song, thus reaching the point of abusive relationships. Santos started the class asking students to make a circle. As he was installing the projector and organizing the papers, he asked one student to come to the blackboard and play for “hangman” with the word “Pearl” (attachment A). At the end of the game, he elicited the meaning of the word. Some students answered something like *Pedra* or *Pera*, and Santos explained them the meaning of the word and that “Pearl” is a song by Katy Perry. He wrote in the blackboard twenty words and explained nine of the twenty words were in the song; so, they needed choose nine words; write in the squares; and draw the meaning – they could use the dictionary or the internet to help them out (attachments B). Santos explained to the students that they were going to play the game Bingo (attachments B). Thereby, as they were drawing, Santos played five songs so that the activity could be more fun. Once everyone had finished their drawings, he put the song “Pearl” three times so that students could identify which of the words they wrote and drew were in the song.

Thereafter Santos asked them more specifically about the lyrics, whether they understood the meaning of the words and metaphors. He introduced all the metaphors that make up the song and explained what each metaphor meant and why it was present in the song. At the end of the explanation, he also asked them about the main purpose of the song and what the singer wanted to say behind all the metaphors. As designers

of the intervention project, we believe we have been able to achieve our goals because one student said the song was about an abusive relationship between a man and a woman.

In the second day, the main purpose was to have students develop the theme and learn more about it. As Santos had already given the first lesson of his intervention project to the students, he started the class asking them to make a circle for a discussion about abusive relationships. He organized the discussion by reviewing the lyrics of the song Pearl, in relation to presence of the metaphors and some of its grammatical structures. Subsequently, he made some questions to instigate the students, such as: “What is the main message of the song?”; “What did you understand about the song?”; and “In your opinion, does the song talk about friends or a couple?”. Students’ replies showed that they had different points of view about the meaning of the text and also some students could identify the song was about a woman who is in an abusive relationship.

After the discussion, he played the video “Don’t Confuse Love & Abusive”<sup>30</sup>. Some students started talking while the video was being reproduced; however, when Santos played the second video “Dealing with an Abusive Relationship”<sup>31</sup>, he realized the students were more attentive. He thus hypothesized that could have happened since the second video showed some strong scenes that called their attention. When the video ended, they stayed some minutes in silence and Santos started explaining how they could identify when the relationship is or has become abusive.

In the course of the discussion, Santos realized some students were worried concerning their own relationships and also with their parents and friends’ relationships. The students reported a lot of stories about abusive relationship, some personal stories and others about people they knew. Among these stories, one of them called our attention. One student (a girl) told Santos that her boyfriend made her life better by being abusive, because before she met him, according to her, she used

30 Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1L6HB97lbrQ> (accessed on November 8th, 2019)

31 The video was removed from the

to wear some short clothes and walk with bad guys. Her friends replied that he was not a good person, and he had all the signs which Santos had previously presented to identify an abusive person. These comments called our attention because it was possible to note that students had apparently understood what an abusive relationship is about.

We conclude that the participation of the students during Santos' implementation was gratifying because it promoted a rich debate among students. As we have already said, some students brought personal examples about them, their parents, friends, neighbors and so on. In Santos words: "our goals were achieved, because some students came to tell us about their relationships and how they could not realize that their relationships were abusive". At this point, it was possible to confirm the relevance of having approached the theme with this group of students, as authors presented in our literature review have highlighted that in this period adolescents cannot identify when the relationship is abusive because at this stage of life, they cannot identify some feelings. (Minayo; Assis; Njaine, 2011; Nascimento; Cordeiro, 2011 *apud* Mattes; Rocha, 2016).

We also observed that the reflective diaries produced by Santos (as a pre-service teacher at the time of the implementation of the intervention project) also contributed to his initial formation as a teacher. As limitations while implementing the project, Santos pointed out: i) some technological problems reproducing the videos; ii) the lack of students' interest about the class and the song; iii) short amount of time to develop the activities (two forty-five-minute classes and the strike by teachers and professors from universities and public schools, which hindered his intervention project to be fully applied).

Another reflection which came out from Santos's diaries was about the importance of asking students about songs they enjoy, because, in his view, the interest of students in the class would be more significant if he had done that. In Santos' opinion this would bring to the classroom and to the student the possibility of giving meaning to their particular worlds. Santos also concluded that the activities could be still more significant to his target public if the activities had been planned alongside with the

in-service teacher responsible for the students' classroom on which he applied his intervention project.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Primarily, the goal of our study was to analyze the implementation of a teaching English project with the song "Pearl" (composed by Stewart, Perry and Wells) in order to develop not only students' language skills but also their critical awareness of a specific social issue: abusive relationships. As we noted in Santos's reflexive diary, we could understand that this aim was achieved mainly because the project promoted relevant discussions with the students about abusive relationships through the understanding of metaphors used in the song.

Secondly, by the remarks Santos pointed out about his own implementation, it is possible to infer that reflexivity, by means of the diary instrument plays a role in helping student-teachers navigate the multiple and often-conflicting discourses of teaching (Moore, 2004). We may thus conclude he was able to detect where he should change his practice if he had to apply an intervention with the same objectives again.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendice A – 1st lesson plan

	UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DO PARANÁ – UNESPAR PRÓ-REITORIA DE ENSINO DE GRADUAÇÃO PROGRAMA INSTITUCIONAL DE BOLSA DE INICIAÇÃO À DOCÊNCIA – PIBID SUBPROJETO DE LÍNGUA INGLESA – Campus de Apucarana	
<b>PLANO DE AULA</b>		
Nome da Escola Colégio Estadual Heitor C. A. Furtado		
Nome do Professor Luiz Fernando dos Santos		
Nível: ( ) Fundamental ( x ) Médio	Série: 1ª	Turma: A
Turno: ( x ) Manhã ( ) Tarde ( ) Noite	Data: 05/11/2019	
No. de aulas: 3	Horário: 09h10min - 10h00min	Duração da aula: 50 minutos
Conteúdo: Estratégias de leitura e metáforas		
Objetivo Geral: Aprender e analisar uma música através de metáforas e estratégias de leitura.		
Objetivos Específicos		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analisar letras de músicas;</li> <li>Desenvolver o pensamento críticos dos alunos através da música.</li> <li>Usar o gênero canção para desenvolver habilidades linguísticas.</li> </ul>		
<b>Procedimentos de Ensino</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>O professor/ pibidiano iniciará a aula se apresentando aos alunos. (3 min)</li> <li>Após os cumprimentos o professor escolherá um aluno para comandar o jogo <i>Hangman</i> com a palavra <i>Pearl</i> enquanto o professor prepara o projetor para dar início a aula. (5 min)</li> <li>Após o jogo de interação, o professor exibirá a palavra <i>Pearl</i> no projetor e perguntará aos alunos: <i>Do you know what is pearl?</i>. Depois de respondida a pergunta, o professor entregará aos alunos uma tabela (apêndice I) com nove quadrados. O professor projetará vinte palavras, as palavras serão: <i>pyramid; shell; sea; ocean; Statue of Liberty; Joan of Arc; abusive; steal; world; dark; boy; cement; avalanche; hurricane; girl; relationship; mice; gold; ring; wind</i> e explicará que algumas dessas palavras estarão na música que eles ouvirão e que eles precisarão escolher nove que eles supõem que estejam na música e escrever uma em cada quadrado, depois de escritas com o auxílio de um dicionário ou internet os alunos deverão desenhar o que as palavras que eles escreverem representam. Após os alunos desenharem o professor explicará que irá reproduzir a música três vezes e os alunos deverão marcar um X nas palavras cantadas na música que eles escreveram/desenharam nos quadrados. Ganhará o aluno que completar com X os nove quadrados. (20 min)</li> <li>Após o jogo o professor analisará junto com os alunos as ideias centrais de cada estrofe da música usando as estratégias de leitura: <i>skimming</i> e <i>scanning</i> e as metáforas encontradas na música com as perguntas: <i>What is Statue of Liberty?</i>, <i>Have you ever read Mice and Men?</i>, <i>What is a shell?</i>. (20 min)</li> </ul>		
<b>Recursos</b>	<b>Procedimentos de Avaliação</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projetor;</li> <li>Caixa de som;</li> <li>Internet;</li> <li>Dicionário.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>O professor irá avaliar os alunos através da capacidade dos alunos de analisar e interpretar a música.</li> </ul>	
<b>Referências Bibliográficas</b>		
FERRO, Jefferson. <i>Around the world: introdução à leitura em língua inglesa</i> . 3 ed. Ver. E atual. 2010		
PERRY, K. <i>Pearl, Teenage Dream</i> . Los Angeles / Capitol Records. 2010		

Source: own authorship

## Appendice B – 2nd lesson plan

		<b>UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DO PARANÁ – UNESPAR</b> <b>PRÓ-REITORIA DE ENSINO DE GRADUAÇÃO</b> <b>PROGRAMA INSTITUCIONAL DE BOLSA DE INICIAÇÃO À</b> <b>DOCÊNCIA – PIBID</b> <b>SUBPROJETO DE LÍNGUA INGLESA –</b> <b>Campus de Apucarana</b>			
<b>PLANO DE AULA</b>					
Nome da Escola Colégio Estadual Heitor C. A. Furtado					
Nome do Professor Luis Fernando dos Santos					
Nível: ( ) Fundamental (x) Médio			Série: 1º		Turma: A
Turno: (x) Manhã ( ) Tarde ( ) Noite				Data: 08/11/2019	
No. de aulas: 3		Horário: 09h10min - 10h00min		Duração da aula: 50 min	
<b>Conteúdo:</b> Relacionamento abusivo					
<b>Objetivo Geral:</b> Aprender e identificar o que é o relacionamento abusivo através do gênero canção.					
<b>Objetivos Específicos</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discutir sobre o tema relacionamento abusivo;</li> <li>• Desenvolver o pensamento críticos dos alunos através da música.</li> <li>• Debater sobre o relacionamento abusivo.</li> <li>• Usar o gênero canção para discutir o relacionamento abusivo.</li> <li>• Desenvolver o pensamento crítico sobre o problema social em si.</li> <li>• Usar o gênero canção para desenvolver habilidades linguísticas.</li> </ul>					
<b>Procedimentos de Ensino</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O professor fará uma revisão do conteúdo trabalhado na última aula e dará início ao novo conteúdo. Enquanto o professor estiver revisando a letra da música, fará perguntas para instigar os alunos: <i>What is the main message of the song, What did you understand about the song?, Does the song talk about friends or a couple?</i>. Depois que os alunos responderem as perguntas o professor dará engajamento para o tema principal da aula relacionamento abusivo: <i>What is an abusive relationship? Do you know someone that is in an abusive relationship? Have you ever been in an abusive relationship?</i>. Respondida as perguntas o professor reproduzirá um vídeo chamado <i>Don't Confuse Love &amp; Abusive</i>. (20 min)</li> <li>• Logo após o vídeo o professor explicará como os alunos conseguem identificar o relacionamento abusivo e reproduzirá o vídeo <i>Dealing With An Abusive Relationship</i> e abrirá uma roda de conversa para que os alunos possam expor suas opiniões. (25 min)</li> <li>• O professor pedirá em forma de tarefa de casa que os alunos produzam um vídeo explicando o que vem ser o relacionamento abusivo usando a sua criatividade. (5 min)</li> </ul>					
<b>Recursos</b>			<b>Procedimentos de Avaliação</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projeto;</li> <li>• Caixa de som.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O professor irá avaliar os alunos através da capacidade dos alunos de analisar e interpretar a música.</li> </ul>		
<b>Referências Bibliográficas</b>					
LISA, Collins. "But What Can I Do?": Helping Victims of Domestic Violence. Teacher to Teacher. Enhancing Adult Literacy in the State of Ohio. Ohio, 2000.					
PERRY, K. Pearl, <i>Teenage Dream</i> . Los Angeles / Capitol Records, 2010.					
SANTOS, Amanda. <i>Discurso, Moralidade e Experiência Amorosa: narrativas sobre relacionamentos abusivos e a produção da subjetividade contemporânea</i> . Dissertação (Mestrado em Comunicação e Cultura) – Escola de Comunicação, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2018.					

Source: own authorship

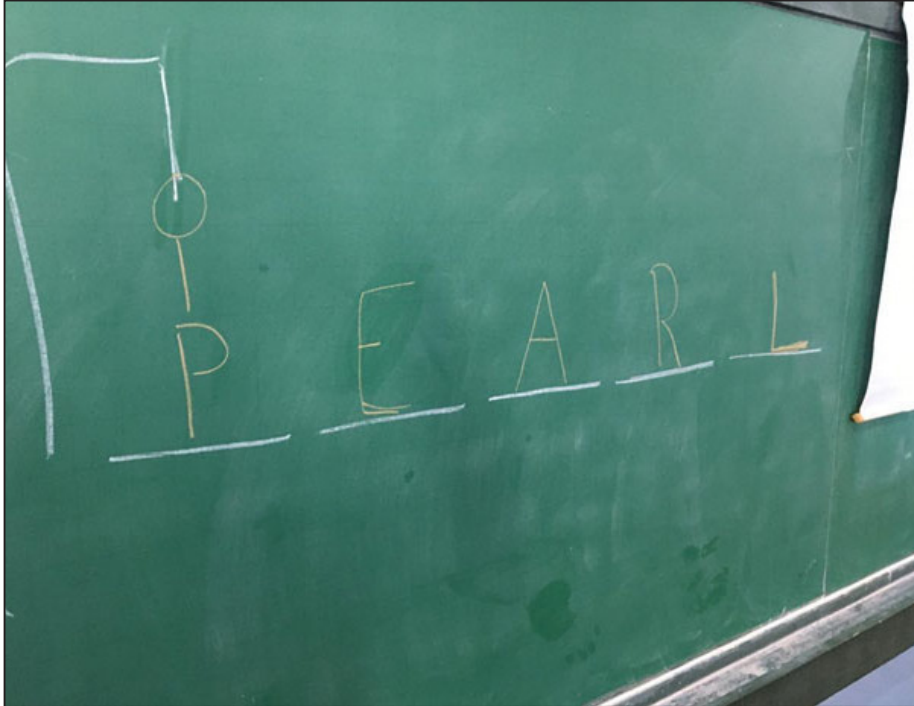
## Appendice C – 3rd lesson plan

		<b>UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DO PARANÁ – UNESPAR</b> <b>PRÓ-REITORIA DE ENSINO DE GRADUAÇÃO</b> <b>PROGRAMA INSTITUCIONAL DE BOLSAS DE INICIAÇÃO À DOCÊNCIA – PIBID</b> <b>SUBPROJETO DE LÍNGUA INGLESA –</b> <b>Campus de Apucarana</b>			
<b>PLANO DE AULA</b>					
Nome da Escola Colégio Estadual Heitor C. A. Furtado.					
Nome do Professor Luis Fernando dos Santos					
Nível: ( ) Fundamental ( x ) Médio		Série: 1º		Turma: A	
Turno: ( x ) Manhã ( ) Tarde ( ) Noite				Data: 22/11/2019	
No. de aulas: 1		Horário: 09h10min - 10h00min		Duração da aula: 50 min	
Conteúdo: Relacionamento abusivo					
Objetivo Geral: Apresentar o trabalho realizado pelos alunos e revisar os assuntos abordados nas últimas aulas.					
Objetivos Específicos					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discutir sobre o tema relacionamento abusivo;</li> <li>• Desenvolver o pensamento críticos dos alunos através da música;</li> <li>• Usar o gênero vídeo para discutir sobre o relacionamento abusivo;</li> <li>• Desenvolver o pensamento crítico sobre o problema social em si.</li> </ul>					
<b>Procedimentos de Ensino</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O professor fará uma revisão do conteúdo trabalhado nas últimas aulas e dará início as apresentações por parte dos alunos. (25 min)</li> <li>• Logo após as apresentações o professor entregará um questionário (Apêndice I) para que os alunos respondam sobre a aula. (15 min)</li> <li>• Ao final o professor mostrará uma caixa aos alunos com conchas coladas e questiona-los sobre o que eles aprenderam ao decorrer das três aulas. Ao final o professor quebrará a caixa e entregará uma lembrancinha em forma de pérola para cada aluno. (10 min)</li> </ul>					
<b>Recursos</b>			<b>Procedimentos de Avaliação</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projeto;</li> <li>• Caixa de som;</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O professor irá avaliar os alunos através das apresentações.</li> </ul>		
<b>Referências Bibliográficas</b>					
LISA, Collins. "But What Can I Do?": Helping Victims of Domestic Violence. Teacher to Teacher: Enhancing Adult Literacy in the State of Ohio. Ohio, 2000.					
PERRY, K. Pearl, Teenage Dream. Los Angeles / Capitol Records, 2010.					
SANTOS, Amanda. Discurso, Moralidade e Experiência Amorosa: narrativas sobre relacionamentos abusivos e a produção da subjetividade contemporânea. Dissertação (Mestrado em Comunicação e Cultura) – Escola de Comunicação, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2018.					

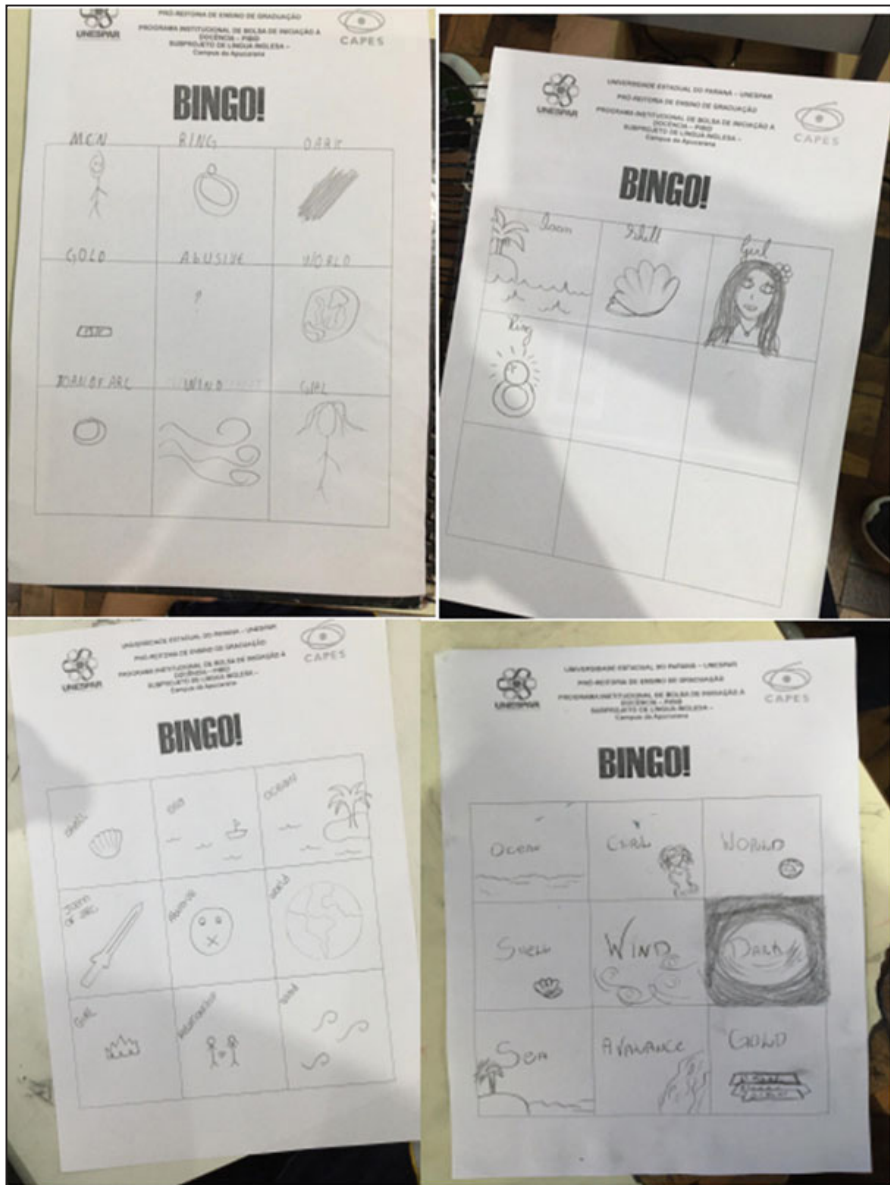
Source: own authorship

# ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Hangman with the word “Pearl”



Attachment B – Students drawings and Bingo



# 3. Oral-practice in the Teaching of English as an Additional Language

Hugo Augusto Costa  
Francini Percinoto Poliselí Corrêa

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Considering one of the authors's (Costa) own experiences as an English language student in the *Língua Estrangeira Moderna* discipline in public school, he found a lack of practice considering the oral exposition. While attending his initial formation course at Unespar – Apucarana campus, he had been offered several disciplines which provided him opportunity to explore different approaches and methodologies and some meaningful experiences to develop teaching and learning abilities. The communicative approach, the genre-based approaches, the development of critical thinking, and working with interdisciplinarity, are some examples of ways of teaching that fascinated Costa as a student-teacher. He found out that all this knowledge could be used in order to develop English speaking competence considerably.

Back then in his school years, “Base Nacional Comum Curricular” (BNCC) had only been implemented for a few years. This document, from 2017, guides the teaching in the whole country of Brazil, and, consequently, the learning. Not only was Costa was glad when studying the document and finding advances and attention to the oral skill, but also thoughtful if the document's implementation has been bringing results and changes to the reality he used to face as a student.

Having this in mind, we decided to develop research to analyze oral-practice activities in the teaching of English as an additional language in remote classes (Google Meet) in a public-school context, in relation to

the prescriptions of the BNCC document and students' participation. The analyzes were guided by the following research questions: to what extent are oral-skill activities presented in the observed English class in this public-school context researched? What are the similarities and/or differences between what is recommended by the BNCC document and the oral-activities developed during the observed class? When brought to class, how do students engage in the speaking activities proposed? By bringing Costa's observing classes in the internship, real classes were analyzed to understand which goals expressed on BNCC were being achieved or not.

It is important to mention, still in this introduction section, that the remote classes via Google Meet happened as a consequence of the pandemic moment, which haunted us all during 2020 and 2021. Because of that, classes at school were being attended online as a way to keep the social distance. In the state of Paraná, where the school, which is the focus of this study, was located, kept their students active. One way for doing that were the video calls with teachers and their students.

For this purpose, this paper has been divided into four parts. The first part begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and looks at school documents that establish competences to be developed during the years of study. The reader finds some excerpts and reflections on the teaching and learning that are guided by school documents. In the second part, methodology is found describing and justifying our choices for our study. The third part brings the results found and discusses them thoroughly. Finally, the fourth part deals with the conclusion of our study and gives a brief summary and critique of the findings.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AND THEIR RELATION TO SCHOOL DOCUMENTS**

The teaching and learning at schools are guided by school documents that prescribe the contents that will be worked throughout the years of study. The first section of this paper examines the document *Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC)*, which is one of these documents that are developed to



guide teachers in their practice and, consequently, students in their studies. The starting point for BNCC's production is overcoming the flunking and school leaving among high-schoolers especially. BNCC was elaborated and produced with the collaborative work and discussions of the society, specialists in different areas of study, and Brazilian teachers and educators.

There is currently a great debate on the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular's* implementation, not only in terms of the theory brought by it, but also the current outcomes obtained by teachers and students. For its implementation, Branco (2017), stated that it was possible to anticipate that educational professionals would need to be trained and enabled for that matter.

Our aim with this study was not to take a position in favor or in opposition to the BNCC document, but to analyze the way that the oral skill is portrayed in the document and, also, the guidelines to the teacher's work.

### 2.1.1 BASE NACIONAL COMUM CURRICULAR'S COMPETENCES

Previously to its development, other documents oriented the process of teaching in order to establish valid educational standards; as the document "Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação (LDB)", to exemplify. The BNCC document does not come to repress the previous ones, but to bring a new approach to teaching and learning. It lines up not only the contents, but also the competencies students are meant to develop in each step during their study life. Commenting on this, it is said:

When saying the curricular contents are of service of competencies development, the LDB document guides the definition of essential learning, and not only of the minimum contents to be taught (BRASIL, 2017, p. 11, translated).<sup>32</sup>

There are ten of these competencies. When it comes to language teaching and learning, one of the competencies is related to this process when students develop the usage of different kinds of speech, being "verbal [...], corporal, visual, sonorous and digital [...] to express oneself and share

32 From the original: Ao dizer que os conteúdos curriculares estão a serviço do desenvolvimento de competências, a LDB orienta a definição das aprendizagens essenciais, e não apenas dos conteúdos mínimos a ser ensinados.

pieces of information, experiences, ideas and feelings in different contexts”<sup>33</sup> (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 9, translated).

Considering the additional language teaching in this brand-new document, the English language receives a new definition compared to its previous mentions on other school documents. On BNCC, the conception of the English language is the one of *lingua franca*. As defined on the Base Nacional Comum Curricular document on page 242, the English language is not considered as one from foreigners only, but a language that is spoken across the world and may be used with different linguistic and cultural repertoires. “To situate the English language in its status of *lingua franca* implies the comprehension that certain beliefs – as the one there is a “better English” to be taught [...] needs to be relativized” (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 242, translated)<sup>34</sup>.

The English taught will work with different focuses to develop the language as a whole, practicing the multiple abilities in it; such as oral practice, reading, writing, linguistic knowledge, and intercultural dimension. All of these focuses are related to the social practices in which the language would be used: “it’s the language in usage, being always hybrid, polyphonic and multimodal”<sup>35</sup> (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 245, translated). As presented later on, still on page 245, this focus on the language, like writing, for example, should not be the starting point to the language use. But it is from the usage of the language – as a dialogue, for instance – that the teacher will present the linguistic knowledge, like grammar and vocabulary.

### 2.1.2 ORAL SKILL CONTENTS ESTABLISHED FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH TO 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

As mentioned before, the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* works with multiple competencies to be developed during the school years. When it comes to the specific competencies to the English language discipline, there

33 From the original: Verbal [...], corporal, visual, sonora e digital [...] para se expressar e partilhar informações, experiências, ideias e sentimentos em diferentes contextos.

34 From the original: Situar a língua inglesa em seu status de língua franca implica compreender que determinadas crenças – como a de que há um “inglês melhor” para se ensinar [...] precisam ser relativizadas.

35 From the original: É a língua em uso, sempre híbrida, polifônica e multimodal.

are six of them which are meant to be advanced throughout the middle school years. Some of these are: to communicate in the English language; to identify similarities and differences between the English language and the student's mother tongue or other languages; to elaborate linguistic-discursive repertoires of the English language and recognize the linguistic diversity as a right and to value the heterogeneous usages of it (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 246). These competencies will guide the teacher's planning to explore the contents which will be used in their classes.

In each grade at school, students are expected to be exposed to certain practices which are essential to the phase they are in; then, in the following year, new studies will be developed considering previous knowledge. For 7<sup>th</sup> grade, to exemplify, in the reading axis, students are exposed to reading practices of several texts in English: verbal, verb-visual, and multimodal (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 252). When it comes to the writing axis, practices of writing in English related to students' daily life. (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 254). For the linguistic knowledge axis, lexicon and grammar studies are conducted, looking for practicing the linguistic analysis to reflect on the functioning of the English language (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 254). Finally, in the intercultural dimension axis, reflections about aspects related to culture interaction – as students' and the ones from speakers of English, are defined (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 254).

When it comes to the oral axis, which is the focus of the paper, for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the BNCC document recommends the development of “practices of oral comprehension and production of the English language, in different face-to-face or simulated discursive contexts, with a repertoire of different speeches, including the speech of the teacher”<sup>36</sup> (BRASIL, BNCC, p. 252).

On BNCC, there are specific abilities that may be worked in other years of study as well, as it may be meaningful to students. But to analyze the oral practice in this case study, the thematic units and the objects of knowledge considered are the ones established for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They are the defined as in the following table:

36 From the original: Práticas de compreensão e produção oral de língua inglesa, em diferentes contextos discursivos presenciais ou simulados, com repertório de falas diversas, incluída a fala do professor.

**Table 1 – Thematic units and objects of knowledge for 7th grade in the oral axis**

Thematic units	Objects of knowledge
Discursive interaction	Functions and uses of the English language: coexistence and classroom collaboration. Investigative practices.
Oral comprehension	Strategies for understanding oral texts: previous knowledge. Understanding of oral texts of a descriptive or narrative nature.
Oral production	Production of oral texts, with mediation by the teacher.

**Source:** BRASIL, BNCC, p. 252 (Our translation)

At the end of the four final years in middle school, possible outcomes are expected from students: they may have explored much of the language and its context and could be able to make use of it.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In order to answer our research questions, set out in the introduction to our study, we established as a general objective to analyze oral-practice activities in the teaching of English as an additional language in remote classes (Google Meet) in a public-school context, in relation to the prescriptions of the BNCC document and students' participation. As specific objectives, we established: to identify oral-practice activities in the teaching of English as an additional language in remote classes in a public-school context; to establish the (in)coherence between the oral practice observed and the ones recommend by BNCC; and to understand how students participate in the oral-practice activities observed.

This case study focused on the 7th-grade group of a public school in the state of Paraná. Criteria for selecting this group was the fact that one of the authors of this paper (Costa) started his project during the middle school leg of his internship as part of his formation course in English Language and Literature. Secondly, the group was chosen because it had the best oral production, both in the additional and mother tongue. This second reason, therefore, would allow the authors to analyze the on-service teacher's activities and students' participation regarding the development of their oral skills.

It was decided that the best method to adopt for this investigation was of a qualitative nature and, for data approach, an interpretive analysis of data content was led. Data were gathered and registered in one of the authors' reflexive diary (Costa's), (found attached), on July 5th, 2021, while he observed a remote English class on a Web platform for the said group. These data of activities developed by the on-service teacher responsible for the observed group were analyzed in relation to what the BNCC document establishes for the development of oral skills in the 7th grade in the English as an additional language class. For this purpose, table 1 (see topic 2.1.2) was used to guide our analysis. The activities developed in class were collected and thereafter analyzed on table 3 (see results and discussion section) in order to establish the rate of speaking activities when compared to the development of the other abilities.

As an analysis criteria to answer the research question of analyzing speakers' oral participation during the class observed, the deductive study was developed according to the procedure used by Fogaça (2010), Lenharo and Cristovão (2016). They are categorized as general responsive act, restricted responsive act, general spontaneous act, restricted spontaneous act, and spontaneous responsive. These categories mentioned are defined by students' responses and participation in the activities proposed by the teacher, as translated into English and shown in the following table.

**Table 2 – Categories and criteria for analyzing students' participation**

Action Classifications	Possible Responses
General Responsive Act (GRA)	It is observed in students' speaking shift if they were just answering something that they were asked or some task given previously, by the teacher or by another student. In this participation, the student engages with the whole group.
General Spontaneous Act (GSA)	It is observed in students' speaking shift if they were just answering something that they were asked or some task given previously, by the teacher or by another student. In this participation, the student engages only with the classmate next to them or with the teacher.

Action Classifications	Possible Responses
Restricted Responsive Act (RRA)	It is observed in students' speaking shift if the practices of language emerged from themselves and not from the interpellation of someone else. In this participation, the student engages with the whole group.
Restricted Spontaneous Act (RSA)	It is observed in students' speaking shift if the practices of language emerged from themselves and not from the interpellation of someone else. In this participation, the student engages only with the classmate next to them or with the teacher.
Spontaneous Responsive Act (SRA)	It is observed in students' speaking shift if, despite answering an activity or a previous speaking shift, they position themselves about the topic which is being discussed making their participation critical and not just responsive.

**Source:** FOGAÇA, 2010; LENHARO; CRISTOVÃO, 2016, p. 59 (Our translation)

When writing the reflexive diary, ethical procedures were taken regarding the on-service teacher and students' confidentiality.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As presented in the methodology section, the context of the class observed was still remote. This way, the format of the class was online on a Web platform because of the social distancing caused by the pandemic. With that being considered, it was established that in the state of Paraná, students would have access to recorded online classes named "Aula Paraná", which were produced and distributed by the state. These classes could be consumed via YouTube and/or the local open channel on TV. Added to this resource, students also had to participate in synchronous classes led by their own on-service teachers.

Having said that, the teacher of the class observed used the slides prepared for "Aula Paraná" and reviewed with their class the contents studied autonomously by students through the recorded classes offered by the state of Paraná.

To answer our first research objective (to identify oral-practice activities in the teaching of English as an additional language in remote classes in a public-school context), we present, in table 3, the activities developed

in the online class observed, in which the main objective, as possible to conclude throughout the class, was the linguistic knowledge axis, lexicon and grammar studies.

**Table 3** – Actions, actors and abilities explored in the class observed

Activities developed by the teacher of the observed class when presenting the content of polysemy proposed by the slides in the 'Aula Paraná' platform	Abilities				Actor and actions	
	W	R	L	S	Teacher	Student
1. Think about it: to approach the topic, the teacher asks two open questions to students in Portuguese and students answer in Portuguese.				X	Asks	Answers
2. Warm up: the teacher asks in English and translates the question into Portuguese, which was on the slides of "Aula Paraná". Some students answer with short oral answers in English.				X	Asks and translates	Answers
3. Warm up: orally, the teacher reads and relates, with students' help, in English the name of the TV program to the definitions. At the end, the worked vocabulary is read by the teacher and repeated by the students.				X	Reads and relates	Relates
4. Polysemy: orally, the teacher reviews what polysemy is once students have already studied the content. The review is conducted in Portuguese by the teacher.			X		Reviews	Listens
5. Polysemy: more interactively, the teacher quickly explains, in Portuguese, what polysemy is and gives an example. Then, the teacher asks the class in Portuguese for examples. Students give examples in Portuguese.			X	X	Explains and brings examples	Listens and gives examples
6. Other cases of polysemy are exemplified, by the teacher, in the English language, but the teacher uses Portuguese to talk to students.			X		Brings examples	Listens

Activities developed by the teacher of the observed class when presenting the content of polysemy proposed by the slides in the 'Aula Paraná' platform	Abilities				Actor and actions	
	W	R	L	S	Teacher	Student
7. The text of an advertisement is shown by the teacher; students listen to the text that the teacher reads in English and answer the questions on the content studied orally and in Portuguese.		X	X	X	Brings examples by presenting a text	Listens and answers
8. The text of a T-shirt is shown by the teacher; students listen to the text that the teacher reads in English and answer the questions orally, in Portuguese.		X	X	X	Brings examples by presenting a text	Listens and answers
9. Cookie Monster: the teacher shows the image of the character "Cookie Monster" and asks students, in Portuguese, if they know it. This was already proposed by the material used. Students answer in Portuguese. The teacher, then, to add to their class, shows a short video of the Sesame Street show's opening, with the song in English, so students can get to know it. The teacher, later on, talks in Portuguese with the students about the TV program. Students answer in Portuguese.			X	X	Shows the image and asks. Shows the video and talks	Observes and answers. Observes/ Listens to the video and talks
10. The teacher reads a comic strip in English for students and asks two questions in Portuguese about the text. Students answer in Portuguese.				X	Reads and asks.	Listens and answers.

**Source:** Elaborated by the author to specify the activities in the class observed.

The focus of the class observed, as it is possible to conclude by the description of the activities, was the teaching of polysemy, which would be classified as belonging to the linguistic knowledge axis of BNCC, developing lexicon and grammar studies. Besides the fact that developing speaking skills was not the main focus of the class, it was observed that in most of the activities the in-service teacher tried to expose students either to listening to or speaking the additional language being studied. Writing, on the other hand, was not developed in the class observed. However, it is



important to point out that only one class is considered in this case study; so, in previous or future classes, the focal point could be abilities that were not emphasized on the day of the observation.

Another fact to examine is that the slides of “Aula Paraná” themselves aimed at students’ written and oral production at home once they were studying autonomously with the recorded class. Some examples of the activities suggested in the recorded class were: registering students’ answers in their notebooks; thinking about the answer; and answering the questions by themselves. All of these practices, which were the ones available at the time, generated a lack of participation and interaction once students were alone and supposed to solve the exercises individually. So, that could explain why some abilities were more emphasized and practiced than other.

The teacher of the observed class, when using the slides to review the content of the video lesson, adapted the exercises so that students could participate orally. In a previous conversation with the teacher in another stage of the internship, the teacher mentioned the fact that, in their classes, they had been trying to enable students with the speaking practices by using the communicative approach. Defined by Rosamond Mitchell in chapter 3 of the book *Teaching Modern Languages* (Swarbrick, 1994, p. 37), the communicative approach is a way of enabling students with situations similar to real-life experiences in which the language being studied would be used. It is also said by Mitchell that this approach most emphasizes the speaking and listening skills. The adaptations done by the in-service teacher were clear when identifying and analyzing students’ oral participation in class. As the focus of our study is the development of oral skills, we stick to the speaking activities more specifically.

Parupalli Srinivas Rao, lecturer in English, in his writing “The Importance of Speaking Skills in English Classrooms” (Rao, 2019), brings several benefits when it comes to learners developing their speaking skills. As an example, speaking a foreign language helps not only career-wise, but also directly in the learner’s confidence level. “In the present modern world, everything is linked with speaking skills” (Rao, 2019, p. 10). During our study case,

oral-practice activities identified in the teaching of English as an additional language in remote classes in a public-school context were mostly through the interaction of students with the teacher. The teacher, as stated before, tries to make use of communicative strategies to expose their students in order to develop their speaking skills in their classes as much as possible.

As possible to conclude when analyzing activities 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (see table 3, page 8), the teacher tries to have speaking skill to be developed even when confronting certain limitations such as the remote context and the focus of that specific class. This exposition to the speaking skill happens mainly in a teacher-asks-and-students-answer situation. During activity 2, for instance, the teacher asks questions displayed on the slides “Aula Paraná” and students answer with short oral answers in English, showing advances when it comes to using the foreign language to communicate orally.

In what refers to our second research aim (to establish the (in)coherence between the oral practice observed and the ones recommended by BNCC), it was possible to observe on table 3 that most of these speaking activities proposed had a teacher-student interaction. Most of the time, the teacher provides a starter for the dialogue, as when the questions from “Aula Paraná” slides were asked. In some cases, the teacher asks and students answer, as in activities 1 and 2; in other moments, the teacher reads and, after it, asks the questions, so students practice more than one ability in the same exercise – activities 7, 8 and 10, for instance. There were also some exercises in which each student exemplified the content, but only after the teacher asked once more.

Considering the thematic units and the objects of knowledge established for the 7th grade on the BNCC document in the oral axis (see table 1, topic 2.1.2) we analyzed the activities developed in the class observed and summarized them on table 3. It seems, when comparing the activities developed in the class observed and the thematic units and objects of knowledge in the oral axis of BNCC, that the speaking activities do not meet all the recommendations of the document in the class observed. However, it is worthwhile noting that the focus of the class itself was not an oral genre, but the linguistic knowledge axis, with lexicon and grammar studies. The

adaptations done by the in-service teacher according to their approach, nevertheless, enabled students to have a greater exposure to the listening and speaking practices. And, once these adaptations also compound the class, they were our focus in this analysis.

Thoroughly examining the activities of the class, the ones that could be classified in the discursive interaction unit, practicing speaking in the English language, were:

(Think about it: to approach the topic, the teacher asks two open questions to students in Portuguese and students answer in Portuguese);

(Warm up: the teacher asks in English and translates the question into Portuguese, which was on the slides of “Aula Paraná”. Some students answer with short oral answers in English);

(Warm up: orally, the teacher reads and relates, with students’ help, in English the name of the TV program to the definitions. At the end, the worked vocabularies are read by the teacher and repeated by the students); and

(Polysemy: the teacher quickly explains, in Portuguese, what polysemy is and gives an example. Then, the teacher asks the class in Portuguese for examples. Students give examples in Portuguese).

Besides the fact that students were also producing and comprehending in the additional language, the activities would not be classified as units of oral comprehension or oral production because of the focus of the class itself; there was no oral text being studied. Students’ participation in English was only when interacting with the teacher, collaborating with the teacher’s approach and their choice of how to explore and review the content studied.

We could conclude, then, that the activities proposed during the class observed briefly helped developing the competences established by the BNCC document. To give an example, students communicated, even very little, in the English language and elaborated linguistic-discursive repertoires of the English language, respecting, of course, their limitations; and the teacher stimulated their students not only into oral comprehension practices, but also into producing using the English language. Furthermore, if we consider the other axis – which were not our focus, when it comes to reading,

students were exposed to reading practices of short texts in English. When it comes to the linguistic knowledge axis, which was the main focus of the class itself, lexicon and grammar studies were conducted, practicing the linguistic analysis to reflect on the functioning of the English language.

Finally, in what refers to our third research aim (to understand how students participate in the oral-practice activities observed), as mentioned before in the methodology section, the 7th grade group was chosen due to their oral participation in class. In spite of this, not all students had the same behavior facing the activities proposed by the teacher. It is important to point out that even preparing activities that aimed at interaction during the class so students could feel more engaged, as the context of the class observed was still online, the teacher could not have all students participating, especially speaking-wise.

To understand students' general participation, we use Fogaça's (2010), Lenharo and Cristovão's (2016) categorization of students' responses to classify their engagement to the activities proposed by the teacher. These responses, or acts – as the authors call it, are categorized as: general responsive act, restricted responsive act, general spontaneous act, restricted spontaneous act, and spontaneous responsive (see table 2, page 7). It is important to mention that the scope of our analysis was not to classify student by student's participation, but to consider their general participation in the activities as a group.

In most of the responses, students had either a general responsive act or a general spontaneous act, as possible to confirm by analyzing activities 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10. These two acts are called general due to the fact that students were answering something asked by someone else, they were not producing their speech spontaneously. The difference is that in the responsive one, the speakers interact with the whole group; and in the spontaneous act, it is only with the teacher and/or with a classmate.

According to Abdullah, Bakar, and Mahbob (2012), there are some factors that may interfere in students' participation, such as personality and environmental factors, the influence of instructors in the classroom and the influence of classmates or peers. The responses found, then, seem

to happen because of the format of the class, which combines these two factors with the influence of both teacher and students. As students were online, they would have to open up their microphones before saying a word. So, it does not happen as spontaneously as in a face-to-face class.

Furthermore, in general, students answered the questions in different ways:

- a. Oral answers in Portuguese;
- b. Written answers in Portuguese through the chat;
- c. Short oral answers in English;
- d. Long and grammatically structured oral answers in English;
- e. Long and grammatically structured answers in English through the chat.

With different responses and respecting students' limitations, throughout the whole class it was possible to perceive students' engagement in all the activities. Moreover, it may be a reflection of the teacher's recognition of their group and students' needs, as brought before in our study. It was told by the in-service teacher that the choice of reviewing what was being studied in 'Aula Paraná' platform was justified by the fact that, as they were together before the online classes, the teacher really knew how it worked better for their students.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study extends our knowledge of the oral-practice activities in the teaching of English as an additional language in remote classes in a public-school context in relation to the prescriptions of the BNCC document and students' participation since we brought not only what is prescribed, but also a real class observation in the case study. With that, in-service teachers and pre-service teachers may reflect upon students' responses and engagement to the activities proposed and consider it when planning their classes according to BNCC in order to create an environment in which students may develop their speaking skills in the additional language being studied. As it is a relatively recent document, teachers are still getting used and adapted to how to implement it in their classes.

We were glad to notice that the 7th grade students of the class were having a moment of opportunity to develop their speaking skills during the observed class. It is known that, outside of their English class, public school students seem not used to being exposed to the additional language being studied in many other moments and situations. So, it was once possible due to the in-service teacher's adaptation and their will to expose students to speaking and listening as much as possible. As stated in the introduction section, there are many approaches to be used by teachers in order to develop, considerably, speaking.

There are, however, many more steps to be taken. We cannot overlook the fact that having those few moments of speaking may not completely prepare students for a moment of real-life conversation. There is still a lack of practice considering the oral exposition and practice. We should keep in mind that the high number of students per class is one of the obstacles when analyzing students' oral production. How would the teacher listen to and/or evaluate each of the forty students in a hypothetical class?

Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings suggest that oral-skill activities were presented in the observed English class in the public-school context research with certain limitations; as to exemplify, the focus of the class itself was not, mainly, the development of oral skills. The oral practice only happened as a will of applying the communicative approach adopted by the in-service teacher when leading the class observed. Also, the remote context also influences the results found once students would not speak as spontaneously as in a face-to-face context.

What was stated in the previous paragraph leads us to our second conclusion: the speaking activities developed during the class briefly helped developing the competences established by the BNCC document. It is essential that we state, once more, that it may have happened as a consequence of the focus of the class observed being the linguistic axis.

When we consider students' engagement to the speaking activities proposed, the remote context, as a consequence of the social distancing caused by the pandemic moment, also had a great influence in how

they engaged. We found that students were less likely to answer questions spontaneously, both in English and in Portuguese; they would produce using the additional language mostly when asked by the in-service teacher – and it happened not only in spoken, but also written form.

Finally, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, the pandemic itself was a huge influence when it comes to the results found once there were bigger concerns such as health, hunger, access to technology and many other things to be mentioned. This way, our observation was only possible to be done online, bringing many obstacles both to the in-service teacher and to students. Secondly, we could only have one class observed and the focus of this class, as mentioned before, was not the development of the oral skill specifically. Thirdly, after the class, we could not have access to its recording. So, students' participation was just registered during the class observation in the reflective diary (find attached). It is unfortunate that the study did not include students' individual participation and excerpts of their oral productions.

This study provided new data regarding the development of English oral skills in a public-school context by the observation of a real class; however, more thorough analysis is necessary in order to collect students' individual participation. Also, it would be interesting to bring excerpts of their oral productions to add to the study.

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# ATTACHMENTS

Reflexive diary developed by the researcher's author when observing the remote class of the case study

## Diário reflexivo

No dia 5 de julho de 2021, tive a experiência de observar a primeira aula do meu estágio na graduação em Letras Inglês. Estando no terceiro ano do curso, nosso foco neste momento é o Ensino Fundamental II. Nesta aula, estarei em uma sala de 7º ano, com a professora regente, L. Admiro grandemente a professora por sua experiência na licenciatura e, assim como dito em sua apresentação para os estagiários, por não deixar a prática oral fora de suas aulas de inglês.

Neste momento de aulas à distância e ensino remoto na educação do estado do Paraná, foram propostas algumas formas de condução de atividades: a primeira, mais emergencial e pensada ainda no início da pandemia, são as Aula Paraná, disponibilizadas através da plataforma de vídeos, Youtube, e por meio da televisão aberta em canal regional. Nestas aulas, os alunos têm acesso a aulas de todas as suas disciplinas com duração de uma média entre 20 e 30 minutos. O conteúdo é trabalhado graciosamente por meio de slides, atividades e explicação dos professores e, ainda mais importante ao meu ver, relembra aos estudantes que há alguém preocupado com sua aprendizagem.

A segunda proposta veio apenas algum tempo depois: aulas síncronas através de plataformas on-line, como o Google Meet. Nestas, os professores utilizam os slides da Aula Paraná para repassar com os estudantes o conteúdo trabalhado nas aulas disponibilizadas pelo estado do Paraná.

Estando em contexto de aulas remotas, a aula está sendo realizada pela plataforma on-line Google Meet. O ponto positivo desse servidor é ser grátis e não ter limite de tempo para a reunião. Entretanto, em outras plataformas há muitos outros recursos a serem utilizados durante as aulas à distância. Não é possível, todavia, essa opção uma vez que os órgãos educacionais estaduais a elegeram para as aulas da rede pública enquanto neste formato de aulas. Considero importante contextualizar essa questão para que tenhamos o cuidado necessário durante a observação. Tanto alunos quanto professores estão lidando com o sistema emergencial de aulas remotas e com outras tantas questões em torno do mesmo.

No início da aula, a professora, muito carinhosamente, apresenta o estagiário e pede aos alunos que abram suas câmeras e digam seus nomes para que eu possa conhecê-los. A apresentação foi realizada em português. Nesta aula, a professora revisa todo o conteúdo trabalhado na última videoaula ofertada pelo Aula Paraná e, para isso, faz uso dos próprios slides da aula ofertada pelo estado do Paraná. Durante a revisão, a professora altera entre usar o inglês e o português na aula, o que aumenta significativamente a exposição dos alunos à língua estrangeira sendo estudada.

Ao meu ver, essa estratégia usada pela professora articula com um dos seus objetivos compartilhado conosco durante as outras atividades de estágio. Segundo ela, é de seu interesse ter um cuidado especial com a habilidade oral na disciplina, mesmo que encontre algumas dificuldades no momento da aplicação. Nessa aula observada, por exemplo, nota-se pelos slides ofertados pelo estado em seu programa durante o ensino emergencial, que muito pouco foi dada atenção ao desenvolvimento da oralidade. Haviam exercícios relacionados a conteúdos gramaticais e lexicais, leitura e escrita, mas *listening e speaking* ficaram de lado.

As atividades desenvolvidas durante a aula foram com base nos slides da Aula Paraná e com algumas adaptações da professora foram:

1. Think about it: para abordar o tema, a professora faz duas perguntas abertas aos alunos em português e os alunos a respondem também em português.

2. Warm up: a professora pergunta em inglês e traduz a pergunta para o português. Alguns alunos respondem com respostas curtas em inglês.

3. Warm up: oralmente, a professora lê e relaciona, com a ajuda dos alunos, em inglês o nome do programa de TV com as definições. Ao final, os vocabulários trabalhados são lidos pela professora e repetidos pelos alunos.

4. Polysemy: oralmente, a professora revisa o que é polissemia uma vez que os alunos já tinham estudado o conteúdo. A revisão é conduzida em português pela professora.

5. Polysemy: a professora explica rapidamente, em português, o que é polissemia e dá um exemplo. Em seguida, a professora pede exemplos à turma em português. Os alunos dão exemplos em português.

6. Outros casos de polissemia são exemplificados, pela professora, na língua inglesa, mas a professora usa o português para conversar com os alunos.

7. O texto de um anúncio é mostrado pela professora; os alunos ouvem o texto que a professora lê em inglês e respondem às perguntas oralmente, em português.

8. O texto de uma camiseta é mostrado pela professora; os alunos ouvem o texto que a professora lê em inglês e respondem às questões oralmente, em português.

9. Cookie Monster: a professora mostra a imagem do personagem “Cookie Monster” e pergunta aos alunos, em português, se eles o conhecem. Os alunos respondem em português. A professora, então, mostra um pequeno vídeo da abertura do show Vila Sésamo, com a música em inglês, para que os alunos possam conhecê-lo. A professora, posteriormente, conversa em português com os alunos sobre o programa de TV. Os alunos respondem em português.

10. A professora lê uma tirinha em inglês para os alunos e faz duas perguntas em português sobre o texto. Os alunos respondem em português.

Em sua aula, então, a professora regente faz perguntas em inglês aos alunos para que haja essa interação na língua estrangeira sendo estudada. Sendo essa turma de 7º ano, os alunos se mostram mais dispostos a participar oral e espontaneamente. Menciono esse ponto positivo pois, no geral, teve-se certa resistência quanto a isso no ensino remoto. Alguns alunos, em alguns momentos, optaram por comunicar-se com a professora e com a turma através do bate-papo, de forma escrita – tanto em português quanto em inglês. Aliás, fica o questionamento: seria essa a oralidade dos alunos enquanto no EAD? No geral, a maior parte dos alunos se dispôs a responder às perguntas da professora com seus microfones abertos em português. Aqueles que se arriscaram a respondê-la em inglês, tendem a utilizar respostas curtas, apesar de alguns poucos casos de respostas longas e bem estruturadas na língua inglesa. E, na minha visão, isso se caracteriza como um grande avanço em contexto de escola pública regular.

Digo isso com base em minha experiência como aluno de escola pública. Em nossas aulas de inglês, apesar de termos acesso ao material didática, neste, havia pouca oportunidade de prática oral. Senti isso, também, com o material do Aula Paraná. Como a professora utiliza esses slides para retomar o conteúdo, conseqüentemente, não teria tanta exposição à oralidade. Mas, mesmo assim, ela o tenta como possível considerando o ensino remoto emergencial.

Como consideração final, tive certa audácia em repensar algumas atividades e práticas da aula. Na apresentação dos alunos no início da aula, eu teria lembrado como introduzimos o nosso nome em inglês e escreveria no *chat*. Então, repetiria com os alunos e exemplificaria; pediria, em seguida, para que eles se apresentassem em inglês. Com relação ao material utilizado para revisar o conteúdo, eu teria resumido o principal para que os alunos pudessem, de fato, lembrar apenas e não trabalhar tudo novamente tomando o tempo dos alunos. Mas entendo o lado da professora em querer trabalhar o que os alunos estudam de acordo com a realidade de sua turma já que o material do Aula Paraná, apesar de rico, é tão geral para atender a todo o estado.

Por fim, fica a minha admiração pela professora, por sua garra e anos de experiência. Espero chegar a esse nível de experiência com tanto carinho pela profissão que escolhemos e temos como professores de língua inglesa.



# 4. English Language Teaching and Children Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Creation and Analysis of an Inclusive Didactic Sequence

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Simone de Souza Burguês

## 1. INTRODUCTION

From personal experiences in the classroom of elementary school with students living with autism<sup>37</sup> and the great interest shown by them in the area of languages during these classes, as an educator, a possible research niche was noted on the possibility of English being an alternative means of stimulation for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (hereinafter ASD). According to Rocha and Tonelli (2013), autism, varying in degrees of intensity, is a global development illness characterized by a neurological disorder that deprives the individual, mainly, of his/her full social development. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration both inclusion (that, nowadays, is increasingly evident in classrooms) and how our work can be delineated to provide the inclusion of students living with ASD in regular and public education.

Within this ambit, it is important to point out that some studies claim that children have a great capacity to learn, mostly because of the neuroplasticity of their brains, which can be explained as the brain's ability

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37 It is important to point out that we use the term children living with autism because it is considered a more respectful way of addressing children who are on the autism spectrum, thus putting the child first in their life, before the disorder.

to shape itself from experiences and stimuli (Mundkur, 2005). Having said that, it is possible to bring Vygotsky (2011) to the discussion, since this author claims that the alternative development pathways may lead the child with some kind of disorder to reach their full development or development equivalent to their age. In other words, creating indirect pathways or making adaptations to our teaching materials and teaching practices may lead the child to achieve their results, as described by Vygotsky (2011, p. 866, our translation).

In cases of anomalous development, the difference between cultural and natural, psychophysiological development is accentuated, so the creation of indirect pathways for development is needed when it is made impossible by normal means.

Taking all this into consideration, we emphasize the need for some types of adaptation in the materials and teaching methodologies, aiming at always providing meaningful learning for all students, including the ones with different needs. This article, an excerpt of the first author's undergraduate thesis, has the general goal of showcasing parts of an inclusive didactic sequence for teaching of English as an additional language that meets the teaching-learning needs of children living with autism. The questions that governed this research were: a) In what ways can a teaching material contribute to the process of teaching-learning English with children living with autism?; b) What were the theoretical and practical contributions found in the research mapping?; c) What didactic goals should be set when dealing with children living with autism in the English teaching room?; d) In what way may the activities present in the DS act positively in the development of language capacities with children living with autism?. Along the text, we discuss the theoretical framework used to ground our work, followed by the methodological procedures for the creation and analysis of the DS. Furthermore, due to the limitations of this article, we present a few selected activities of the material created as well as its analysis. Finally, we conclude with our final remarks.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides the essential theoretical framework that was used in this body of work. Firstly, we discuss autism and its definitions. Secondly, we elaborate on some concepts regarding teaching of English as an additional language (EAL, henceforth). Thirdly, we discuss the English teaching for children living with autism, and, finally, in the next part, we will discuss the Didactic Sequence mechanism.

A broader definition of autism presents it as a disorder of chronological order that affects mostly the social development of the person, regardless of the degree of its spectrum. This is explained by an apparent difficulty in their neural circuits that are responsible for peer interaction and social recognition and understanding, as well as identification of the human face (Rocha; Tonelli, 2013). Furthermore, this disorder leads to a series of other difficulties presented by autistic children besides the struggle of interaction, such as: tactile and sound sensitivity and/or compulsive behaviours.

The teaching of English language to autistic children has been a growing reality due to the large number of children with ASD in the regular education system, and, as advocated by several researchers, learning a foreign language may be a form of social inclusion in this system. Studies in this area are being carried out nowadays, challenging teachers to find ways to make learning possible and to enable the class and the material to meet autistic students' needs, as well as everyone else's (Lopes, 2005 apud Tonelli; Rocha, 2013). Feijó (2017) points out that the teacher should be aware of the challenges and specificities brought by the stereotyping of the student with ASD, and also of how classes should be developed so that they can challenge those stereotypes and meet the children's needs.

In relation to the Common National Curriculum Base – BNCC (Brasil, 2018), the current guiding document in force regarding education in Brazil, the teaching of English language should consider the concept of English as a lingua franca (ELF, henceforth), which means teaching English not as a language belonging to a country, but a deterritorialized one. However, Leffa (2016) points out that elementary school students still have the view of English as just a curriculum subject without use in real contexts.

The teaching of English as an EAL in Brazil, according to the document Common National Curriculum Base (Brasil, 2022) began in the year 1960 when the culture of learning a new language began. However, this teaching took place mostly in language institutes and private schools. It is reported that, at the beginning, this insertion in language and private schools had a market-oriented purpose, but after a few years after its insertion in the public network it started to have an inclusion-oriented purpose.

The term additional language, according to the document, was adopted from the premise that students have contact with English through a globalized world, thus, overturning the discrimination of the geographical territory and individual characteristics of the student, as a second or third language in cases of indigenous people or refugees, in addition to their mother tongue. It is argued that the term additional language is not just about a mere addition of the language, but about contact with the culture of that language. The document advocates that learning a new language as a way of valuing one's own and other cultures and a way of seeing the importance of language learning.

It is vital to point out that the publication *Documento-base para a elaboração de diretrizes curriculares nacionais para a língua inglesa nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental* (British Council, 2022) was equally used as a support to create Didactic Sequence proposed in this project, as a tool of inclusion for children living with autism, and towards children inserted in the 2nd grade of elementary school. The following picture (picture 1) demonstrates the textual genres that can be used in which grade, since the genre-based teaching is also supported by BNCC. This table connects with the definitions and objectives of the didactic sequence tool, since it needs to be centered around a genre, as well as the guidelines provided by BNCC.



## Image 1: Genre-based teaching: a possible guideline for EAL

Segundo ano	Presença dos multiletramentos por meio de gravações de vídeos, criação de avatar, entre outros;	Rimas;	Bilhetes;	Falando de si e do outro;
	Interculturalidade e sensibilização linguística;	Cantigas de roda;	Receita de cozinha;	Expressar preferências (alimentação, brinquedos, diversão);
	Construção da cidadania.	Roda de conversa;	Poemas curtos;	Expressar sentimentos e emoções;
		Narrativas de aventura;	Convite.	Meu lugar no mundo;
	Gravar vídeo no celular.		Saúde;	Internet;
			Respeito ao outro.	

**Source:** Documento-base para a elaboração de diretrizes curriculares nacionais para a língua inglesa nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental (BRITISH COUNCIL, 2022).

In view of the 2nd grade in which we aimed to build the Didactic Sequence for, the priority contents for this age permeates several contexts such as: domestic animals, family groups, school materials, toys and games, parts of the human body and racial issues. Some objectives to be achieved are communication, greeting in English, recognizing and associating everyday objects with their colors and shapes, using different means of communication, among others. Here, we would like to mention, based in Magiolo and Tonelli (2020), that children tend to appreciate the time of storytelling, promoting a contextualized and meaningful teaching. The authors point that these are proved by their own experiences in class where they see the literature as an important ally in the classroom. For the aforementioned reasons, the Didactic Sequence is centered around a child's book named *The color monster: a story about emotions* by Anna Lennas.

In relation to critical language education, an important subject to discuss since we are talking about inclusive teaching, Kawachi-furlan and Malta (2020) define it as the critical use of words highlighting the learners' critical perspective on the world in which they are embedded. According to the authors, it is the critical use of words and texts inside the class to enhance learners' critical perspective on the world they are in and their ability to construct meaning.

In our Didactic Sequence, we talk about emotions through storytelling and the creation of a handmade lapbook, emphasizing the students' need to

express their feelings as well as their position in the world. For children living with autism, it is essential to express their feelings in other ways, having in mind that they have some difficulties in communication. It is also crucial to make children aware of differences in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner. Critical language education plays a role in these movements. In synthesis, we echo the words of Magiolo and Tonelli (2020, p.111) who state that:

(...) among the main reasons in favor of this teaching, we cite its potential, under favorable conditions, to take the child to break cultural barriers and broaden his horizons, to critically promote the student's cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural and psychological development, to contribute to the formation of their linguistic awareness and positive attitudes towards differences and, finally, to prepare more solid ground for language learning in later grades.

Is important to talk about the sensibilization of differences, an aspect very important when we talk about inclusion, having in mind that our Didactic Sequence is a tool of inclusion for children living with autism in English classes. The didactic sequence may serve as a mechanism for the children living with autism to be put in a position of protagonists, stating their identities when we allow them to use different ways to communicate and show their opinions and ideas. Moreover, when it comes to teaching English language to autistic students of different degrees, not only the concept presented by the BNCC, but mainly the multidisciplinary approach and contextualization it advocates are crucial for students' inclusion and successful teaching.

Therefore, the teaching of English language students living with autism, when it considers the particularities of this student and their special needs, so that learning makes sense to everyone – including them, playfulness plays a fundamental role in their cognitive development (Rocha; Tonelli, 2013). It is worth noting that, as pointed out in the research of the authors Rocha and Tonelli (2013), the student living with autism has interests focused on specific areas, and when English is part of this focus, the students' interest will be easily perceived. However, when the area of interest is another, like math or games, the youngster may encounter some difficulties in finding the content interesting.

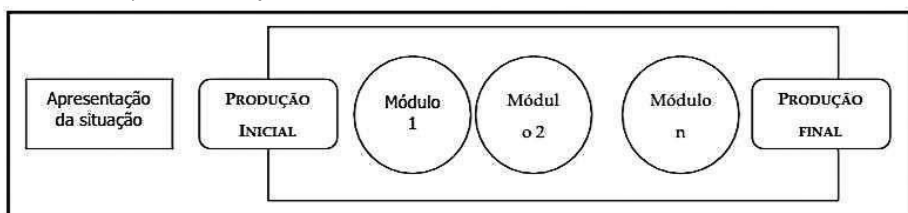
Thus, it is from knowing that children living with autism have their specificities that the proposal of a didactic sequence, aimed at them in order to meet their needs, enabling them to understand a world of possibilities, has become a topic of analysis. The author Tonelli (2012) defends how English teaching works as a tool for inclusion when it allows the student living with autism, as well as everyone in the classroom that they are inserted into, to have access to the globalized world in which we live. This inclusion was performed through a Didactic Sequence, which is better explained in the following section.

A Didactic Sequence is a procedure that allows planning and organizing the teaching practice. Developed by Dolz, Noverraz, and Schneuwly (2004), and separated into four parts, the didactic sequences aim to enable students to overcome obstacles to linguistic appropriation, having a textual genre as a north for that process. One of the biggest objectives of the Didactic Sequence is the development of the language capacities that are explained as Cristovão and Stutz (2011, p.20, our translation):

They are the necessary operations for a language action that, in the in the Vygotskian view of instrument, allow us to transform knowledge through interactions in specific communicative situations in a continuous process of evaluation (of oneself, of evaluation of oneself, of the other and of the situation itself).

Moreover, the authors Cristovão and Stutz (2011) defend that the activities in the Didactic Sequence must consider the previous knowledge of the students and consider the reality of the context (Cristovão; Stutz, 2011). The following figure (Figure 02) represents the original configuration of the procedure.

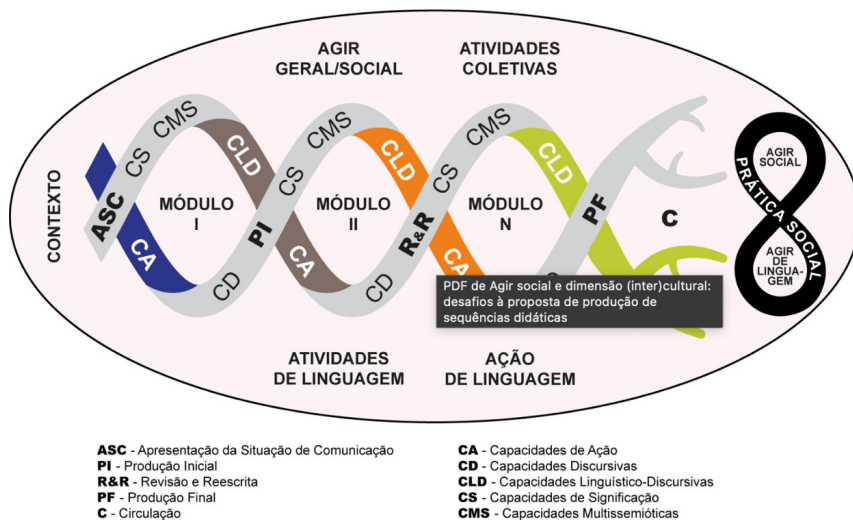
**Image 2:** Basic outline of the didactic sequence Source: Dolz, Noverraz, Schneuwly, (2004, p. 97).



Source: Dolz, Noverraz, Schneuwly, (2004, p. 97).

The configuration of the Didactic Sequence that was used in this work is the resignification of the device by Miquelante, Cristovão e Pontara (2020). In view of the difficulties of applying a didactic sequence in the teaching of foreign languages/additional languages, a research group at the State University of Londrina (UEL) – Linguagem e Educação (UEL/CNPq) – proposes an improved model based on language skills systematized in the form of DNA, as shown in the picture 3, which better represents the connections between the language capacities and other aspects of the Brazilian Didactic Sequence.

**Image 3:** Resignification proposed by Research group: “Linguagem e educação”.



**Source:** Miquelante, Cristovão, Pontara (2020, p.157).

Freitas (2021) points out the characteristics of the new Didactic Sequence model proposed by Brazilian researchers, and argues that: a) the Didactic Sequence is not linear and immutable; b) the teacher acts as a mediator of the teaching-learning process; b) the non-exclusivity of a textual genre; d) being able to have a variety of activities during the modules that help to better prepare the student for the final production; e) the possibility of continuous adaptation to the context in which it is inserted; f) the choice of a theme pertinent to the student's reality; g)

continuous evaluation; among other characteristics.

Having in mind we are using this model promoted by the Brazilian authors, Cristovão and Miquelante (2020), as well as their research group exemplified above, it allowed us to a scope to use more than one genre in the construction of the Didactic Sequence, based in the Brazilian expansions.

In this new model, it is possible to perceive that all stages of the Didactic Sequence are intertwined in the form of DNA with the language capacities, so we can infer that the language capacities (henceforth LC), as clarified by Cristovão and Stutz (2011) as set of abilities that enables the students towards better development in various areas of communication through language. They include: signification, action capacities, discursive capacities, linguistic-discursive capacities and multisemiotic capacities. Each of these abilities allows us to establish and analyze the objectives that our students should achieve with each activity. With this in mind, the LC goes through the whole process in a non-linear way, they are present from the initial presentation, during the modules and the initial and final productions, working together in meaning making as clogs in the mechanism of a watch.

The authors Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly ([2004] 2010, p. 44) talk about LC, defining action capacities (AC) as the ones that refer to the physical and socio-subjective factors; discursive capacities (DC) are related to the organization of the content in genres; linguistic-discursive capacities (LDC) are related to the text resources as pragmatic, syntactic, lexical, orthographic and graphic. Cristovão and Stutz (2011) added the signification capacities (SC), which can be described as the capacities needed for the sense making from the social practices that the individual inserts. In addition to this, Lenharo (2016) basing herself in Dolz (2015), talks about the addition of a fifth capacity, multisemiotic capacities (MSC). The author says: “such capacities play a central role when analyzing texts that present sound, digital and visual materialities” (Lenharo, 2016, p. 30) present in new and hybrid genres.

Thus, given everything that has already been mentioned, the Didactic Sequence proposed in this work aims to meet the aspects highlighted by Rocha and Tonelli (2013), in the attempt to provide interesting learning

practices for autistic students and to create an alternative path of development for the child with difficulties, as advocated by Vygotsky (2011). As argued by the guiding document of education in our current scenario, BNCC (Brasil, 2018), the didactic sequence also meets the concept of English as a lingua franca (a deterritorialized language), bringing it to the context of both the autistic and of all the other students in a classroom, seeking not only to develop the language capacities of students with ASD, but also to improve their criticality and their protagonism in an inclusive manner.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this section, we show the methodological path created for data collection and the lenses through which they will later be analyzed. As previously mentioned, this project aims to verify possibilities about teaching English to children living with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and how English language teaching can develop these children's language capacities based on existing bibliographies through the production and analysis of a didactic sequence.

Initially, the first stage of data collection was a study of the state-of-the-art on teaching English as an additional language to children living with autism, followed by the prototyping of a Didactic Sequence (hereinafter, DS) that can be used in regular classes of English as an additional language at school in English classes, which also aims toward meeting the needs of children with typical and atypical development as a means of inclusion of such children.

This study is firstly characterized as bibliographic as it searches for existing bibliographies about the teaching of English as an additional language to children living with autism and how the teaching of English can be a means of stimulus for these students, as well as searching for references of the precepts of Sociodiscursive Interactionism. Fonseca (2002) claims that any work begins with bibliographical research which is carried out by means of a survey of theories already published and analyzed.

Regarding the approach to the problem, the research has an interpretivist and qualitative nature because we seek to analyze and interpret

the data found in the production of each activity of the DS. Gerhardt and Silveira (2010, p.32, our translation) argue:

The characteristics of qualitative research are: objectification of the phenomenon; hierarchization of the actions of describing, understanding, explaining precision of the relationships between the global and the local in a given phenomenon. Observation of the differences between the social world and the natural world; respect for the interactive character between the objectives sought by the researchers, their theoretical orientations, and their empirical data; search for the most reliable results possible; opposition to the assumption that advocates a single research model for all sciences.

Thus, with all that mentioned, this study is a bibliographical research at first since we investigate authors prior to ours when they talk about children living with autism and their relation with the English language as an additional language. It is also of a interpretivist nature, the production and analysis of a didactic sequence created for children living with autism in order to develop their language capacities. In the next section, we talk about the lens that was used to analyze the DS.

In relation to the lenses that were used for the creation and analysis of the DS, we used the concepts of the language capacities developed by Cristovão e Stutz (2011). Hence, a deductive method was used. This method is defended by Markoni and Lakatos (2007) as: “starting from the theories and laws, most often predicts the occurrence of particular phenomena (downward connection)”; (Lakatos; Markoni, 2007, p.106). In the following table it is exposed the language capacities that the student needs to achieve with the activities proposed with the DS below:

Table 1 – Language capacities and its operations.

<b>i) Signification capacities:</b>
Constructing meaning through representations and/or knowledge concerning social practices involving spheres of activity, language and praxeological activities, and their relations with different planes of language and interaction with different human experiences.
(1CS) Comprehending the meaning between the texts and the way of being, thinking, acting and feeling of who produces; (2CS) Building semantic maps; (3CS) Engaging in language activities; (4CS) Understanding collective pre-constructed sets; (5CS) Relating the macro aspects to your reality; (6CS) Understanding the imbrications between praxeological and language activities; (7CS) (Re)getting to know the socio-history of genre; (8CS) Taking a position on text-context relations. (Cristovão; Stutz, 2011)
<b>ii) Action capacities:</b>
Building meaning through representations of the elements of the context of production, mobilization of content and the choice of textual genre. It is the operations for the recognition of physical and socio subjective components, content and the selection of the genre that are responsible for the construction of action capacities (Bronckart, 2007; Machado, 2005). For this, the focus is on interpretation based on the socio-historical context of the following items: survey of the producer and receiver of the text, the place and period of production, the social position occupied by the producer and receiver, the social function of the text and the thematic content.
(1CA) Making inferences about: who writes the text, to whom it is addressed, on what subject, when the text was produced, where it was produced, for what purpose;
(2CA) Evaluating the appropriateness of a text to the situation in which the communication takes place; (3CA) Taking into account language properties in their relation to social and/or cultural aspects; (4CA) Mobilizing world knowledge to understand and/or produce a text.
<b>iii) Discursive capacities:</b>
Constructing meaning through representations about the characteristics of the genre the overall planning of the text, the different linguistically organized segments of the text (types of discourse), and the ways of planning the language within the text (the types of sequences: narrative, descriptive sequences: narrative, descriptive, argumentative, explanatory and dialogical).
(1CD) Recognizing text organization such as layout, non-verbal language (pictures, verbal language, , graphics, titles, text format, location of information location in the text) etc. (2CD) Mobilizing discursive worlds to engender the overall planning of the thematic content; (3CD) Understanding the function of the organization of the content in that text; (4CD) Understanding the difference between different forms of organization of the mobilized content.



#### iv) Linguistic-discursive capacities:

They construct meaning through representations about textualization operations, sentence construction, and choice of vocabulary. The knowledge to be covered refers to the microstructure (the linguistic units of phrases and sentences) such as: cohesion, verbal connection, connection.

#### v) Multisemiotic capacities:

CMS (Multisemiotic Capacities). Cited by Dolz (2015) and categorized by Cristovão and Lenharo (2016)

(1CMS) Understanding the meaning relations between verbal and non-verbal elements of verbal elements of the genre;

(2CMS) Apprehending the different knowledge and meanings that emerge from sounds, videos and images;

(3CMS) Recognizing the importance of non-verbal elements for the construction of senses;

(4CMS) Relating nonverbal elements to the surrounding macro social context.

(5CMS) Understanding the semiotic elements in the constitution of the genre.

**Source:** Cristovão, Stutz, (2011); Lenharo (2016).

Another lens that was used for the analysis of the DS was the guiding questions developed by Pontara (2019) in order to interpret the aforementioned language capacities into simpler questions. It is crucial to say that the criteria and the guiding questions were used side by side due to the correlation between them and also in order to facilitate the analysis of the DS and how the CL appeared in each part. The questions on the right correspond to the criteria on the left because they talk about the same operations, but the questions are way more simplified and easier to understand upon the analysis of the DS.

**Table 2 – Correspondences between action capacities and guiding questions.**

Language Capacities	Guiding questions by Pontara
Related to Action Capacities	<p>Who produces the genre?            With what purpose/objective does he/she produce the text?            Who is it aimed at?            What is the medium of circulation (where the genre circulates)?            What social practice is the genre linked to?            With what purpose/objective do you produce the text?            What is the tone of the text (more relaxed, humorous, objective, poetic, colloquial, serious, familiar, moralistic, empowering)?            What do texts of this genre deal with?</p>
Related to Discursive Capacities	<p>How are the contents organized in the text?            What is the general structure of the text?            How does it look like?            How is it set up?            Is it divided into parts? Does it have a title/sub-title?            Is it signed? What is its approximate length?            Does it include photos/figures?</p>
Related to Signification Capacities	<p>What relationships can be established between texts of this genre and the way of being, thinking, acting and feeling of those who produce them?            What is the genre's sociohistorical status?            What kind of relations may be established between texts from this genre and the wide social context?            Which voices permeate this genre (author's, social, character)?</p>
Related to Multisemiotic Capacities	<p>How do the nonverbal elements of genre relate to the verbal elements?            Is there mobilization of elements outside of the text, such as tables, images, titles, subtitles, underscoring, etc?            How do these elements make meaning in the text?            Do they allow meaning to be understood or produced?</p>
Related to Linguistic-Discursive Capacities	<p>How are the lexical choices in the text?            Are there lots of concrete and/or abstract nouns?            Are there action verbs? Stative verbs?            Are there adjectives? Of Which kind?</p>

**Source:** Cristovão et al, 2010; Cristovão, Stutz, 2011; Pontara, 2015; Pontara, 2019 (our translation).

The concept of a more experienced pair was used to explain the role of the teacher as a mediator in the learning process, conducting the children living with autism, as Vygotsky (1998) said that the alternative path is needed when the objective cannot be achieved by the regular way. In this case, the teacher will be the more experienced pair, giving the children living with autism a way to achieve and develop the LC required in each activity.

The data collected were analyzed using the criteria of analysis through the guiding questions of Pontara (2015) based on Cristovão and Stutz (2011); and the Vygotskian concepts that preach activities aimed at the development of language interaction skills among students through the concept of the more experienced pair in which the teacher is the mediator of this communication in order to promote the development of students who, due to ASD, do not have their speech, or other skills required at the language classes, well developed. In addition, the data were also looked at through the precepts of Libâneo (2006) who states that we must pay attention to the specificities of the student that the DS was being developed for, so that they are able to achieve the learning objectives, considering that the DS in question has been developed thinking of a student living with autism with poorly developed speech, enrolled in a 2nd year class in regular elementary school. The aforementioned methodology is summarized in the following table.

**Table 3 – Objectives, questions and analysis procedures**

Objectives	Research questions	Analysis procedures
a) Prototype a didactic sequence for teaching English as an additional language that meets the teaching-learning needs of children living with autism.	In what ways can a teaching material contribute to the teaching-learning process of LI with children living with autism?	Apply the precepts of Sociodiscursive Interactionism in the creation of the DS aiming at school work with children living with autism in an inclusive way using the guiding questions of Pontara (2015) based on Cristovão and Stutz (2011) and the concepts of Vygotsky (1998) and Libâneo (2006) in relation to thinking about the needs and specificities of the student with ASD when producing the activities.
b) Identify the state of the art regarding teaching English to children with autism;	What were the theoretical and practical contributions found in the mapping of the research?	Identify and analyze research published in the last 10 years about teaching ELF and EAL to children living with autism.
c) Develop didactic objectives that will guide the creation of the DS;	What didactic goals should be set when dealing with autistic children in the classroom?	Produce activities that develop the language in question and language capacities of autistic children with underdeveloped speech and/or other skills.
d) Investigate which elements of the material dialog with teaching English to children with autism.	In what ways do the activities present in DS act positively for the development of language skills with children living with autism?	Analyze which language skills may be potentially mobilized in each activity and relate each activity to precepts of teaching autistic children, based on Vygotsky (1998), Libâneo (2006) and Pontara's (2015) guiding questions based on Cristovão and Stutz (2011).

**Source:** the authors

In this way, this section had the purpose to explain all the lenses used as a criterion of analysis of the DS prototyped in this process. The lenses used were the language capacities, the guiding questions of Pontara and the concept of a more experienced pair of Vygotsky. The next section will show the results

of the research. It is important to say that we don't have participants in our research. Therefore, the focus of this project was just the creation and analysis of DS, having the application of the sequence left for other future studies.

## 5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Along this section we present and analyze the data collected throughout the DS produced for kids at the first stage of elementary school, as a tool to develop the LC and to include students living with autism in the teaching-learning process. We analyze the DS looking for the language capacities that can potentially be improved as well as the ways the more experienced pair can contribute to the students' performance in each activity in the DS. The following table (Table 4) presents the macrostructure of the DS in each section.

**Table 4 – Macrostructure of the DS**

Section	Macrostructure
Cover	This section of the DS contains the name of the sequence, the name of the author and some illustrations of monsters which appear in all activities during the modules and are related to the themes of the DS.
Summary	Contains all the parts of the DS and the pages that each one starts.
To the teacher	In this section, we explain and give some advice for the teachers on how they can develop the activities and how they can include the students living with autism in each activity.
Introduction	In the introduction, we explain the main objectives of this section for the teachers and students and start the activities with a song that talks about emotions and there are some activities about this song. The first production of a lapbook is also presented here, presenting the structure of the genre and how they can create a lapbook. The students are asked to do this about themselves.
Module 1	In this part, we also put the objectives on the cover of the module to show the teachers and the students what the objectives of this part are. This module will work with the story of the color monster, using the characters to express their own emotions in English.

Section	Macrostructure
Module 2	In this section we will continue working with the story (The color monster) <sup>38</sup> and express the emotions using the monsters, but now the students must ask their friends about their emotions, recognize the colors in English and associate with the monsters of the book while developing motor coordination. The objectives are also presented in the cover of the module.
Second production	In this part of the DS, the students will return to their lapbook produced on the introduction and improve this with the help of the teacher.
Module 3	Here, the students will continue using the expressions of emotions, colors and will learn the vocabulary of family members. They will also do some activities in the folder to improve this ability for the final production of the lapbook.
Final production	In this section, the students will compose the final production, a lapbook about emotions studied in the modules. The students and the teacher also have the proposal of making an exhibition of the lapbooks produced for the parents and the scholar community.
Support material	In this extra section, the teachers and the students can find the material that can be used during the activities of the DS.

**Source:** the authors.

Because of the limitations<sup>39</sup> in this article, in the next section, we analyze a few selected activities of the DS as presented in the previous table and see how the activities can develop the language capacities and the role of the concept of a more experienced pair (Vygotsky, 1998). It is important to point out that most of the suggestions of the inclusion in addition to being based on the previously mentioned author, they also contain parts of our personal experiences in the classroom with students who live with autism.

### 5.1 ACTIVITY 01 – LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING SONG

The first activity of the DS has playful and pedagogical objectives and intends to contextualize the subject of the DS for the students. By listening to a song about emotions, students will have the opportunity to connect with the subject (emotions). In relation to the signification capacities, regarding meaning-making capacities, it can be inferred that students will have to associate the genre with its function in our society. Regarding discursive

<sup>38</sup> It is important to highlight that we are using a translated version of the book *Color Monster* from the Spanish language. The author is Anna Llenas and the original name is *El Monstruo de Colores*, published in 2012.

<sup>39</sup> The complete didactic sequence can be accessed through the following link: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JFd6lXdmv7\\_2gSScVHanAa5yivEWy\]a2?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JFd6lXdmv7_2gSScVHanAa5yivEWy]a2?usp=share_link)

capacities, students will have to mobilize their understanding of the format and layout of the genre. As the first activity is a video, multisemiotic capacities are in evidence so that students make connections between non-verbal elements and their meanings. In Vygotskian terms, the role of the more experienced peer in this activity would be to delimit the process in such a way as to include all the students, without burdening any of them. For example, if the teacher realizes that the individual living with ASD is bothered by loud noises, they can take a different approach to the activity, such as playing the video without audio or with reduced audio, to include them in the exercise.

**Image 4** – Listen to the following song.



Source: first author's DS.

### 5.2 ACTIVITY 03 – DID YOU KNOW WHAT A LAPBOOK IS?

This activity, on pages 6 and 7, introduces students to what the lapbook genre is and how it is made. After this presentation, students can observe various images that serve as examples for them who are then challenged to create their own lapbook with personal information. In the activity, it is also important to explain to the students that the works produced during the development of the DS will be presented for the parents, families during an exhibition, as part of an authentic school social practice. In this way, the student is challenged to create and to be a central part of this creative

process. In relation to the language capacities that can be developed through this activity, the signification capacities may potentially develop the ways of acting, thinking and feeling of those who produce it as well as engagement in language activities. In terms of action capacities, students can make inferences about the genre and its immediate production context. In discursive capacities, students must recognize the text and its organization. And finally, regarding multisemiotic capacities, we can list two that have the potential to be developed with the above-mentioned activity: recognition of the verbal and non-verbal elements of the genre in question. Lastly, in view of Vygotsky's concept of the more experienced peer, the teacher/support teacher will be able to work more closely with the student living with ASD, helping and guiding their way of expressing their preferences, sometimes recording when the student expresses themselves in another way, accompanying activities that require greater concentration on motor coordination and providing multiple possibilities for the student's expression.

**Images 5 and 6:** Did you know what is a lap book?/Let's see some examples.

**DID YOU KNOW WHAT IS A LAP BOOK?**

A LAP BOOK É UMA ESPÉCIE DE LIVRO CRIADO PELOS ALUNOS A PARTIR DE UM CONTEÚDO, SEMPRE COLORIDO COM COLAGENS E RECORTES.

**LET'S DO IT**

3) VAMOS CRIAR UM MINI LAP BOOK PARA FALAR SOBRE VOCÊ, COM SUAS INFORMAÇÕES PESSOAIS:

- NOME
- IDADE
- COMIDA PREFERIDA
- BRINQUEDO PREFERIDO

**Let's see some examples.**

**You will need.**

- CARTÃO OU SIVETE COLORIDO
- LÁPIS DE COR
- CANETINHA
- LIVRO PARA RECORTES OU DESENHOS IMPRESSOS PARA PINTAR.

COLE UMA PEQUENA FOTO AQUI

THIS IS ME AND MY LAPBOOK

Source: first author's DS.




### 5.3 ACTIVITY 04 – IT IS STORY TIME

The fourth activity has the playful objectives of presenting children's literature in English, with the aim of stimulating creativity and enabling students to express their emotions. The storytelling can be carried out using a variety of media such as videos, manipulatives, images, books, the choice being up to the teacher. The signification capacity that can be developed through this activity is the recognition of the genre and its story, and in relation to the capacity for action, students must mobilize their own funds of knowledge in order to understand the story. The discursive capacity to understand the function and organization of the story. And finally the multisemiotic capacities of recognizing non-verbal language such as images and sounds through the various media that can be used for storytelling by the teacher. Echoing Vygotsky's ideas in relation to the more experienced peer, the teacher must take into account the hyper-focuses of the student living with ASD in order to be able to adapt the storytelling in an inclusive way, bringing this student closer to facilitate their understanding.

Image 7: It is story time.

**It is story time**

**LET'S LISTEN TO A STORY ABOUT EMOTIONS.  
THE NAME OF THE STORY IS: THE COLOUR MONSTER**

SOURCE: [HTTPS://EYTONPRIMARY.CO.UK/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2021/02/THE-COLOUR-MONSTER-BOOK.PDF](https://eytonprimary.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/THE-COLOUR-MONSTER-BOOK.PDF)




SOURCE: [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/W6WIEP-M4TG?SI=XNYPGVPOPIY\\_N\\_Z7](https://youtu.be/w6wIeP-M4TG?si=XNYPGVPOPIY_N_Z7)

FOR THE CHILDREN LIVING WITH AUTISM, IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE THE VISUAL THINGS CONSIDERING THAT THEY HAVE DIFFICULTS IN COMMUNICATION

TEACHER, YOU CAN USE DIFFERENT SOURCES TO TELL THE STORY, SUCH AS TOYS, FLASH CARDS, MISTERIOUS BOXES.

09

Source: first author's DS.

## 5.4 ACTIVITY 16 – CREATE

In this activity the student is invited to make a drawing using the shape of their own hand drawing their family members with the finger.

**Image 8:** Create.

**Create!**

3) CRIE A SUA FINGER FAMILY USANDO A SUA MÃO, ESCREVA OS NOMES DOS MEMBROS DA FAMÍLIA EM INGLÊS PARA CADA DEDINHO:

A PRESENÇA DA FAMÍLIA DE DE SEMA IMPORTANCIA PARA A CONCESSÃO DO INGLÊS FORA DA ESCOLA. A FAMÍLIA TAMÉM PODE ENCONTRAR A PRESENÇA MAIS CONCERTÁVEL DE REGISTRO DAS ATIVIDADES PARA O ALUNO QUE VIVE COM AUTISMO E ADAPTAR A REALIDADE DA MESMA

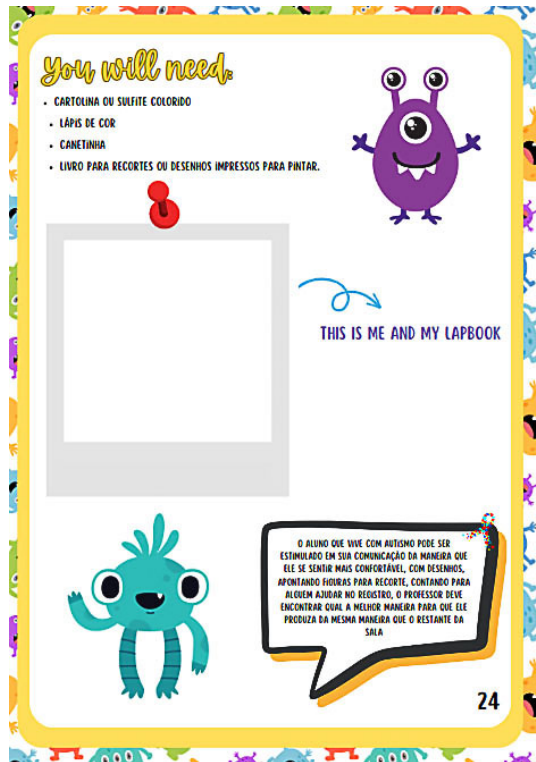
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**Source:** first author's DS.

During this activity the students can develop the signification capacities by being able to engage with the genre, based on the video they watched previously, where it was produced, who produced it and thus engage with this vocabulary and apply them to their reality when making their own family finger with the members of their family. The action capacities that could potentially be developed include the relationship between the language and the words in the activity and the cultural aspects of the formation of different types of families. The discursive capacities that can be developed with the activity in question mobilize the student to recognize the characteristics of the genre in question, the title, the images present in the video and mobilize this knowledge to carry out the activity, Finally the multisemiotic capacities that work on the student establishing the connection between the verbal and nonverbal language present in the video by associating the images with the music, and the vocabulary, recognizing the importance of this relationship and connecting it to aspects of their

reality. Lastly, in relation to the concept of the more experienced peer established by Vygotsky, the teacher or support teacher can work with the student living with ASD, anticipating that it is an activity that involves music and sounds, already preparing and finding the most comfortable way for the student to deal with the auditory sensitivity that some students living with the disorder may have, the teacher can also encourage repetition and interaction between teacher and student with the words of the activity in question. The family inclusion was carried out during the didactic sequence activity as it is important in long-term education with children as it involves the community inside and outside the school.

**Image 9** – You will need.



**Source:** first author's didactic sequence

Taking into consideration the language capacities that can be developed through this final activity, the signification capacities can develop the text and the ways of acting, thinking and feeling of those who produce it,

and can also engage the student in language activities. In relation to the action capacities, the children can make inferences about the genre and its immediate production context. In discursive capacities, students must recognize the text and its organization. And to finish with the multisemiotic capacities, we can list two that can be developed with this activity: recognizing the verbal and non-verbal relationships of the genre. About Vygotsky's concept of the more experienced peer, the teacher/support teacher will be able to work more closely with the student living with ASD, helping and guiding their way of expressing their preferences, sometimes recording when the student expresses themselves in another way, accompanying activities that require greater concentration on motor coordination. The teacher can also work with the student in an individual way using the English language to see what vocabulary the student already knows and mobilize the knowledge for new vocabulary and talks.

## 6. FINAL REMARKS

The main goal of this current text was to showcase a DS for teaching in English as an additional language class that meets the teaching/learning needs of children living with autism, as the general and specific objectives pointed out in the beginning of this work. This work emerged from the curiosity to study more about children living with autism, from personal experiences in classes with students that live with ASD and how they learn English as an additional language. We started the work with bibliographical research, studying authors that have already talked about the teaching of English and the teaching of this language for children living with autism. With all the reading and studies about the theme we were able to create the DS, working with the concepts studied in the bibliographical research. After the creation of the DS, we started to analyze this material guided by the lenses cited in the methodology section, such as the language capacities, the guiding questions of Pontara and, finally, the concept of a more experienced pair by Vygotsky, being the lens of utmost importance in our work.

With all this in mind, we believe that our objectives with this work were achieved, since with the creation and analysis of the DS we point all the language capacities that can be developed for all the students,

including the ones that live with autism and make some suggestions based on Vygotsky and the more experienced pair and how the teacher can work with the student who lives with ASD. It is also important to mention the importance of the inclusion, and how this occurs during the DS bearing in mind that the activities are the same for all the students in which we do not make any difference between the students and the one who lives with ASD, the only difference is how the teacher can adapt each activity for the student who lives with autism, taking into consideration the specificities that autism bring, especially in relation to communication.

All in all, it is essential to notice that the effectiveness of this didactic sequence can only be truly affirmed when applied with students living with autism in the classroom which, at this moment, is not part of the scope of this work. Thinking of future works, we can expand this research and effectively apply the DS on a real classroom, apply all the parts, methods and activities developed in this work, to see how the inclusion happens and if the student living with autism as well as the other students in the class can effectively develop their language capacities as we intended.

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# 5. Using the didactic book through a critical literacy-based approach: preparing, exploring and problematizing in English classes

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The following study was elaborated from experiences made in student-teachers supervised training in a public high school in the city of Apucarana. During this experience period, we reflected about the learners' education as critical citizens, a formation much sought by the state curriculum guidelines, and their processes of constructing their awareness towards the language, its power relations and their role as citizens of the world.

In Brazil, there are official documents that instruct and guide the teaching processes in regular schools. These official plans, developed by Paraná's State Education Secretariat (SEED) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), provide objectives, approach suggestions, ability development, structural contents, action strategies and many other proposals to orient teachers' pedagogical planning.

The Statewide Curriculum Guidelines<sup>40</sup> for Modern Foreign Languages is one of these documents and it presents objectives such as “[...] overcome the view of a Foreign Language teaching as a way to achieve communicative goals, restraining the learning

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40 In this research the term “Statewide Curriculum Guidelines” will be used as our translation to refer to the state of Paraná's official documents, in Portuguese named “Diretrizes Curriculares Estaduais”.

possibilities as a cultural and social identification experience [...]”<sup>41</sup> (PARANÁ, 2008, p.52).

One of the authors from this work made some observations sessions in a public school English classes, and realized some of the goals proposed by the official documents were not being accomplished in an effective way. That led us to question if the approaches adopted by these English Language teachers were appropriate to achieve the presented objectives.

As we have noted previously in these English Language classes, students have a broad potential to be critical towards what they experience in the classroom. They used to question the purposes of the activities developed in the classes, proposed by the teacher, and also the goals for learning English, for instance.

Given this scenario, we have reflected upon the possibility of using the English Language didactic material, provided by the state government for the state public schools, through a critical approach. According to Hardwood (2008), the purpose of a critical approach is to engage students to think critically and to have a broader perspective of the language, the students’ reality and the world from their own point of view, leading and motivating them to have their own opinion about the mentioned points.

English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) classes can be challenging to students in the point that they are able to deconstruct and reconstruct their views about society and many other subjects, reaching a broader awareness about their role in the transformation of society (JORDÃO, FOGAÇA, 2012).

Through the observation of classes and the reflections about some deficits in the English Language class, that could be related to the teacher’s approach and how students respond to the mentioned method, our general objective is to analyze how lessons can be designed based on a critical literacy approach, using the didactic material given in order to relate the methods used with the goals once established by the official documents.

In order to accomplish the primary aim of this research, the specific

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41 Our translation for the excerpt “[...] superar uma visão de ensino de Língua Estrangeira Moderna apenas como meio para se atingir fins comunicativos que restringem as possibilidades de sua aprendizagem como experiência de identificação social e cultural [...]”.

goals are: a) plan and analyze critical literacy-based lesson plans from the English Language didactic material provided by the state government in public schools, approaching the texts presented in the book units in a provocative and instigating way; b) provide further information concerning planning classes from the didactic book contents, encompassing the goals set in the documents towards students' critical development, which comes from the perspective that EFL teaching is not an isolated practice from social, cultural and historical matters.

We would like to emphasize that our intention with these investigations is not precisely to make students become critical with the use of the unit here mentioned, but to demonstrate that it is not necessary to create a whole new didactic material, for the reason that there is already the material provided by the state government. What we desire to show here is that if we add some new ways to get students' attention, we can work with this material in order to develop their critical thinking.

From our perspective, the material should not only be used as a tool for enhancing the identity of the EFL discipline as a fundamental component in students' school curriculum, but also as an instrument for reflection about language use and goals. The content would be adapted, if necessary, and approached through more provocative means.

Taking that into consideration, this can also demonstrate that, through a more critical approach of the units, students might realize the importance of the critical language awareness as well as the contribution it could possibly bring for an effective construction of citizenship. Furthermore, from the suggestions and approach here presented, teachers may be able to improve their own language awareness when planning their classes

This chapter is divided in four sections. In sequence, the sections are: the theoretical framework, containing the foundation of the research, the methodology, explaining the details of how the research was done, the analysis, where we show our contribution to the material, followed by our final considerations.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Considering that the focus established for this research is to analyze how lessons can be planned based on a critical literacy approach using the didactic material given and relating the methods used with the goals once established by the official documents, the theoretical framework is divided in sections concerning some critical literacy conceptions, the perspective in which this study is based, and the contextualization of the Brazilian EFL classroom's issues.

In this section are also included some reflections about the practices in the EFL classroom based on the observation period from the practicum stage in the public school and possible contributions of critical literacy for the presented context.

### 2.1 BASIC CONCEPTIONS OF CRITICAL LITERACY

In line with the studies we have done for this research, when talking about critical stances on pedagogy, literacy, and other elements, most scholars have been carrying the name of a fundamental specialist, among others, on the field of critical pedagogy and awareness: Paulo Freire (GREEN, 2001).

This analysis will be done through the Freirean perspective of critical pedagogy, which encompasses notions about knowledge, literacy, thinking and empowerment. According to Wallace (1998), Freire's view of knowledge encompasses collective search and attempts to reflect and act on the world, focusing on the previous knowledge of the students and the collectiveness rather than individual ownership.

Freire (1974) talks about *conscientização*<sup>42</sup>, which basically refers to learning to be aware about the contradictions contained in the fields of the context surrounding individuals (social, political and economic). He had studied about the oppressed, people who are afraid of awareness, lack of confidence and also believe in the power of the oppressor.

Oppressed people, according to Freire (1974), may not recognize themselves as part of the world and their society. That would be consequence of the oppression they have experienced. In order to achieve liberation and solve this problem, the only way would be one in which the oppressed perceive their own reality and their struggle to transform it.

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42 The term "conscientização" is not translated in the book, therefore I preferred not to translate it.

What has been generating and perpetuating this relation of oppressive domain, especially in Brazil, was the exploitation of the population, even through education and knowledge. According to Freire (1974):

More and more, the oppressors are using science and technology as unquestionably powerful instruments for their purpose: the maintenance of the oppressive order through manipulation and repression. The oppressed, as objects, as “things”, have no purposes except those their oppressors prescribe for them. (p.60)

In order to maintain this oppressive form of social control, there is an educational concept Freire called as “banking education”. This model of education, in his view, “inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world [...]” (FREIRE, 1974, p.83).

Yet, another educational concept, also brought by the same scholar, called “problem posing education” is an alternative model to the previously mentioned. While banking education means simply treating students as “objects of assistance”, problem-posing education “makes them (learners) critical thinkers” (FREIRE, 1974, p.83).

Alexander (1989 *apud* PETRECHE 2009, p.7) defines critical thinking as ‘the filter through which learners acquire information, perceiving it and judging its relevance’<sup>43</sup>. This process encloses learners’ cognitive capacities of comparison, classification, interpretation, criticizing, inferring, predicting, analyzing and synthesizing the information presented.

For the purpose of implementing problem-posing education, leading to critical thinking, some scholars consider critical literacy a valuable instrument to such means. It is a key to empowerment and, according to Wallace (1998), a challenge to hegemony that leads to questioning one’s own cultural practices.

Critical literacy, in a Freirean perspective, is comprehended as a response to the oppression and exploitation of the population in Brazil, which is a possible way to rebuild their identities and realities through the signification

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43 Our translation for: “[...] Alexander (1989 *apud* PETRECHE 2009, p.7) que define a expressão “pensamento crítico” como sendo o filtro através do qual os aprendizes adquirem a informação, percebendo-a e julgando sua relevância”.

process of their actions (MATTOS & VALÉRIO, 2010). However, in order to achieve transformation, students must undergo an empowerment process.

Empowerment, according to Freire (1974), is the oppressed acknowledgement of one's position in society and the causes that led to that situation, struggling to transform the domain structure in which they are immersed, constructing and deconstructing the idea of liberation.

This process may be enabled through a critical perspective applied to the language teaching. Therefore, through a critical approach it would be possible to give students broader ways to question, analyze and reflect upon their own reality, making the processes of signification and language learning more valuable or even possibly opening paths to empowerment.

## 2.2 EFL CLASSES IN BRAZILIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A BRIEF PANORAMA

In Brazil, the EFL classes in public schools are commonly associated to ineffectiveness and setbacks. According to Leffa (2011), the dilemma is that there has always been a pursuit of someone or something to blame for students' failure at learning the English Language and teachers' frustration in accomplishing this goal effectively.

As one of the authors could observe previously during the practicum stage in a public school, there are some possible reasons for the disappointment of teachers and students towards the English Language learning.

Mattos & Valério (2010) pinpoint some of the situations faced by teachers and students in Brazilian public schools, such as:

The distance between Brazilian learners and real communication situations in the target language; the convenience of safe grounds with narrow demands of the structural approach; the communicative deficits of the own teachers concerning the language use; [...] excessively crowded classrooms and the naturally developed conduct of the traditional classes environment with its availability of seats; the short period of time established to Foreign Languages in the syllabus; [...] (p. 136).

44 Our translation for: "A distância entre os aprendizes brasileiros e situações reais de comunicação na língua-alvo; a conveniência do terreno seguro e com menores demandas da abordagem estrutural; as deficiências comunicativas dos próprios professores no uso do idioma; [...] turmas excessivamente

The Brazilian realities in public schools concerning Foreign Languages classrooms are issues that demotivate both teachers and students. The issues observed in the context researched are that the texts presented in the provided didactic books are much difficult to be worked in class and, sometimes, teachers may have doubts on how to work with large texts in a foreign language, for its genre social impact, context, or other linguistic functions.

Furthermore, the level of language in the book differs, in some cases considerably, from the level of language that students have, which consequently leads some teachers to presume students will not learn, in the worry about their comprehension.

Providing that scenario, students' learning in EFL is not related to authentic use of language and its significations have no specific purposes in the classes (Mattos & Valério, 2010). In most of the classes observed it was noticed that the work with texts and genres could be considered superficial.

To put it another way, the text has been explored in a linear way, not getting into further reflections about the genre meanings and goals, figures of speech, ideologies, context and other language elements.

During the observations, it was noticed that students lacked interest in the classes, contents and most of the things presented by the teacher. From that, we presumed that a different approach could have a better outcome into engaging students on learning the English Language.

Considering that the work with genres, according to Statewide Curriculum Guidelines (2008, p.58) "attempts to broaden the comprehension of the several usages of the language, as well as the alternative interpretative procedures in the reader's significations construction process"<sup>45</sup>, the work observed could not be considered as successful as it aimed to be.

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numerosas e a conduta naturalmente decorrente do ambiente de sala de aula tradicional, com sua disposição de assentos; o pouco tempo destinado à LE na grade curricular; [...]."

45 Our translation for the article's excerpt: "O trabalho com a Língua Estrangeira Moderna fundamenta-se na diversidade de gêneros textuais e busca alargar a compreensão dos diversos usos da linguagem, bem como a ativação de procedimentos interpretativos alternativos no processo de construção de significados possíveis pelo leitor".

Moreover, in the observations and the talks had with the teacher, there was another issue in the way of developing a meaningful learning process for students: the didactic material usage, which shall be analyzed in the next sections.

Another key thing we have reflected upon was the criticism that students had toward the classes, questioning points the teacher presented concerning the contents and also their grades and evaluation criteria. The students already had potential for critical thinking, but their criticism was not being directed to the language awareness or the themes presented in the classes, though it could have been considered legit and spontaneous.

Once again, from the Statewide Curriculum Guidelines' (2008) perspective, the EFL classrooms ought to have active discourse interaction, which means students should participate on the social processes of language construction in order to develop their criticism and create their own meaning for what is being presented to them.

For these reasons, we have decided to conciliate a critical approach for the EFL classes using the didactic material, in order to analyze how meaningful the lessons can be when attempting to develop their critical skills according to the documents, showing how valuable the didactic textbook may be in this process.

### **2.3 A CRITICAL LITERACY-BASED APPROACH: POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO EFL LEARNING**

According to Jordão & Fogaça (2007), critical literacy is an educational approach based on a discursive view of the world which attributes a fundamental role to the language in the process of understanding our experiences. Grounded in this conception, the experience here presented could provide possible contributions for this context's students learning process and the development of their awareness.

Some previous studies concerning the development of EFL learners' critical literacy, as Ko's (2013) for instance, point that these learners' language proficiency level was not an obstacle. The author states that "critical literacy could be implemented in the EFL context even though the students' English proficiency was still limited, but special attention should be paid to the selection of reading materials and the use of target and first language" (2013, p. 11).



Furthermore, the Statewide Curriculum Guidelines (2008) acknowledge that:

[...] no language is neutral, and languages may represent several cultures and ways of living; in fact, they may as well be used as an extent of intercultural communication, for their usage in diverse communities, many times even by speakers who do not have them as their mother tongue. [...] It is the teacher's duty to create conditions for the student not to be a naïve reader, but a critical reader [...].<sup>46</sup> (PARANÁ, 2008. p. 66).

Taking this into consideration, the proposal of the lessons will be an attempt to provide some of the above-mentioned conditions through the lessons planned, in order to breach with the traditional EFL classroom's education, that according to Mattos & Valério (2010, p.141) "serve to the perpetuation of the currently existent power relations, promoting the conformation through obstructing the individual's questioning opportunity"<sup>47</sup>.

For Green (2001, p.10) "a critical perspective of literacy argues for an active, challenging approach to literacy". In other words, through the usage of critical literacy students may feel challenged to explore deeper into the construction of texts, leading them to become aware of the author's position towards the subject and also their own as readers.

Even though critical literacy is an instrument that might be liberating, it may not transform students' lives and have a great impact in the world. It may be, as Green (2001, p.8) claims, a "double-edged sword".

According to the same author, literacy may be even exploitative if not taught in a problem-posing model of education, which presupposes teaching through dialogues and debates, not imposing one's view about a text as the correct one, possibly biasing students' perspective about the presented text.

46 Our translation for: "[...] nenhuma língua é neutra, e as línguas podem representar diversas culturas e maneiras de viver; inclusive, podem passar a ser um espaço de comunicação intercultural, por serem usadas em diversas comunidades, muitas vezes até por falantes que não as têm como língua materna. [...] cabe ao professor criar condições para que o aluno não seja um leitor ingênuo, mas que seja crítico [...]."

47 Original: "[...] o tipo de educação promovida pela sala de aula tradicional está a serviço da perpetuação das relações de poder já existentes, promovendo a conformação ao privar o indivíduo de oportunidades para questionamentos".

Sadeghi (2009, p. 365) points out that a dialogical approach “[...] abandons the lecture format and the banking approach to education in favor of dialogue and open communication among students and teachers’]. This way, students should be able to investigate critically each other’s context, cooperating, learning and becoming more aware through dialogue.

Hence, by adopting a critical literacy-based approach, the experience of learning the English Language, which also includes its perspectives, power relations and its heterogeneity, students may be able to develop reflecting upon dominant ideologies imposed by society. As we see it, a critical approach could possibly provide students an opportunity to transform their own social context, or preserve it the way it is. From that perspective, the next topic presents the methodology we have adopted for this research, concerning lesson plans, data gathering and its analysis procedures.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This is a qualitative documentary research, for its usage of documents in scientific investigation (SÁ-SILVA, ALMEIDA & GUINDANI, 2009) and analysis of these official documents and lessons seeking to provide further clarifications about designing critical literacy based classes. Therefore, this section presents clarifications about how Edmundo’s (2013) perspective, which substantiates this analysis, related to designing lesson plans and some matters related to the didactic material used in the preparation of the classes.

#### **3.1 THE USAGE OF THE DIDACTIC MATERIAL IN EFL CLASSES**

In the Brazilian context, it is known that each state reunites teachers and counselors in order to choose the best didactic material of all the mandatory subjects for their state institutions. For that, they must take into account if the material provides authentic texts, the development of various types of genre, the adequacy to the learner’s age and reality, subjects of the interest of the learners and the instruction of usage of the material in the classroom by the teachers.

Another key thing to remember is that the language, according to Statewide Curriculum Guidelines for Foreign Languages (2008), must be

treated with social and dynamic principles, since it is a historical and cultural construction. To that end, the didactic material chosen must be an engaging tool on the learners' development process with a social interaction environment.

An issue to be pinpointed here by the studies and observations made in the practicum stage is the work with the didactic material in the EFL classroom. What happened in the context studied was that the teachers, in their own rights, chose not to work with the material designed for the English Language classes.

During the practicum experience, one of the authors of this research observed, participated and taught English Language classes in a regular public school in Apucarana, in the state of Paraná, Brazil. These classes were supervised by the groups' English teacher. It was possible to notice some issues concerning the disproportionality between the school's number of different age-groups taught by the teacher and the time they have to prepare their lessons.

Therefore, we have reflected upon a possible reason for teachers choosing not to use the provided textbooks when planning their lessons: they might not have been able to analyze the material properly. Besides, the teacher must select adequate approaches to the material and also consider the aspects evolving the groups' critical development.

Still regarding teachers and the issues faced in this environment, it is necessary to consider the oppressive/domain relations that have been perpetuated in education, which was briefly described previously (FREIRE, 1974). Mattos and Valério explain some changes that have been occurring in the social scenario of education in Brazilian public schools.

In classrooms' social scenario, the standards of conduct which delegate the monopoly of knowledge and interactional rules' control to the teacher, ones which include the domain of teacher-student turn-taking system, have given space to the negotiation of knowledge and a more flexible perspective about the roles developed in the classroom.<sup>48</sup> (MATTOS, VALÉRIO, 2010, p.140)

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48 Excerpt translated by the author. Original fragment: No cenário social da sala de aula, as regras de conduta que delegam ao professor o monopólio do saber e do controle das regras interacionais, as quais

Even though, nowadays, teachers have their autonomy in their classes and are supported by national and statewide official guidelines and other policies concerning education, in the practicum scenario, the above-mentioned relations were fairly frequent. Hence, still reflecting upon the issue and the decisions for their preference on not using the book, it is the teachers' call to decide which material, themes, kinds of practice and approach they are going to work with.

Thus, as far as we are concerned, they might possibly be influenced by the "supremacy" of their authority in classrooms, so considering these aspects on planning the lessons would only be meaningful for students if they were convenient for teachers. Aside from those concerns, in spite of the teacher's effort in preparing adequate lessons to every single age-group, in classrooms formed by an average of 35–40 students per group, they were not able to designed lessons that would contemplate the parameters established by their school and the Statewide Guidelines (PARANÁ, 2008).

This situation here mentioned is brought up from the teachers' care about students' learning and comprehension. From our analysis towards the teachers' justifications, the book provides texts that go further and beyond students' level of knowledge, that is to say it would be rather not interesting to use this material, even in a linear approach.

As Ko (2013) states, the materials for developing critical literacy classroom ought to be connected to students' lives and reality-based, as well as attend to students' and the teachers' level of proficiency.

On the researched context, the teacher had previously analyzed the material and reached a verdict that it would not fit well for those students, choosing to work with an extra textbook, one which students only had access if the teacher put on the board or through copies, which is more concerned about grammatical topics, considering it more adequate.

The groups observed in during the practicum experience were 2<sup>nd</sup> year high-school students. There were two groups, formed by 40 students each. From what was noted, most of these learners have shown themselves

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incluem o comando do sistema de troca de turnos, deram lugar à negociação de saberes decorrente de uma visão mais flexível dos papéis desempenhados na sala de aula.

demotivated to participate in English classes, and had a major concern about their grades.

These students showed some concerns about other issues in their lives, such as work and extracurricular activities and, therefore, did not show much interest in English classes. The relationship they had with their teacher was not what Leffa (2010) considers as one of complicity – one in which they established common goals in classes and worked as a team to achieve those.

Furthermore, these students were not used to bring and have responsibility towards their textbooks in English classes, given the fact that their teacher would not use it. Public schools' teachers are on their absolute right to analyze and choose what is best for their students, being able to use the proposed didactic material in the classrooms, making adaptations on it, or even create their own material, adapting it to their learners and their methodological procedures.

However, under our analysis, it is worthy to use the didactic material in the EFL classroom once it attends to the above-mentioned requirements. These materials may be considered valuable and rich in content, and conciliating them to critical literacy could be an alternative to develop students' awareness and language in context.

The material analyzed in this research, which is the one already adopted by the school visited during the practicum period, is the didactic book *Way to go!* (2013), for second year high school students.

Developed by Kátia Tavares<sup>49</sup> and Claudio Franco<sup>50</sup>, the book joins some critical thinking activities to an instrumental approach, based on reading strategies – such as prediction, skimming, scanning and others, and language focus sections, concerning grammar. In the analysis section,

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we present the book sections and the directions given for teachers to work with it on their classes, allied with some adaptations and the lesson plans.

### **3.2 PLANNING CRITICAL LITERACY-BASED LESSONS**

Joining the objectives provided by the official documents to the development of EFL students' critical thinking and language awareness development, we have planned lessons from the didactic book proposed by the state government, making use of a more provocative tactic, considering that a critical literacy-based class evolves students' participation and discussion surrounding the themes and contents given by the book.

On classes that activate students' critical thinking, according to Statewide Curriculum Guidelines (2008), those must react to texts and activities proposed, understanding the story, ideologies and particular values inserted in their context, being instigated to seek for possible solutions to their questions and needs related to their learning process.

Having these perspectives in mind, our proposal with the EFL classes was to use the didactic material in order to achieve the above-mentioned reactions from the participants during the practicum period. The grammatical content to be taught was provided by the classroom teacher, being those "the comparative and superlative degree of adjectives" and "the second conditional", both were part of the teacher's annual teaching plan, presented in the didactic book.

In order to make further exploration of the critical thinking sections of the book, we have created some complementary questions as an attempt to have students improve their interpretation skills and reflect upon the themes presented in the book related to their reality.

Designed for each of the grammatical competences, suggested by the researched group's teacher, the book brings different themes for contextualization. To introduce the studies about the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, the book brings the theme "Overcoming obstacles", relating to sports, paralympic athletes and world records in sports, which is in the second unit of the book. For the second conditional studies, the theme presented is related to life experiences, which is in the seventh unit of the book, entitled "Live and Learn".

When planning these lessons, we aimed at not only teaching language aspects, such as the given grammatical competences and related vocabulary, but also at having critical moments, proposing discussion and reflection about the themes already presented by the didactic material. We preferred to work with both themes because we could establish a link between them, aiming at developing a final project that would connect all the studied and discussed topics.

From Pennycook's perspective (2004), in order to have potential changes in their experiences concerning critical development, it is necessary to consider the spontaneous moments of critical enlightenment aroused in classes.

My interest here is in the smaller, unplanned micro-moments when the possibilities for critical reflection come and go. Rather than a critical-directive framework in which the ideas and issues have been laid out beforehand, then, I am looking for a critical alternative or a critical nondirective option, one in which other possibilities come to the fore as we discuss choices that were made in class. (PENNYCOOK, 2004, p.355)

Considering the given scenario for the practicum experiences and its issues, which have also been a key motivator to develop this research, we reflected upon the above-mentioned perspective related to the reality of the environment observed previously. Regarding these aspects, both Pennycook's (2004) perspective and the practicum's reality, it would not have been possible to develop their critical awareness as we aimed if we had not planned moments for critical discussions.

For the issues we have previously described faced in the practicum stage, we reflected upon the possibility of students not taking part in classes and not being able to be critical towards what would be presented to them without beforehand preparation of moments of criticality during classes.

Having this concern in mind, we have planned discussions surrounding the themes previously mentioned. For each lesson planned, we have proposed questions related to gender exclusivity in some sports practice, stories about overcoming obstacles, debates about how the students deal

with difficulties in life compared to some worldwide celebrities, and other questionings about those themes.

These kinds of discussion activities, which may provide some questionings and reflections, according to Petreche (2009), can lead students to analyze and identify the kinds of information presented in the texts and the kinds of information that come from their background basis on the subject.

As a possible result for the implementation of this approach allied to the book contents, students ought to think more critically and thoroughly about their practices and what is being presented to them.

In order to prepare these lessons, it was necessary to do some background research and analyze the fundamental aspects to provide these critical moments during classes. On the next topic, we explain the criteria used for the analysis of the lesson plans, based on the perspective of Edmundo (2013), a scholar in Linguistic Studies that has published some studies concerning the inclusion of critical literacy for EFL teaching in regular public schools in Brazil.

### **3.3 ENCOMPASSING CRITICAL LITERACY IN LESSON PLANS: PREPARATION, EXPLORATION AND PROBLEMATIZATION**

According to Edmundo (2013), the situation that Brazilian regular schools face is focusing in three aspects: formal education, foreign language and critical development. The relationship of these three values, in this context, should be equally developed in EFL classes.

Yet, what happens is that schools prioritize formal education, including English Language on the curriculum, still from the perspective that learning a language means grammatical or vocabulary studies and getting to communicate through communicative functions (EDMUNDO, 2013, p.13).

Meanwhile, students' critical development is left behind in the EFL teaching context. The author explains that this perspective is being surpassed although the worry about critical development is still not a priority, or treated as it is proposed.

Edmundo (2013, p.13) states that the notion proposed for critical development means providing a broader perspective about language teaching, concerning society matters and its changes, in order to make



students reflect upon issues faced in their reality from several different angles. This proposal is related to the previously mentioned problem-posing model of education, in which students will be engaged as active and aware citizens, participating of political issues and other matters relating to their context.

One of the issues this scholar pinpoints is the distance between a critical literacy-based practice and the EFL teaching process. This distance means the difficulty in materializing a critical approach into projects or other types of concrete results for the teachers' works in the classes.

To make this connection joining critical literacy theories and meaningful practices in English Language classes, Edmundo (2013) suggests a methodological procedure based on the Pedagogical Orientations Journal (2006/2007) also developed by the State Education Secretariat of Paraná (SEED). This other document provides didactic materials for English Language teachers, ruled on the approach of texts through three interdependent sections: "**preparation, exploration** (content and methodology) and **problematization**" (2013, p. 103).

The preparation stage includes contents selection based in themes, as the critical literacy perspective coherently suggests. The aspects to be considered when choosing the contents are that these must be meaningful and interesting for students and the themes should approach social matters through different viewpoints, also encompassing a variety of genres, textual modalities and the language use contexts (EDMUNDO, 2013).

As Edmundo (2013) states, the **exploration** section evolves activities that explore texts' discursive aspects and the reading processes. These activities should not only provide the development of students' perceptions of a genre's characteristics, but also the texts' global planning (p. 103). To trigger this kind of practice cohesively, the author suggests the development of a Didactic Sequence, based on Schneuwly & Dolz (1999) theory.

From a Didactic Sequence, in these scholars' perspective, it is possible to have different perspectives in means of language analysis, linguistic resources, text's themes and expression resources, as well as reflections surrounding grammatical aspects and aspects incorporated in the

construction of the discourses, not dealing exclusively with structure and categorization. This methodology offers the opportunity of having a more significant construction of meanings for students, relating the knowledge to be acquired to their contexts.

Concerning **problematization** aspects, Edmundo (2013) explains that the necessity of this element in classes comes as basic criteria proposed by the critical literacy framework. This section aims at providing in classes the acknowledgement and (re)elaboration of meanings for students towards discursive constructions, approaching the themes and contents attempting to provoke students' perception to a more critical reading, beyond words, vocabularies and structures (p. 40–41).

Souza (2010, *apud* EDMUNDO, 2013) claims that approaching through problematization “makes students reflect further about texts' appearance, authenticity and independence of opinions and knowledges”. Edmundo reaffirms this statement, recognizing that:

In English Language, these perceptions contribute to the expansion of the goals of students' identities, in the proportion that the alternative interpretative procedures' appropriation seeks the possibility of having a different glance towards the reality and the world [...] (2013, p. 40).<sup>51</sup>

From the unity of the three described elements, in the next section we analyze the didactic book, and the lessons planned based on its contents and the supervising teacher's curriculum.

#### 4. ANALYSIS

We have divided this investigation in two main topics, firstly analyzing the sections provided by the didactic material, and secondly analyzing two lessons we have planned for the practicum context given the here-presented approach and using the mentioned units of the book. The didactic

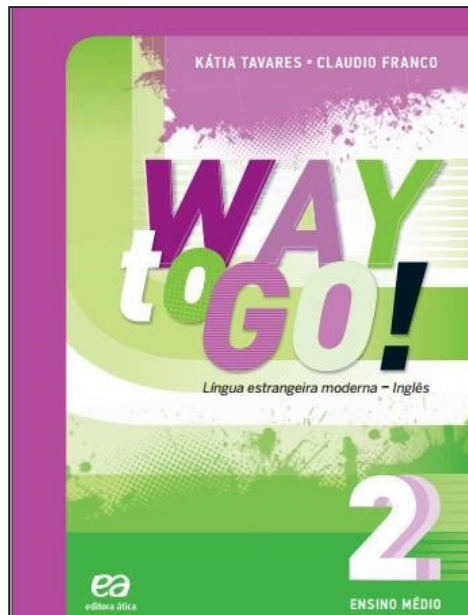
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51 Our translation for the excerpt: “No ensino de LI, tais percepções contribuem para a ampliação do escopo das identidades dos alunos, à medida que a apropriação de procedimentos interpretativos alternativos aos usuais, vislumbra a possibilidade de um novo olhar diferenciado para a realidade e para o mundo [...]” (EDMUNDO, 2013, p.40)

book is analyzed from our perspective considering the guidelines provided by the official documents and objectives to be achieved in EFL classes. As for the lesson plans, we analyze each stage proposed by Edmundo (2013), preparation, exploration and problematization, bringing possible re-adaptations for further critical development.

#### 4.1 THE DIDACTIC BOOK: WAY TO GO! VOL. 2

**Image 1:** Cover.



**Source:** Way to go! Vol. 2 digital book

In the book presentation the authors bring its objectives as a didactic material for EFL learning, being those contributing not only to second year high school students' development in English Language and its capacities, but also to their development as "individuals capable of using language in diversified social practices" (TAVARES & FRANCO, 2013, p.3).

This work is developed in the book through several textual genres and socially relevant themes, providing students an opportunity to be in contact with different perspectives and to reflect critically about their communities' and worldwide questions.

There are eight units in the book, providing reviews and projects after every two units studies (e.g.: Unit 1, Unit 2, Review 1, Project 1A...; see pictures 2 and 3). For each of the units provided, it is explored one main type of textual genre, encompassing vocabulary studies and grammar contents, all of them contextualized through a different theme. The book also provides further tools for supporting students' learning, such as Language Reference, an Irregular Verbs list and Glossary.

**Image 2:** Summary/Content chart, page 4. Content chart, page 5.  
**Image 3:** Summary/

Contents	
7	Centers are Born Tips into Practice
15	Unit 1 Cultural Diffusion
23	Unit 2 Choosing a Career
43	Review 1 Studying for Exams
47	Thinking about Learning
48	Project 1A
49	Unit 3 Overcoming Obstacles
63	Unit 4 Eating Habits
77	Review 2 Studying for Exams
80	Thinking about Learning
81	Project 1B

Source: digital book

83	Unit 5 Climate Change	Exploring letters to the editor Establishing connections with Geography, Biology Vocabulary Study Words with more than one meaning False cognates Discourse markers Language in Use Present Perfect
97	Unit 6 Lights, Camera, Action!	Exploring movie reviews Establishing connections with Arts, Languages Vocabulary Study False cognates Discourse markers Language in Use Present Perfect, since, for Present Perfect or Past Simple? Present Perfect, past, already, yet
111	Review 3 Studying for Exams	
114	Thinking about Learning	
115	Project 2A	
116		
117	Unit 7 Live and Learn	Exploring interviews Establishing connections with Philosophy, History, Sociology Vocabulary Study Discourse markers Subjunctive verbs Language in Use Second conditional Relative pronouns
131	Unit 8 Study Skills	Exploring comic strips Establishing connections with Arts, Languages Vocabulary Study Word formation Multi-word verbs Idioms Language in Use Futures with going to The more..., the more...
145	Review 4 Studying for Exams	
148	Thinking about Learning	
150	Project 2B	
151	Language Reference	
161	Irregular Verbs	
176	Glossary	
176	Index	
176	Bibliography	

Source: digital book

After the presentation and summary, the book brings some more clarifications for students and teachers understand and make better use of the tools and tips provided in the book. These clarifications are followed by a brief section called “Tips into practice”, where the authors highlight all the important aspects students should be aware of when solving the activities, guiding them explaining the goals of each practice, types of knowledge that are required to be activated and other elements.

From our perspective, this point is interesting because the authors bring clear explanation of the procedures each strategy evolve, which can

be seen as an attempt to lead students to reflect upon their objectives throughout the learning processes.

This didactic book takes into consideration problems pinpointed in the Statewide Curriculum Guidelines for Modern Foreign Languages (PARANÁ, 2008) concerning linear approaches to texts. According to this document, it is necessary to break with approaches that are mainly focusing on testing linguistic–discursive knowledges of a text, such as grammar, vocabulary, genre (structure) and others.

It is stated as an objective for approaching texts “the purpose of developing an active reader, capable of producing meanings when reading texts, such as: inferring from background knowledges, raising hypothesis towards the texts’ organization, perceive its intentions, etc.” (PARANÁ, 2008, p.70).<sup>52</sup>

Given this perspective, as the same document suggests, a communicative approach would best apply to EFL classes, once it integrates several competences (grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociocultural and probabilistic systems). Though as Mattos & Valério (2010) state, communicative teaching encompasses instrumental aspects in teaching, which would leave gaps concerning critical development. These gaps, according to these authors, can be fulfilled through an intersection joining the communicative approach and critical literacy.

The authors of the didactic book, *Way to go!*, have considered this concern, proposing a sequence for reading competences development: the main texts presented are authentic and corresponding to the principal genre to be explored in the unit, starting with the “Before Reading” section, followed by “Reading for General Comprehension”, “Reading for Detailed Comprehension” and “Reading for Critical Thinking” sections.

In the “Before Reading” section, the proposal is to activate previous knowledge about the topic presented in the text, having activities related to the theme, texts organization, and some vocabulary exercises. In the

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52 Our translation for the passage: “Pretende-se formar um leitor ativo, ou seja, capaz de produzir sentidos na leitura dos textos, tais como: inferir, servindo-se dos conhecimentos prévios; levantar hipóteses a respeito da organização textual; perceber a intencionalidade, etc.” (Diretrizes Curriculares Estaduais de Línguas Estrangeiras Modernas, Paraná, 2008)

sections of “Reading for General and Detailed Comprehension”, the activities proposed develop interpretation of the text, exploration of the theme leading to inductive grammar studies. After that, there is the “Reading for Critical Thinking”, raising two questions, relating the text to students’ reality, to be developed as a debate.

Therefore, using this material, as we see it, could facilitate teachers’ preparations, given that they would not have to prepare all the material necessary to teach, but think about how to approach the subjects presented, fitting to each group necessities and objectives. Furthermore, it is connected to the objectives proposed in the official documents, offering to EFL classes a proposal in which is possible to achieve development in the stages aimed at (personal, critical, citizen and foreign language learner levels) concomitantly.

As we have mentioned previously, the book develops critical literacy through inducing reading strategies, which are capable of instigating and promoting critical moments in EFL classes. This happens due to the book’s proposal of varied genres and strategies through different and updated themes contextualized to students’ realities. Because of these proposals, students may be led to reflect about situations beyond the ones presented in classes, related to the real-world context, learning, using and reflecting about the foreign in these real scenarios.

Yet, thinking further about the mostly varied classroom contexts and the many expected results, positive or negative ones, the questions proposed in the sections of “Reading for Critical Thinking” may not be provocative enough depending on the objectives to be achieved for critical development, classroom context and the teacher’s approach for the themes.

The Statewide Curriculum Guidelines proposes that the critical reflections to be made in EFL classes is only possible when there was a previous contact with it through verbal and nonverbal texts (PARANÁ, 2008). To achieve that, the teacher must look for strategies that will expose the language and its heterogeneity, analyzing its social implications, cultural values and beliefs, offering a space for a range of interpretations.

To our mind, it may be didactic book authors’ responsibility to prepare and reflect about the aspects related to preparation instructions to aid

teachers in order to explore the material and use it at its best considering their context, but there is no way to imagine every single variable of recurrent issues and needs for every single classroom context in which the book will be used because each of these contexts have unique aspects that only the teacher is able to analyze and deal with.

For this reason, in our point of view, to adequately deal with their contexts' particularities, teachers must resort to the official documents and focus on preparation steps to fill the remaining gaps on their classes to have the critical moments developed in a more meaningful way. In the next topic we present the lessons we have designed considering preparation, exploration and problematization from the book's contents, reflecting upon the adaptations to achieve these objectives.

#### **4.1 LESSON PLANS: PREPARING, EXPLORING AND PROBLEMATIZING IN EFL CLASSES USING THE DIDACTIC BOOK**

We started this study from the thought that it is possible to develop students critically while teaching EFL using the didactic material provided by the government for regular public schools. In the previous topic, we have analyzed the book and presented that the material itself can be very useful when having this objective, given that it proposes not only reflexive activities that make students aware of their own learning process, but also specific sections to provide critical moments in classes.

In this section we analyze two lessons, the first and the last ones, which we have planned to apply in a public school, for second year high school students, during the practicum period. The groups' teacher had previously selected the contents to be studied and, from those, we prepared eight classes, aiming at creating a cohesive sequence connecting the themes of the book's units, Overcoming Obstacles (unit 3) and Live and Learn (unit 7) in order to finish the practicum developing a small project.

The first lesson was planned from the third unit of the book, that brings the theme of overcoming barriers through sports, exploring mainly the textual genre profile and, for grammar content, making comparisons.

## Chart 1: Lesson Plan #1 – Unit 3 – Overcoming Obstacles

Group: 2nd Year – Public High School	
<b>Contents:</b>	Themes: Overcoming obstacles; Animals vs. Olympians; Comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives.
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p><b>General objective:</b> Introduce the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives related to sports vocabulary/thematic</p> <p><b>Specific objectives:</b> Develop students' critical literacy through the theme provided by the didactic book, Overcoming obstacles;</p> <p>Identify and use adjectives in their superlatives and comparative degrees, reflecting about the other provided theme, Animals vs. Olympians.</p> <p>Comprehend the context and concept of usage for comparative and superlative adjectives.</p>



### Group: 2nd Year – Public High School

<p><b>Methodology:</b></p>	<p>To check students' knowledge about sports vocabulary, brainstorm ideas about sports and discuss the following questions:</p> <p><b>Do you practice any sports/physical activities? Why (not)? / What are the benefits achieved through practicing sports?</b></p> <p>Explore the questions presented on page 49 to check if students know any of the athletes shown and what their stories are. • Divide students in smaller groups to do a memory activity: Take a picture of different sports' modalities in English and exhibit it for a minute. Explain to students that the group that is able remember more of the sports shown, scores more points.</p> <p>Moving to the book on page 50, discuss questions number 1 and 2 with students. Then, explain they will read a short biography to do activity number 3. Ask them to solve the activity and check briefly, discussing the questions: <b>"Do you know any stories of overcoming obstacles through sports/physical activities? If so, what's the story?", "Are there any sports practiced exclusively by men or women? If so, which ones? What's your opinion about it?"</b></p> <p>Write the question on the board and instigate them to justify their opinions: <b>"Animals vs. Olympians: Who would probably win this competition? Why?"</b></p> <p>After that, show students the video "Athletes Vs Animals Athletic Similarities in the Animal Kingdom and the Olympic Games" (3:06) and ask them the same question again, to see if there were any changes or extra comments.</p> <p>On page 51, in groups, ask students to do the activities from the "Before Reading" section and check them briefly.</p> <p>Ask them to move on to the text on page 52 and read it, discussing the text with them. From the question previously asked, show some examples comparing animals and Olympians records on the slides presentation and explain the grammar content (comparative and superlative adjectives).</p> <p>Develop the activities from the sections "Reading for General Comprehension" and "Reading for Detailed Comprehension". Check the answers and start a discussion from the questions provided in the "Reading for Critical Thinking" section, proposing another question after the ones proposed: <b>"If you were the coach of one of these athletes who had just been through a failure experience, how would you react to the situation?"</b> (p.53-54).</p> <p>As a practice for the topics presented, ask them to do the activities provided in the book from pages 55 to 59 (numbers 1 to 11), as homework to be corrected in the following class.</p>
<p><b>Material:</b></p>	<p>Board and chalk; Multimedia projector; Slides presentation; Flash drive; • Didactic book; Video.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b></p>	<p>Text reading and reflections; Participation in the discussions, development and correction of the activities; • Reflections about the discussed themes;</p>

As we previously mentioned for the methodology adopted, the **preparation** stage relates to themes and content selection to fit in with the groups' interests, considering language and genre varieties and other aspects. Given the fact that we used the didactic book, in which these contents have already been selected and studied, the preparation stage here relates to the methods we used to approach the theme.

In order to develop the objectives we established for this class (see Chart 1, Lesson Plan #1) and the provided theme in a critical way, we analyzed the book's proposal, which began with contextualizing the theme by showing the pictures of some Brazilian athletes, asking the questions "Do you know these people? What do they have in common?" (*Way to go!* Vol. 2 p. 49).

To activate more of students' background knowledge, we added a few steps before it to make them think further about the topic and how they relate to it. The starting point of the class was a brainstorm about sports, having them exploring vocabulary they had learned previously from two other questions, which were "Do you practice any sports/physical activities? Why (not)?" and "What are the benefits achieved through practicing sports?".

By asking these questions we aimed at getting to know their interest in the topic and their point of view of the relevance of practicing sports for them, and also their vision of how they and other people could benefit from this practice. After that, considering that this is an EFL class in which they are supposed to develop not only critically but also in their language capacities, we designed another activity to explore the vocabulary they would use for as long as the theme was being developed, leading us to the exploration stage.

The **exploration**<sup>53</sup> stage concerns to proposing activities that are instigating and meaningful when working with texts. In the approach used here, developed from the book activities, the activities from the sections "Before Reading", "Reading for General Comprehension", "Reading for Detailed Comprehension" and "Reading for Critical Thinking" fit in Edmundo's (2013) and other authors views of significative analytical exercises.

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53 Although Edmundo suggests creating a Didactic Sequence to the exploration stage, we concluded that the unit itself is a type of Didactic Sequence, not in the same molds proposed by Schneuwly & Dolz (1999), but in an adapted way. This being said, we decided to add some more questions to have a more instigating material.

For the first text to be explored, we had to prepare more questions that would instigate more students, to raise their awareness about the kind of text and the ideas presented in it. The reason we decided to do that is because this text, which is a profile, was not the main text of the unit, therefore, there was no exploration of the text concerning before reading, while reading and after reading practices.

Providing that situation, we started a discussion with students from two main questions: the first one was “Do you know any stories of overcoming obstacles through sports/physical activities? If so, what’s the story?”. From this question we sought to explore if students already knew about someone from their context or if they were in touch with the information broadcasted by media about athletes and their overcoming stories, relating to prejudice, extreme poverty, physiological and mental health issues, etc.

The other questions we had prepared, connecting with possible answers for the first one, were “Are there any sports practiced exclusively by men or women? If so, which ones?” “What’s your opinion about it?”.

These questions, on one hand, aimed at contextualizing one of the problematizations raised in the profile text about the judoka Sarah Menezes, who suffered prejudice even from her parents when she first started practicing the sport. On the other hand, it was also another opportunity to provide students a moment of critical insight, adapting Pennycook’s (2004) perspective, making them think about issues they may not have reflected about before.

In this moment, it is possible to notice how the three stages of planning critical literacy based lessons from Edmundo’s (2013) perspective worked together, in the **preparation** of contents that **explored** more deeply text aspects, creating a space for **problematization** about the provided text, causing further reflection about the ideas presented and exploring the English Language contents. In the practicum experience, this moment of the class was meaningful for their critical development, because some of the girls in class discussed about the reasons for gender prejudice in sports context, and most of the boys who participated the discussion had more profound thoughts about the issue, agreeing and supporting girls in their argument.

After this text, the book presents the unit’s main text, which is an infographic comparing Olympians and athletes in order to contextualize

the language studies. For this reason, there is a broader development for the reading tasks, with all the reading sections presented in the book.

In the “Before Reading” section, there are exercises that explore a little of the text’s theme, genre, vocabulary, and verbal/non-verbal elements previously to reading it. From these activities students could activate more of their knowledge about the theme, and make inferences about the text and its intentionality, agreeing with the approach suggested in the Statewide Curriculum Guidelines (PARANÁ, 2008). Additionally, this aspect would also contribute with the stated objectives of developing critical literacy, being it a trigger to make students start reflecting about the goals of the text from the language used in it and the other elements presented.

To start exploring these activities more broadly, we had selected a video entitled “Athletes Vs Animals Athletic Similarities in the Animal Kingdom and the Olympic Games”, in which animals are being compared to Olympians according to their abilities (strength, speed, flexibility, etc.) and checking their opinion with the questions: “Animals vs. Olympians: Who would probably win this competition? Why?”.

As for the **problematization** stage, proposed by Edmundo (2013), meaning posing problems from the provided texts, we developed the questions mentioned previously, related to gender/disabilities prejudice in sports sphere and about overcoming obstacles, joining the questions already proposed by the didactic book in the “Reading for Critical Thinking” section (Picture 4).

**Picture 4:** Reading for Critical Thinking questions. Page 54.

**READING FOR CRITICAL THINKING**

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**Discuss the questions with your classmates.**

<p>a. Professional athletes are constantly under pressure to become faster, higher and stronger. In your opinion, does it have negative consequences? If so, which one(s)?</p>	<p>b. Olympians are not the best all the time. They do not win every competition. How do you think they deal with this? In your opinion, how should people deal with failure?</p>
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Source: Way to go! Vol. 2 digital book

From the book's questions it is possible to notice the purpose for the **problematization** took into consideration, which would be to make students reflect deeper about the conditions the athletes are put through, like pressure to always bring home the gold medal, work harder and harder in each competition, enhancement stakes and how to cope with failure. Parting from these points, it is possible to have students create new meanings for their conceptions of "pressure" and "failure", their origins, motives and effective ways to deal with these issues from their previous life experiences and perspectives about other cases they have heard about.

Aiming at a more personal critical development, we added one more question to discuss with students in that moment, which was "If you were the coach of one of these athletes who had just been through a failure experience, how would you react to the situation?". By discussing these questions, students could broaden their view about behaviors, attitudes and how identities are built in this sphere, possibly leading them to develop their awareness and reconstruct their own opinions and attitudes towards the provided topic.

Based in the development of the three stages, **preparation, exploration** and **problematization**, in the elaboration of the lessons from the didactic book, coherently considering the unique needs and characteristics for each classroom environment, in our perspective, teachers may be able to produce more meaningful classes without spending much time on creating new exercises and many other extra materials to achieve the goals provided by the official education documents for EFL classes.

Subsequently, for the other lessons planned for the practicum experience with high schools, we followed the same steps, only changing the theme and contents to be taught, which were the topic of life experiences, exploring the genre "interview", with grammar focus on conditional sentences (the second if-clause), presented in Unit 7 in the didactic book (*Way to go!* Vol. 2 p. 117–130).

For the final practice, in order to assess students in what they could acquire from the lessons we planned and applied during the practicum, we proposed a small project based on both themes and contents studied as we described previously.

Edmundo (2013, p. 105) characterizes assessment, from a critical literacy perspective, as activities that focus on checking students' productions of meaning, ideological positions from what has been previously analyzed and discussed in classes, examining beyond specific linguistic contents acquired.

Grounded in this perception, we have planned a simple project, as presented in Chart 2, aiming at investigating what were students' viewpoints about what had been debated previously, what had been meaningful to them and what they could have absorbed from these experiences.

### Chart 2: Lesson Plan #8 – Final Project (Units 3 and 7)

Group: 2nd Year – Public High School	
<b>Contents:</b>	Themes: Live and learn (Unit 7); Overcoming obstacles (Unit 3); Comparative degree of adjectives; Conditional Sentences (Second If-clause).
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p><b>General objective:</b> Execute the final project joining the themes “Live and learn” and “Overcoming obstacles” and the contents studied previously Comparatives and superlatives e Second conditional sentences.</p> <p><b>Specific objectives:</b> Develop students' critical literacy through the theme provided by the didactic book, Overcoming obstacles; Identify and use adjectives in their superlatives and comparative degrees, reflecting about the other provided theme, Animals vs. Olympians. Comprehend the context and concept of usage for comparative and superlative adjectives. Design brief biographies about people who overcame obstacles in life, using the studied structures, and life lessons students could have learned from their stories.</p>

### Group: 2nd Year – Public High School

<b>Methodology:</b>	<p>Review the themes studied, discussing and reflecting about the stories students have brought to build their project and the reasons why they have selected these people and what they could absorb from them and their experiences.</p> <p>After the discussions, review the structure of the genre biography, exemplifying each topic that should be developed in their project. Elicit the relevance of developing mostly about the person's life lessons, which may impact readers and achieve their (students') writing goals.</p> <p>Organize students in smaller groups of three to four people and provide them with dictionaries for possible vocabulary doubts. In case any group has not researched any stories, provide them with extra ones about celebrities/athletes prepared previously for them to develop the project the same way as the other groups.</p> <p>Each group should develop a brief biography about the person previously chosen, providing the following information: full name, date and place of birth (and death if it is the case), occupation, and life story.</p> <p>On top of the short biography, emphasize that the group must create two sentences that summarize the motivation message they took from the experiences lived by the person they are writing about, using the structures studied in the previous classes.</p> <p>Provide the necessary support to each group and guide them throughout the project development.</p>
<b>Material:</b>	<p>Board and chalk;</p> <p>Extra stories of overcoming obstacles and life lessons;</p> <p>Dictionaries;</p> <p>Didactic book.</p>
<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>Texts reading and reflections;</p> <p>Participation in the discussions and development of the project in teams;</p> <p>Elaboration of reflections about the discussed themes;</p> <p>Adequate appliance of the contents previously studied in the project development.</p>

At this point, we chose not to execute the projects proposed by the book, due to the schedule and deadlines<sup>54</sup> to meet in the practicum. Still, we took reference in one of the activities to be developed from the book and made some adaptations. This activity is presented on page 61 (TAVARES & FRANCO, 2013) in Unit 3, Overcoming Obstacles, in which students have to develop a profile of a Brazilian athlete they admire, exploring the genre studied.

Hence, for planning this project, we developed the **preparation** considering the practicum context, and opted for working with the genre “biography”, which can explore more of the person's life story and experiences that could be more meaningful for students. In the practicum context we

54 In the practicum environment, students had English classes twice a week, 50 minutes each. Due to this tight schedule and some other indiscipline factors faced during the classes, it had been difficult to execute all the planned activities in some occasions.

have decided to develop biographies because through this genre students would be able to get to know more about the people they were writing about and reflect more deeply and meaningfully upon their stories and how they relate to motivation and overcoming adversities.

We adapted some of the criteria suggested in the book's activity: instead of having them writing specifically about athletes, we opened the variety of choices they could make, establishing that they could write about someone they admired and had relevant and important life experiences for them, whether this person were famous or not. In addition to our considerations about the context we applied the project, we also prepared some extra stories from famous people, Brazilian and from other nationalities as well, in case some students had not done the research previously asked to execute the aimed tasks.

We envisioned, for the **exploration** stage, the development of a review about the contents and themes discussed previously, in which students would participate and could be able to summarize what had been more significant from prior classes, both in matters of linguistic or critical reflection aspects. The review activity would be simply brainstorming and debating about their ideas from what we had discussed and what they could apply in their reality from those, or what message they could pass to a friend who had been going through difficulties.

Regarding genre **exploration**, we parted from the premise of not focusing mainly on its structure and linguistic aspects, but in how students should develop their writing in order to be meaningful to them and the possible targeted readers. We proposed the elaboration of two quotes, in which they should write about the most relevant messages that they, and their readers, could acquire from those stories.

**Problematization**, in this project, is accomplished in the sense that students would be producing a piece of genre accordingly to what they had discussed, signified and re-signified during their previous experiences, inside and outside their classrooms. They would be expanding, activating and manifesting about the practices and lessons that had been more relevant to them, re-constructing their ideas as a whole piece, only now they would be more critically reviewed.



At this point, they would also be reflecting upon the impact of these discussions' on their identities, for the reason that the messages they took from the stories they had studied will be created from the awareness they developed throughout these processes.

Regarding the two lesson plans analyzed in this section, it is possible to see how teachers can implement their classes to provoke more critical instances to their students. The three stages proposed by Edmundo (2013) can be very helpful when having goals for developing both critical literacy and other language related skills.

All in all, encompassing the stages of **preparation** (selecting adequate contents and materials), **exploration** (reflecting and preparing how these contents will be approached) and **problematization** (posing problems from the explored themes/contents) could be meaningful for EFL teachers when preparing their lessons, joining the objectives suggested by the official documents to their own teaching goals.

Accordingly to the here-presented analysis, in the next section we pinpoint the conclusions for this research, as well as its relevance for future works in EFL classes, concerning preparation and development of critical literacy in the classroom.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Brazilian public regular schools, in a perspective we believe to share with many of the teachers and scholars within this context, can be considered quite of a challenging task. It demands more than simply having high language proficiency level, mastery of approaches and methodologies.

Nowadays, teaching EFL takes critical and global perspectives from both teachers and students. It requires further reflections and assessments about the practices executed daily inside the classroom, which also influence and are influenced by the practices that occur outside the school environment.

Teachers from this context must not only know how to deal with the issues faced in the classrooms – regarding indiscipline, disorganization, lack of time for proper development of the contents and depreciation of

their own subject and school environment, but they must also know how to manage their time outside the classrooms, when planning their lessons.

What we have been aiming at with this research, given all the problem situations previously described, is to analyze how lessons can be designed through a critical literacy approach from the didactic material, provided by the government for these schools, encompassing the goals once established by national and statewide official documents.

Meant for that purpose we have analyzed two of the lessons planned for a practicum stage in a regular public high school based in the didactic book used in this school for the English Language discipline. In the analysis we highlighted three stages to design critical literacy based on Edmundo's (2013) planning framework, **preparation**, **exploration** and **problematization**. From our analysis it is possible to ascertain that it is not necessary to elaborate a whole new material to accomplish the goals stated by the official documents for students' critical development, but to incorporate an approach to the provided material that is more provocative and meaningful for students, making simple insertions and adaptations in means of content. In the chart presented below we make a parallel, from what had already been provided by the didactic book *Way to go!* (TAVARES & FRANCO, 2013) and what we had to create to make these contents more instigating.

Chart 3: Activities proposed by the lesson plans.

Content provided by the didactic book		Extra content prepared
<b>Theme:</b> Overcoming Obstacles/Sports (Unit 3)		
<b>Text:</b> Animals VS. Olympians (infographic)		
<b>Activities Developed</b>	Animals VS Olympians (infographic) – Exercises from the sections: “Before Reading” “Reading for General Comprehension” and “Reading for Detailed Comprehension” “Reading for Critical Thinking” ( <i>Way to go!</i> , 2013, p. 51-54)	Video for contextualization: “Athletes Vs Animals Athletic Similarities in the Animal Kingdom and the Olympic Games” (3:06) Questions for further reflection after the “Reading for Critical Thinking” section: “If you were the coach of one of these athletes who had just been through a failure experience, how would you react to the situation?”
<b>Grammatical Competences</b>	Comparative and Superlative degrees of adjectives	–
<b>Activities for language use practice</b>	Section “Language in use” • Exercises #1 to #11 ( <i>Way to go!</i> , 2013, p. 55-59)	–

Based on Chart 3, it is possible to notice that most of the contents were already provided by the didactic book, therefore, teachers would not have to be concerned about selecting texts or elaborating practice activities to work with both texts and grammatical competences. As we see it, using the didactic material could save teachers’ time when preparing lessons, provided that the presented contents in these books were previously selected and prepared by other professionals in the area, who consider the aims provided in the official documents.

The time spared from the elaboration of activities for language use practices, selecting texts and activities to explore them, which may be long depending on the contents studied, could be better used to **prepare** more instigating ways of developing students critical literacy, **exploring** further aspects of the language and **problematizing** all these previous elements. What we had to add in these lesson plans were questions that would provoke students to reflect more deeply about the themes presented and discussed.

Grounded on the three mentioned stages, we could design lessons that would join the communicative approach and critical literacy (MATTOS &

VALÉRIO, 2010) aiming at reaching the goals and methods proposed by the Statewide Curriculum Guidelines (PARANÁ, 2008) in order to have classes that would develop students as critical thinkers through problem-posing (FREIRE, 1974).

Following these steps when designing critical literacy-based lessons can be relevant in means that learners would be able to share, explore and construct meanings from critical questions, facilitating deeper reflections and leading them to develop a conscience of literacy as a tool for argumentation (LESLEY, 2004) inside and outside the classroom.

Just as we stated previously, it has not been our intention to criticize common practices in Brazilian EFL classrooms from regular public schools, nor revolutionize practices to transform students' lives by developing them critically in English Language classes.

As far as we are concerned, EFL classes could be more meaningful if we, as teachers in progressive development, reflected and assessed more constantly our everyday practices considering what had already been provided to us from previous studies and analysis, materials and theoretical frameworks. In the words of Paulo Freire (1974, p. 84), "Education is thus constantly remade in the praxis. In order to be, it must become."

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# 6. The impacts of critical literacy in the practice of two English language pre-service teachers

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is an increasingly important area in Applied Linguistics (PIMENTA, 1999; TARDIF, 2002). A primary concern of researchers in this field is the relationship between theory and practice and its implications on teacher education since it is during the initial training that professors need to acquire theoretical background to guide their practice reflexively and critically. Thus, this work seeks to comprehend the relationship that students from the *Letras Inglês* undergraduate course have with a theory introduced in the course and expanded on a specific project and their views about practice in the school setting. Understanding the relationship the undergraduates have regarding theories introduced in the course is fundamental considering the role of the English teacher in the classroom. Also, the whole pedagogical process entails decisions that are not random but based on previous research and knowledge acquired and developed at the teacher education program and subsequent teaching experiences.

Upon considering a theoretical concept such as critical literacy, understanding the reasons that lead the participants in this study to adopt or not such assumptions in their classes will make it possible to identify how students make sense about such theory and thus analyze if their

understandings become part of their daily practice as teachers. Instead of judging whether or not their concepts are correct, the focus will be on the role of these understandings in their professional lives.

Pennycook's studies (2000) show the importance of taking into consideration what happens outside the classroom since it affects what goes on inside and vice versa. This means that working as a teacher demands the creation of links and an articulation between the outside world and the classroom since the classes are part of the real world. In this perspective, teaching students to learn how to read and write is "part of the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations" (ANDERSON; IRVINE, 2014, p. 82). Different theories and concepts that represent the scientific development in the field of Applied Linguistics are frequently introduced as an important part of the educational process. Options and theories of teaching vary, and studying each of them provides an in-depth perspective on the complexity of teaching a new language.

The main purpose of this work is to analyze the conceptual development of pre-service teachers regarding their notions of critical literacy. To address how the students relate to these concepts, three specific goals were established to guide this investigation:

Identify how pre-service teachers comprehend and conceptualize the notion of critical literacy.

Analyze how they see this concept concerning their profession and the reasons that lead them to utilize, experiment or discard such theory.

Verify if their understandings of the concept relate to their avoidance or acceptance regarding their profession as language teachers.

This paper is constituted of four parts. First, we provide the basis for this research in the theoretical framework, then in the methodology section it is described each step taken to develop the investigation, and the instruments used to gather data. By the end, we analyze the information gathered in the interview and discuss the implications of it.



## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 CRITICAL LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT: EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

We learn, understand ourselves and build knowledge through social relations. In this way, the language that mediates such interactions cannot be taken only as a tool for communication, but also as a way in which we interact in society, and develop our own identities. According to Shor (1997, p. 2), “we are what we say and do. The way we speak and are spoken to help shape us into the people we become. Through words and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us.” With this quotation, it is possible to see the role of language in the process of becoming an active individual in society in which people develop “consciousness from the outside through relations with others” (VYGOTSKY, 1962, p. 20), that is to say the individual acquires knowledge within–personal relations, and through social relations. Also, in understanding the words of Sluys; Lewison; Flint (2006 *apud* GEE, 1996; 1999) “that social worlds are discursively constructed and that various discourses communicate different degrees of power”, it is clear how we are shaped through language, and how it affects us as social beings who are not unrelated to what goes around us.

Then, as stated by Pennycook (2000, p. 92) “the walls of classrooms become permeable, with social relations outside classrooms affecting what goes on inside, and social relations inside affecting what goes on outside”. In this way, having in mind the role of language in society, and that we all are people shaped in a social world bringing to class our own experiences and ideologies, it is possible to perceive the relations between the outside world and the classroom.

As one of the goals of this paper is to comprehend how English pre-service teachers relate critical literacy to their profession, we adopted a view to work within which we extend the relations between students, society, and the world without forgetting the role of the first language, and the different social contexts in the activity of becoming aware of our oneself in and through society. Also, this research takes into consideration a critical perspective to rely on when relating power, cultural, and social questions to the classroom.

Taking critical teaching perspectives as key to this research, and the increasing interest in researching teacher education (MOTTA, 2008; BRANDT; TOZETTO, 2009; COSTA, 2012; SANTOS, 2013), in this section it will be provided some concepts about critical literacy regarding language teaching. First, however, it is necessary to discuss the notions of critical literacy and its importance in teacher development.

Since critical literacy has been largely utilized by many other research fields such as feminist, postcolonial, poststructuralist and critical race theories, critical linguistics and cultural studies, and so on; offering a differentiation between some terms – *literacy and critical literacy* – is a crucial first step in this research. As stated by Luke (2014, p. 3) “the term literacy refers to the reading and writing of text” while “the term critical literacy stands for utilizing texts and other kinds of media to analyze, challenge or criticize norms, rules and other fields of daily life”. In other words, through critical literacy, we engage students to not only pay attention to textual structures but also to understand the social role that constitutes different genres, the different degrees of discourse, and how texts can be manipulated or changed.

Through Luke’s position about critical literacy and the power relations<sup>55</sup> inherent to language stated by Gee (1996; 1999), teaching through just literacy is a practice that needs to be reviewed. As it is necessary to relate the social to the classroom using texts and communication media to engage the students in the activity of becoming conscious about themselves, their participation in society and its inequalities which may even affect them. While literacy focuses on decoding text, critical literacy propitiates a better understanding of the world making use of texts and discourses and how they can be changed, manipulated, or represented, thus, seeking for social transformation, focusing not only on linguistic practices but also on cultural ones, understanding the social necessities in a globalized world.

Essential to comprehend the role of teaching in the activity of social transformation is with the statement provided by Freire (1987, p. 40):

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55 Language has a significant role in society and exercises symbolic power in the world (BOURDIEU, 1989, p. 14), propagating values, ideologies through different kind of discourses which communicate different degrees of power (GEE, 1996,1999), then propitiating forms of domination.

In the first stage, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all men in the process of permanent liberation.

Along those lines, we can see that the culture of domination which perpetuates inequalities among mankind is challenged through reflection followed by action. That way, the social transformation begins when the oppressed, those dehumanized by those who have economic/political power in society, recognize the degrees of oppression in their lives and awake to change their reality through a continuous process of liberation. Then, understanding Freire's pedagogy as a way of challenging the *status quo*, and relating that to critical literacy as a way of improving literacy, propitiating a better engagement from the students in the learning process is a central point to this investigation. Freire's studies have been very influential in how critical literacy interprets the role of education through language. His ideas are key to understanding social transformation without forgetting the differences between cultures, communities, and contexts.

Also, Pennycook (1997, p. 169) suggests that the concern of critical literacy is "to understand texts and practices of reading and writing in relation to questions of power, equity, diversity, and change". Moreover, Luke and Dooley (2011, p. 1) argue that "critical literacy is the use of texts to analyze and transform relations of cultural, social and political power". Accordingly, both authors stress the role of critical literacy in a world marked by inequality to promote reflection upon it. Then, it forces us to think about the teachers' performance and how teaching a second language — in this case, English — may become a political act because of its status as an international language. Next, as teachers, we can turn that into our favor using English as a way to expand our students' knowledge, providing them a better relationship with the outside, with this globalized world that through English reduces the language barriers offering cross-cultural interactions.

Also, considering Pennycook's position (2000, p. 92) about the "relations between classrooms and the outside world which lead them to almost

become a single one”, and the proposal by Jordão e Fogaça (2007, p. 91) “depending on teacher’s attitude in classroom the students may have more or less space to question and change information developing and accepting meaning created by others in order to see the world in a new perspective” the school setting becomes the suitable place to discuss all of those questions since the classrooms are not only a reflection of the “real world” but also affect how the world works. Therefore, before teaching students to be critical thinkers, it is necessary to comprehend how teachers understand the concept of critical literacy. As claimed by Motta (2008), besides his or her beliefs the educational background of a teacher affects the pedagogical practice. In this way, the teacher’s personal views, and the knowledge acquired over his or her education will define the way he or she teaches.

As the pedagogical process requires decisions based on personal experience as well as knowledge acquired during the teaching program, the relationship of both become essential to reveal how teachers understand their own choices in their profession.

In this section, some basic concepts about critical literacy were discussed taking into consideration the school setting and the educational process as a way to challenge the *status quo*. In such a way, a clear understanding of critical literacy and its functions is necessary so that teachers can utilize it and apply it in their classrooms to promote social change. This leads us to consider the importance of how teachers interpret Critical Applied Linguistic theories. Finally, having defined the guiding concept of this investigation, the next topic will show the implications of such a theory in the development of teachers and the relationship between theory and practice.

## **2.2 THEORY AND PRACTICE: A PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHER’S EDUCATION**

As stated before, the teaching process needs to be guided by previous studies which are generally acquired during the teaching training course; such practice demands much more than random choices. In this way, comprehending the relationship between theory and practice, and how they affect teachers’ performance in the classroom will help us to understand the role of critical literacy regarding teacher education.

Pimenta E Ghedin (2005, p.111) argues that “historically, the pedagogical practice is challenged to answer the social demands”. Then, teachers are expected to not only provide scientific knowledge but also to teach without forgetting the current model of society, acting as agents of change aware of social contexts. In other words, theory and practice are inseparable. On one hand, we have the scientific knowledge that teachers acquire during their studies, and on the other, we have the experience that we acquire during our life, and that we gain working as teachers. Both are necessary for teaching.

In connection to that, we can think about Vygotsky’s everyday concepts and scientific concepts. As stated by Lima (2018, p. 10) “the first one takes into consideration the relations that someone has with his or her own experience and the knowledge acquired according to each new stage of development” while the second one “considers a more abstract kind of knowledge which reflects the historicity of people who not only create knowledge but keep them as part of cultural heritage”. Consequently, these concepts contribute to teachers’ education and the role of theory and practice since “both were taken of equal importance by cultural-historical theory as essential to psychological activity” (LIMA, 2018, p. 10), and indicates the importance of considering one’s everyday experience and the scientific knowledge to teachers’ education since we build ourselves as teachers through action (practice) and reflection (theory).

The concern in researching teacher education and what teachers think became stronger in the eighties and has remained until today. Thus, many researchers have considered the role of critical thinking in teachers’ practice and studies (PIMENTA, 2005; MEDEIROS, CABRAL 2006; MOTTA, 2008). Studies related to teacher education define teacher development as historically and socially constructed, then highlighting the significance of relating theory to practice in teachers’ education settings. In this direction, we will consider these different types of teacher knowledge from the perspective of everyday and scientific concepts that are created regarding teaching.

As we can see, the process of teaching is entirely affected by the society and its contexts. Then considering the ideas of Pimenta (2005, p. 126) “that the pedagogical practice is challenged to answer the social demands”, and Vygotsky’s everyday and scientific concepts which consider

as fundamental the relations between the scientific knowledge and the social life in the activity of conceptual thinking, it is possible to notice the wide range which scientific concepts can play not only in regular schools but also in teachers training. Consider, for example, the concept of critical literacy that we presented earlier; this notion provides a way of challenging the status quo of the profession. Upon conceiving the teacher as an agent of social change, teachers who develop a theoretical understanding of critical literacy and relate that to their practice can make the classroom a place to understand questions of political power as part of language teaching. In this manner, critical literacy may be a possibility, among others, of bringing the social aspects to the classroom and linking them to scientific knowledge developed in school settings.

As theory and practice are connected and the teachers are expected by the community to not only provide scientific knowledge, but also to help students to become active in the society with what they already know, improving literacy through critical literacy is a great possibility to engage students and help them to understand the social, political, cultural and economic aspects inherent in society. Besides, it helps teachers to understand theory and practice as equally important in their professional development and also in the social role they are supposed to play as educators.

In conclusion, the literature review covered some basic concepts regarding critical literacy, as well as the relations between theory and practice as a core aspect of professional development. In the first section, a short introduction to social contexts and its role regarding human development has been offered, followed by definitions of critical literacy. In addition, we considered the relations of theory and practice and then tried to illustrate the relationship between theory and practice considering critical literacy as a scientific concept that can be introduced for teachers who already have their everyday understanding of their profession.

In the next section, to comprehend such relations, and how it affects the pre-service teachers in their practices, we will introduce the methodology of this investigation which means the resources used and the characteristics of this qualitative study.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this section, we provide a description of each step taken to develop the research as well as the instruments utilized to gather data.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH NATURE

As the objective of this investigation is not to analyze if the students' concepts of critical literacy are right, but rather to analyze the relations and experiences they create about this content, and how it interferes in their practice as language pre-service teachers, a qualitative nature is adopted. As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.10) "qualitative researches stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry". Therefore, this method is chosen to provide a better understanding of the participants' experiences as English language student-teachers and the reasons that led them to comprehend critical literacy the way they do. This leads the researcher to interpret the collected data and the participants' context under study.

#### 3.2 DATA GATHERING: CONTEXT

It is relevant to mention in this section the context in which the data was gathered and its implications in this paper. In this way, it is necessary to introduce some important facts about a project which guided us to collect the required data. The project mentioned is a university activity that aims to share the knowledge developed there not only to its students but also to the entire community. The main objective of this project is to create links between theory and practice concerning language education to help teachers and student-teachers in the task of approaching language in the classroom through critical perspectives. In this collaborative activity, besides a professor, students from Letras courses (Portuguese, English, and Spanish) and an English language teacher who works in different schools in the city participate in the project.

Throughout the years that this project entitled "*Perspectivas críticas para o ensino de línguas: construindo pontes entre teorias e práticas*" has been going on, its participants have developed activities that help teachers

to approach different themes in the classroom through critical perspectives, discussed and read many materials, attended to a congress to share their findings, and created a website in which their activities are posted. Thus, this project emerged as a suitable place to gather data since most of its participants were students pursuing a degree in language teaching. They all have been introduced to the critical literacy concept, besides having some experience as language teachers.

### **3.3 DATA GATHERING: INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

The methodological procedure of this investigation consisted of gathering data from English student-teachers through narrative inquiry to produce a narrative about the participants in this research. Clandinin and Huber (2000, p. 2) indicate that “people shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories.” In this way, the authors suggest that through stories we enter and operate in the world and through our experience of the world our stories become particularly relevant. Utilizing narrative inquiry to gather data from the participants is essential since we aim to understand their experiences regarding a theory quite overspread in the Letras Ingêls course. In this way, the following methods were used: oral interview, narrative about the interview, and an analysis of documents utilized by the students in order to comprehend critical literacy.

To do so we conducted an oral interview (APPENDIX A). Clandinin and Huber (2000, p. 5) state that “most narrative inquiries begin with telling stories, that is, with the researcher interviewing or having conversations with participants who tell stories of their experiences”. The interviews were carried out in pairs for two hours, and I started by asking them to map out their participation in the English course and in the project about critical perspectives for teaching languages, and why they joined these activities. Furthermore, it was checked how they comprehend and conceptualize the critical literacy perspectives as well as its concepts for teaching languages, how they understand this theory with their teaching activity, and the reasons that lead them to consider, experiment or discard critical literacy in their practices.



As this research aims to analyze the conceptual development of pre-service teachers regarding their notions of critical literacy, and the data for doing so was collected during an interview, a definition of narrative is given, “the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience”. (CLANDININ; HUBER, 2000, p.3). Consequently, the narrative for collecting data was written by us through observations about the interview and what we know<sup>56</sup> about the project they are involved as well as its participants, such as: professional background, personal information, participation in the scientific project, academic journey, and so on.

Finally, the last resource used for gathering data is the analysis of materials that the participants have read to understand what critical literacy is. Some of the materials utilized are: Freire’s *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1987), Ferreira’s, *Social Identities, visual literacy, and critical literacy: images on media about race and ethnicity* (2012), Brahim’s, *Critical pedagogy, critical literacy and critical reading* (2007), and so on.

### 3.4 PARTICIPANTS

The participants chosen for this project come from a public university in the north of Paraná, and as stated before they are also English student-teachers. The training course for teaching English lasts at least 4 years, with classes held at night. The subject areas offered by the university combine applied linguistics, literature and practical teaching tasks. The institution also offers additional activities aimed at scientific research such as the ones in which the participants are involved in.

Both students involved in the investigation have joined a scientific project related to critical perspectives for teaching languages when the project had already begun:

- **Student One:** Pedro joined both the English course and the critical literacy project in 2018. He has been studying English for a long time and was already working as a teacher before entering the university. Pedro was 18 and currently lives in the same city where the university is situated. Even in his first year in college, he was very

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<sup>56</sup> So as the participants of this research we attended the mentioned project, then we were engaged in the same activities which helped us to conduct the interview and analyze the data gathered.

committed to the political events of the institution.

- **Student Two:** Patrícia also has been studying English for a long time and has some experience in teaching kids. Patrícia was a sophomore student and is currently living in the same city where the university is located.

### 3.5 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

Given the details about the methods and participants' context, the next steps taken to organize the data gathering consisted of five stages in which different tasks were developed. First, the written materials utilized in the scientific project to introduce the students in the field of critical literacy perspective were analyzed in order to guide and contextualize the data gathering and data analysis. After that, the questions used to create the narrative were written, followed by the actual interviews. In the fourth task, the audio recorded in the interview was transcribed in text, which led us to comment upon the transcribed material, consequently leading to narrative inquiry.

### 3.6 RESEARCH ETHICS

During the whole investigation process, some ethical precautions were taken to protect the participants and the research as well. Of the participants, Celani (2005, p. 110) states that their safety is essential, thus “the advised agreement clarified through continuous dialogue and consent reaffirmation throughout the research is crucial.” In this way, their real names were not utilized in the research and were substituted by pseudonyms (Patricia and Pedro). The two of them also signed consent forms (APPENDIX B) informing them about the research's procedures. The students selected to participate in this work were not obligated to do so. They were invited and willingly agreed to participate.

## 4. RESULTS/ANALYSIS

As it has been mentioned in the previous sections, the data for this paper was gathered in an interview with two students from the Letras Inglês course where they were asked to share some experiences they have

had throughout the year(s) in college, and more specifically, in the project about critical literacy. Thus, we started the inquiry process trying to get to know their routine at the university in a better way. We opted to do so because we already knew that both students were engaged in programs offered by the university regarding language teaching, critical language teaching, and political aspects inherent to this space. In this first stage, the participants shared not only details about their routine in college but also went over the reasons that brought them to the Letras Inglês course, and their feelings about the language.

Patricia besides participating in the project about critical literacy for language teaching used to attend the Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência (PIBID), a program that aims to introduce student-teachers in the classroom's context right in their first years of college. This program offers scholarships, and in Patricia's words was a good opportunity in her life as a trainee teacher since she was earning money in her first year as a college student. Pedro besides attending the project regarding critical literacy for language teaching was very committed to the The Central Students Directorate (DCE in Portuguese), aiming to represent all the students, and organize and guide their agenda.

#### **4.1 BACKGROUND/WARM-UP**

After that, seeking to get into their relationship with the English language we asked them to explain how they were introduced to the language.

## Chart 1 – Participants and their first experiences with the English language.

Patricia	Pedro
<p>“My relationship with the English language started in 1997,1998 when I was in 7th grade. I liked the language, the foreigner, I liked foreign music, and I wanted to learn how to sing.”</p> <p>“The teacher instigated me, she saw that I liked the language, and was always saying that I had to study in a private center.”</p>	<p>“I was born in 1991, and when I was in kindergarten I had a terrible teacher, and this is something that I criticize because she did not have a degree in English teaching.”</p> <p>“On the first day, she taught the numbers, 1 to 20, on the second one, 20 to 30, on the third day 30 to 40, so I get mad at English, I used to hate it.”</p> <p>“In the 7th grade, I went to a private school and my English teacher used to say that I was good, but I did not care. So, in that year her daughter that was also a teacher asked me to study with her at home.”</p> <p>“When I turned 14 or 15 she asked me to work with her.”</p>

**SOURCE:** The authors (2019)

Chart 1 shows some extracts from the interview in which the participants shared how they were introduced to the English language. As it can be seen, it appears that their first English teachers had an impact on their initial journey as English learners. Patricia was encouraged by her teacher to study the language even more, while Pedro did not have good contact with his first teacher. Only years after he would have a teacher to encourage and to change his understanding of the language.

Subsequently, I asked both why they joined the English language teaching course, and if the institution was their first choice to apply to. Patricia wanted to study Law, but she failed the entrance examination test, and because of her fondness for English, and by the suggestion of friends she decided to attend the course. For Pedro, the institution was his first choice, but before getting in he was pursuing a degree in Medicine. Both came to know about the project through a promotion made by e-mail, or the coordinator herself. On the reasons for joining the project:

## Chart 2 – Reasons for joining the project.

Patricia	Pedro
<p>“It seemed that it was related to Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, it seemed that it was related to what I want to research, about thinking further.”</p>	<p>“She – the coordinator, went to our classroom and told us about the project, and I was like “what is literacy?” I did not even know what was that, and she said that we would discuss about text, life, that we can see that with a critical glance. I was like “interesting!”. I like that, this critical angle, the discussion.”</p>

**SOURCE:** The authors (2019)

Chart 2 reveals that these students had their reasons for joining the project and shows that they had little notion of what critical literacy means. In addition, Patricia was trying to improve a research she was about to start, then aiming to improve that, she took part in the project while Pedro was focused on debating, discussing text and life. Of Pedro, it is possible to infer that because of his taste for political subjects he has joined this scientific project. Thus, it is again possible to deduce that, before attending the project both had a very limited notion or no notion of critical literacy

### 4.2 STUDENT'S VIEW OF CRITICAL LITERACY

In the second moment of the interview, in order to answer the three specific objects delimited on the introduction section of this paper, we raised some questions about how they understand the concept of critical literacy, how they can benefit from this theory, the impacts of critical literacy in their practice as language teachers, etc. The two of them told me that they enjoyed being part of the aforementioned project. Patricia highlighted that the project was a good opportunity for her to think about her practice as an English teacher. Pedro pointed out that the things he learned there would follow him to his life.

### Chart 3 – Student’s feelings upon the project.

Patricia	Pedro
<p>“I enjoy it because the project helps me to think a lot. I am 34 years old and when I was a student in high school I was not instigated to think about things, the method was very traditional.”</p> <p>“I will not do the same with my students, I will work with a different methodology, I will look at my students and see who each of them are. That is what I intend, right? As a dreamer student. Let’s see.”</p>	<p>“You take all of it to your life.” – The things, he has learned in the project so far.</p>

**SOURCE:** The authors (2019)

Chart 3 demonstrates the student’s feelings on the project they participate in and illustrates how they relate this concept to their lives. As it can be noticed, Patricia was able to think about her practice as an English teacher because of the activities proposed in the project, and to imagine other possibilities to her activity as a teacher. She certainly liked the project since she developed a sense of criticality there that made her consider what would be better to her students, taking into consideration the contexts where they live.

Pedro emphasized that the things he learned there would be crucial to his life in general. Also, during the interview, he said that the practice of a teacher involves a lot of their own daily experiences. Through this information, we can think about Pennycook’s (2000) position already mentioned in this paper in which he indicates that the classroom affects how the world works and vice versa. The participants of this research learned about a subject in the classroom and besides reflecting on their practice as teachers, they both were able to see the relevance of it and probably transpose it to their lives.

After that, to identify how pre-service teachers comprehend and conceptualize the notion of critical literacy to address the first specific objective designed for this paper, I asked them some question such as “How did you feel the first time you heard the term critical literacy?”, “How would you explain the concept of critical literacy to someone?”.

**Chart 4** – How the participants conceptualize the notion of critical literacy.

	Patricia	Pedro
First time they heard the term critical literacy	<p>“The first time I heard about critical literacy, I had no idea what it stands for.”</p> <p>“I never thought I would improve my education with critical literacy, or it would help me in the classroom with my students.”</p>	<p>“I first heard literacy when I attended BRAZTESOL.”</p> <p>“I did not know if literacy stands for <i>alfabetização ou letramento</i>.”</p>
How would you explain the concept of critical literacy to someone?	<p>“It is to be critical”</p> <p>“In a simple way, because I do not know the correct terms, so I believe that critical literacy is to help the individual to think beyond.”</p> <p>“To think beyond what is given to him/her, to question, to raise other possibilities, problems, and solutions.”</p>	<p>“Problematize, we can problematize anything. Any image, song.”</p> <p>“Critical literacy is to contextualize the academic theory, the school, with the student’s life in a way that this student can question anything, is to offer new possibilities to him/her. So, the student is offered a range of possibilities so that he or she can understand and question anything.”</p>

SOURCE: The authors (2019)

The data displayed in Chart 4 illustrate the concepts created by the participants upon critical literacy. Before participating in the project, both did not have a clear definition of the term critical literacy. But when asked to define this concept after almost a year of studying it, both offered a definition that fits the ideas proposed by authors such as Luke (2014), Pennycook (1997) and Freire (1987). These authors understand critical literacy as a way to reflect, question, challenge, and promote social transformation through practices of reading, and writing. Both participants appear to understand the role of this theory as a manner to help students to create new possibilities, to raise solutions, and to question the *status-quo* of things. They seem to believe that through critical literacy the student is engaged in practices of thinking beyond. Then, it is possible to say that they take critical literacy as a possibility to promote reflection followed by action intended by the students.

Of the second and third specific objectives defined for this research that are analyze how the participants see this concept in relation to their profession and the reasons that lead them to utilize, experiment or discard such theory; verify if their understandings of the concept relate to their avoidance or acceptance regarding their profession as language teachers, it was asked to them if approaching the subjects in classroom through a critical perspective is a task that a teacher must accomplish.

### Chart 5 – Is critical literacy in the classroom a must-do task?

Patricia	Pedro
<p>“I do not know, because, you know, teaching English implies working with grammar, verb tense, etc. Is there room for critical literacy? There is, but we have to? I do not know.”</p> <p>“I have too many things to assimilate, orality, structure, so I am not sure if we are obliged to work with critical literacy, it is worthwhile, but it is not obligated.”</p> <p>“I accompany a teacher who works in three different schools, so it is hard for her to say that she is going to apply critical literacy in all three schools, that she is going to design 1000 critical classes, guys, sorry, it is humanly impossible.”</p> <p>“Is it worthwhile? – applying critical literacy, We know that it is important, we know that it is cool, but we have to? With so many things to accomplish – as teachers? I do not know.”</p>	<p>“That is what I am saying, we can think about grammar, normative grammar, the right and wrong. The teacher cannot teach only one thing, a certain kind of information. This would be a kind of indoctrination because he or she would lead the student to think only in one perspective.”</p>

**SOURCE:** The authors (2019)

In the chart presented above, the participants shared their thoughts about critical literacy related to the teaching practice. Both see this theory as significant and suitable for classrooms following the ideas they presented earlier. But, specifically, Patricia offered interesting comments on the subject. Even though she agrees that critical literacy is important and there is room for utilizing it in the classroom, she does not think that it is possible to consider this perspective the whole time. Considering all the tasks and demands that teachers of foreign languages are expected to meet, it appears that she is not convinced that they should apply critical literacy in their classes in all activities. Patricia’s position besides being very insightful



fits the idea of critical moments in the classroom by Pennycook (2004) in which he points out that the teacher's challenge is to promote criticality in specific moments of their practice, and he also claims that these critical or potential moments also happen in the every day, and the results we do not always know nor are prepared that is why critical moments. Besides, even though Patricia feels that approaching critical literacy in the classroom is not so easy, it is possible to see how critical she is on the teaching activity since she was able to reflect on her practice as a teacher. In this way, considering Pennycook (2004) again when he mentions that discussing teaching is a small, but important moment of critical language education, we perceive that even though she does not seem overenthusiastic about critical literacy in the classroom, nevertheless she is being critical on the activity of language teaching.

As we can notice by the answer and by what we have witnessed during the interview, Pedro seems more optimistic about bringing critical literacy to the classroom. In the chart above, he shows all of his political commitment relating the theory with his practice in the classroom and approaching both from a political perspective. There is a good possibility he believes that through critical literacy, the teacher encourages students to consider different possibilities, to approach different themes, and to present contrasting information. Thus, once more we can consider Pennycook's position about critical literacy when he says that this perspective refers "to understand texts and practices of reading and writing in relationship to questions of power, equity, diversity and change" (1997, p. 169).

Consequently, we might predict that Patricia believes that it is necessary to put a lot of effort into it when trying to bring critical literacy to the teaching practice, and it is difficult to design all classes to contemplate the critical perspective. It is crucial to emphasize that her position regarding this theory, even being more pessimistic compared to Pedro's stresses how reflective and aware of the tasks teachers are supposed to meet she is. Regarding Pedro's opinion, it is possible to assume that he likely feels that working with this theory besides being crucial is a way to keep his ideologies and achieve his duties as a teacher.

In conclusion, the two student-teachers surveyed in this interview were introduced to the English language in their childhood. Both have different experiences back then, but we could see how these experiences impacted and led them to consider different possibilities to their practice as English teachers. The two of them, in different ways, believe that the students need to be instigated to think beyond, to broaden their horizons, and through critical literacy, they would be able to do so. Even when the use of this theory in the classroom was questioned by Patricia, it was possible to note that she was still being critical, reflective of her practice which shows the extent of critical notions in her life. In fact, she got interested in this subject first of all because she was willing to conduct research, that is to say, a final project about thinking further as she mentioned in the interview, and only after joining the project she understood the range of possibilities this theory provides and its role in the classroom.

Pedro has always been curious about political and social themes. From the first moment, he heard the coordinator going over the critical literacy project he was already interested in because he saw a possibility to extend the political activities he was already conducting in the university, and go deeper about such themes. Even though he was connected with social themes before attending the project he did not have a clear idea of critical literacy, and its function in school contexts.

At the end of the interview, we could see how their experiences throughout life shaped their understandings of critical literacy. Before joining the project, they were already questioning, interrogating and reflecting on things, for example when Patricia said that she did not want to work with her students in the same way she used to study years ago, or when Pedro said that his first teacher did not have a degree on language teaching, which he has always considered wrong. But it was only after taking part in the studies about critical perspectives that they understood the scope of critical literacy in the classroom, and how to utilize it with their students. These understandings besides working for assisting them in their activities as teachers seem to have helped both to develop and maintain their teachers' persona.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As it has been mentioned in the previous sections, this paper seeks to analyze the conceptual development of pre-service teachers regarding their notions of critical literacy. In this way, three specific objectives were established:

Identify how pre-service teachers comprehend and conceptualize the notion of critical literacy.

Analyze how they see this concept concerning their profession and the reasons that lead them to utilize, experiment or discard such theory.

Verify if their understandings of the concept relate to their avoidance or acceptance regarding their profession as language teachers.

The data for this investigation was gathered from two participants already introduced here in an interview for almost two hours. Since our objective was not to analyze if the student's concepts upon critical literacy were right, but to analyze their conceptual development regarding critical literacy a qualitative nature of research has been adopted. This kind of thinking research allowed us to understand and interpret their experiences as English language student-teachers, and the reasons that lead them to comprehend this concept the way they do.

Through this research, it was possible to notice how participants comprehended the notion of critical literacy and the implications of it not only in their practice as language teachers but also in their lives. Addressing the first specific objective designed for this paper it was possible to notice that their understandings upon this theory highlight that they believe in the potential of critical literacy to improve students' life. Also, they relate this concept to helping students to raise questions about anything, to think beyond, to create other possibilities, and so on. As the authors above, — the ones researching critical theories, both believe in the transformative role of being critical, reflexive and active.

Of the second and third specific objectives, the two participants shared different insights about applying critical literacy in the classroom. While Patricia believes that there are moments to work with this theory with her students, Pedro is convinced that working with critical literacy is a way to

present different perspectives to them, otherwise he would be a kind of indoctrinator, he would present only one way of thinking.

From the beginning to the end of the interview, Patricia was able to critically think about her practice as a teacher and the needs of her students, but she was not convinced that the teachers are obliged to use critical literacy. Actually, so as Pennycook (2004) she believes that there are moments to help students to think beyond and that it is impossible and unnecessary to apply it in all classes since sometimes it is necessary to focus on grammatical aspects of the language, to teach the language itself. Through her position, we understand that the way she comprehends critical literacy, the way she is critical on this theory impacts on how she works. She does not agree that there is room for this theory in all classes, but she sees the relevance of it and is open to applying critical literacy in her practice.

Pedro, as pointed out before, is very interested in utilizing critical perspectives in his classes. During the interview he verbalized that, as teachers, we can not present only one information, to stand for only one way of thinking. Then, through critical perspectives, we would avoid this kind of teaching. He feels that most of the time the teacher has to work with critical literacy.

Besides, we could see that being critical is part of who they are and that they transpose this feeling to their teaching activity. Even Patricia who felt more difficulties working with this theory in the classroom was very reflective about her practice and the needs of her students. Pedro found a way, through critical literacy, to keep his ideologies and work in a way that he believes to be the right. Thus, considering the role of critical literacy in the lives of the participants under study we may presume that this theory helps them to grow as teachers given that both appear to have developed a critical awareness about their activity as English educators.

Last but not least, it is essential to emphasize that analyzing the conceptual development of someone in a two-hour interview is not an easy task given the complexity of the human being. But as it has been said this work tried to understand a sum of parts of the participants' lives so as to interpret the data gathered from them. Thus, this work offers a perspective on student-teachers' life and how they connect theory and practice not only in their activity as teachers but also in their existence.

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# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A – Interview questions

### BACKGROUND

Pedir para que eles comentem brevemente sobre sua rotina na faculdade já que ambos participam do projeto e um deles é bastante envolvido em assuntos políticos da universidade, pode ser que já saia algo interessante aqui;

### AQUECIMENTO

Como começou sua relação com a língua inglesa? Como ela se fez presente em sua vida?

Como eram suas aulas de inglês no ensino médio? Fale um pouco sobre elas? Quais recordações você tem dos seus professores?

O que te levou a cursar a licenciatura em língua inglesa? E a UNESPAR?

Foi esta a sua primeira opção?

A possibilidade ofertada pelo curso de se tornar um professor de língua inglesa – com diploma nesse caso, foi o principal fator que o levou a ingressar na licenciatura?

Você já deu ou dava aula de inglês antes de iniciar Letras? Comente sobre sua experiência?

### A PARTICIPAÇÃO NO PROJETO

Como você ficou sabendo do projeto? Quis participar de imediato? Como foi?

Porque o interesse pelo projeto de perspectivas críticas para o ensino de línguas?

E como foi o começo do projeto?

O que você esperava conseguir ou fazer como participante do projeto?



Comente o que vocês geralmente fazem no projeto (atividades, tarefas, etc.).

Você gosta de participar do projeto?

Que tipos de leituras você recorda já ter feito?

O que você achou quando ouviu o nome Letramento crítico pela primeira vez?

E o que você aprendeu sobre Letramento crítico desde então?

Se eu quisesse entrar para o projeto e te perguntasse o que é LC como que você me explicaria?

#### PENSANDO SOBRE O PAPEL DO LETRAMENTO CRÍTICO NA FORMA COMO VOCÊ VÊ O ENSINO DE LÍNGUAS

Enquanto alunos das etapas do ensino fundamental e médio vocês se recordam de alguma prática crítica de ensino as quais foram apresentados? Alguma delas vai ao encontro do que é proposto pelo letramento crítico?

Vocês acreditam que antes de iniciar a graduação em licenciatura de língua inglesa vocês já eram capazes de lecionar criticamente – ou não criticamente. Qual o papel dessa graduação na sua prática em sala de aula?

De que modo o curso pode contribuir para a prática de vocês como professores de língua inglesa? Você acha que já consegue atingir uma dimensão crítica com seu ensino? Dê exemplos.

Como você vê a relação teoria (LC) e prática (ensino na sala de aula)? Quais são seus maiores desafios neste momento?

Como o projeto pode contribuir para sua carreira como professor? Vocês acreditam já ser possível aplicar os conceitos aprendidos no projeto em suas práticas como professores de inglês? De que modo vocês fariam isso? Se fariam

É tarefa do professor de uma segunda língua trabalhar de modo a contemplar os conceitos de letramento crítico? Porque? Qual a relação entre os dois? Existe uma?

É proveitoso para os alunos estudarem onde o professor propicia um espaço para o aprendizado de inglês de forma crítica? Quais ganhos teriam esses alunos em contraponto a uma abordagem mais tradicional de ensino de línguas?

Considerando o papel do professor de inglês em sala de aula e a função desta língua no mundo: utilizar o letramento crítico pode ajudar o professor em sua prática? Em que sentido?

Levando em conta suas experiências como professores de língua inglesa e o contexto dos ambientes em que já lecionaram, vocês acreditam ser possível aplicar os conceitos de LC nesses ambientes? Porque?

Qual o papel do letramento crítico na sua formação? De que maneira isso pode influenciar sua prática?

Você acha que após terminar o curso de Letras será possível ensinar língua inglesa criticamente? Explique.

## APPENDIX B – Statement of Informed Consent

**TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO**

Você está sendo convidado para participar da pesquisa **"o conceito de letramento crítico na perspectiva de professores em formação"**. Você foi selecionado(a) por ser estudante do curso de Letras inglês e sua participação não é obrigatória. A qualquer momento você pode desistir de participar e retirar seu consentimento. Sua recusa não trará nenhum prejuízo em sua relação com o pesquisador ou com a pesquisa.

Os objetivos deste estudo são estudar como professores em formação concebem o conceito de letramento crítico e o interpretam em sua futura profissão.

Sua participação nesta pesquisa consistirá em conceder entrevistas orais que serão gravadas em áudio.

As informações obtidas através dessa pesquisa serão confidenciais e asseguramos o sigilo sobre sua participação. Os dados não serão divulgados de forma a possibilitar sua identificação. E se assim desejar, ao longo da pesquisa você será chamado (a) pelo pseudônimo: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Giovani Gustavo Pereira Tosi  
Pesquisador Responsável pelo TCC

Declaro que entendi os objetivos, riscos e benefícios de minha participação na pesquisa e concordo em participar.

Apucarana, \_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ de 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participante da pesquisa

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# 7. Culture On Fire: A Semiological Perspective on Fahrenheit 451 (1953)

Ricardo Naoki Nakada Apolinário  
Simone de Souza Burguês

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Fear, a sense of social anxiety elevated to a continental and hemispherical scale, added to the uncertainty of the events that could occur in the near future, filled 20th century with tragic events and permanent changes in the History of humankind. The rise of technology and the forthcoming nuclear crisis during the period between the end of the Second Great War (1939–1945) and through the political conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union, known as the Cold War (1946–1991) were fertile soil for the rise and development of the dystopian literary genre, whose denotative meaning is ‘atrocious place’. A dystopian narrative recalls, mostly, the same language used among the genre, including authoritarianism, doubts, and criticism of the capitalist system, technology versus human relation, the uncertainty of the future by the reflections of the present, the critique and doubt of existence and the inversion or distortion of moral conducts. Some examples of famous dystopian literary productions that contain these signs mentioned are *1984* (1949), *Metropolis* (1925), *Brave New World* (1932), and *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).

The American writer Ray Bradbury debuted *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) during a time when the world was passing through a doubtful scenario with much uncertainty, having the Soviet Union and the United States of America ready to start a war that could end entire civilizations within

seconds. These conflicts and their impacts on human behavior can be found through the pages of *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), which presents a social analysis not only in the main plot of the book, but in the minor dialogues, commentaries, and symbols placed by the author to create a bigger picture of the entire situation.

To further analyze these signs and their impact on society, the usage of a semiological approach on the literary genre shall be presented. Semiology, described by the linguistic Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) as the science of signs which one day would have been the major field in which linguistics could be placed on, has its origins in Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (1916), and its development on the scope of culture and society were made by Charles Peirce, Yuri Lotman, Algirdas Greimas, and Roland Barthes. Semiology studies the signs, the production of meaning (semiosis), and the correlation between sign and society, approaching the denotative and literal meanings of a word, and its possible connotative applications, creating possibilities of interpretation.

Understanding the translated signs in the dystopian genre, whether in literature, visual arts, or music, can provide tools to further analysis on the same subject, and briefly provide a discussion topic to world-based problems, such as authoritarianism and censorship. The objective of the research paper is to analyze *Fahrenheit 451's* (1953) semiology, taking into consideration its cultural background, using the approach of Roland Barthes described in *Mythologies* (1957).

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From clothes to books, human beings have developed different cultures throughout the globe, and people are immersed in their preferred one. Although the term 'culture' faces difficulty to be defined, Canedo (2009) divides the word into three possible definitions. According to Canedo (2009), culture can be defined as "lifestyles which characterize a collectivity; work and practices of Art, intellectual activity and entertainment; and factor of

human development” (CANEDO, 2009, p. 4) [our translation].<sup>57</sup> As a lifestyle, culture is defined by the semiological interaction between society and signs. In the artistic field, it is more focused on a technical vision of creation, “elaborated production with the intention of creating determined feelings, and reach some public” (CANEDO, 2009, p. 5) [our translation].<sup>58</sup> The third conception is more focused on the social and educational tool of culture, used mostly to develop skills and as a form of different literacies.

However, culture does not balance nor create itself; the Industry of Culture, used as a tool by the capitalist system, does. As a product of the industrial revolutions of the modern days (1765, 1870, and 1969), culture and economy walk alongside in terms of profit. The term ‘Industry of Culture’ highlights “the mechanism in which society is built, under the capitalist system, reinforcing its current conditions” (COSTA, 2013, p. 135).<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Costa (2013) affirms, roughly, that the creations of the cultural industry are focused only on profit, created to be used as an exchange product. Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) analyze and criticize the Industry of Culture. According to them:

Those in charge no longer take much trouble to conceal the structure, the power which increases more bluntly its existence is admitted. Films and radio no longer need to present themselves as art. The truth that they are nothing but business is used as an ideology to legitimize the trash they intentionally produce. They call themselves industries, and the published figures for their directors’ incomes quell any doubts about the social necessity of their finished products (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985, p. 99).<sup>60</sup>

57 From the original in Portuguese: “(...) modos de vida que caracterizam uma coletividade; obras e práticas da arte, da atividade intelectual e do entretenimento; e fator de desenvolvimento humano.”

58 From the original in Portuguese: “(...) produção elaborada com a intenção explícita de construir determinados sentidos e de alcançar algum tipo de público.”

59 From the original in Portuguese: “O termo “indústria cultural” ressalta o mecanismo pelo qual a sociedade como um todo é construída, sob o escudo do capital, reforçando as condições vigentes.”

60 From the original in Portuguese: “Os dirigentes não estão mais sequer muito interessados em encobri-lo, seu poder se fortalece quanto mais brutalmente ele se confessa de público. O cinema e o rádio não precisam mais se apresentar como arte. A verdade é de que não passam de um negócio, eles a utilizam como uma ideologia destinada a legitimar o lixo que propositalmente produzem. Eles se definem a si mesmos como indústrias, e as cifras publicadas dos rendimentos de seus diretores gerais suprimem toda dúvida quanto à necessidade social de seus produtos.”

The excessive amount of culture created to serve as profit to capitalism standardizes culture, which is based on an average public who does not have the time nor the interest to question the culture (COSTA, 2013). There are indeed plenty of cultures to be consumed and enjoyed, without monetization being the main interest of the cultural producer, but the question that remains is about us, final consumers: are we happy?

This question made by Clarisse McClellan to Guy Montag, characters in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), by Ray Bradbury, is the starting point of an existential crisis to the main character of the dystopian book. Montag lives in a society ruled by an authoritarian government, which controls every cultural aspect of life. Schools and educational systems are chosen by the government, and transmitted via television; every house has, at least, one big television mounted on the wall and the programs are based on the relatability of the spectators, which are considered (and called) as 'family'. And even though this might be a very technological universe, people do not have access to other cultures besides the one chosen by the government, and the act of reading books is, literally, a crime.

Ray Bradbury was born between WWI and WWII and started his career as a writer during the Cold War (1946–1991). Besides technological advancement, a consequence of the Great Wars, Bradbury watched closely the nuclear crisis, the Space Race, and a possible Third War. The collective fear is very present in his works: *The Garbage Collector* (1953), short story, where garbage collectors start collecting corpses instead of trash, a reflection of the imminent possible nuclear war; *A Little Journey* (1951), about a group of religious people buying a trip to Mars to find their idea of a god, a reflection to the Space Race (1955–1975) during the political conflict of the Cold War (1946–1991); *The Pedestrian* (1951), which can be read as a prequel to *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), where a man is arrested by a police car (without the presence of a police officer, showing the technological improvement of the time the short story is placed) for walking during the evening, an overview of the technological society that is to come.

Moreover, Bradbury and other dystopian writers had the fear of technology's advance. "It is noticeable the worrying of Bradbury, in the early 1950s,



with the invasion of television inside middle-class houses”<sup>61</sup> (RENGEL, 2012, p. 77). In one of his interviews to the LA Weekly, the author admitted his real idea behind *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). The journalist Amy Johnston says that “Bradbury, a man living in the creative and industrial center of reality TV and one-hour dramas, says it (the book) is, in fact, a story about how television destroys interest in reading literature” (JOHNSTON, 2007, p. 2). In addition, Bradbury affirms that “They [the Industry of Culture] stuff you with so much useless information, you feel full” (JOHNSTON, 2007, p. 2).

Movies and other cultural manifestations such as *Modern Times* (1936), by Charles Chaplin and *Metropolis* (1927), by Thea von Harbou, think of technology’s alliance with capitalism as an “imminent evil”. These and other symbols, icons, and indexes can be understood by semiology, “the science in which the objective is to investigate every possible language” (SANTAELLA, 1983, p. 9)<sup>62</sup>. A key aspect of semiology is that everything has (and is) language. The artistic language, for example, can vary its meanings depending on the context, along with the period, the person and its background, and many other particularities within, but also has an internal structure, that those familiarized with the language can understand it rapidly, and create a process of semiosis between the cultural background and the sign.

Additionally, the following analysis will focus on clarifying several aspects of the semiological representations of the Industry of Culture, and how they operate on Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study is held as a content analysis investigation, added to a semiological perspective of research methodology. As a content analysis investigation research, there are possibilities beyond what is said and omitted by the authors. “The content analysis constitutes a research method used to describe and interpret the content of the whole class of

61 From the original in Portuguese: “Nota-se a preocupação de Bradbury, já no início dos anos 1950, com a invasão dos primeiros televisores nos lares da classe média norte-americana.”

62 From the original in Portuguese: “Semiótica é a ciência que tem por objeto de investigação todas as linguagens possíveis”

documents and texts” (MORAES, 1999, p. 2). The “semiological methodology is an instrument to explain the interpretations which, at a given moment in a given society, receive a given phenomenon” (MORETIN, 2011, p.109). The content analysis research, in a qualitative approach, seeks to put in evidence and analyze the symbolic function of a text (MORAES, 1999, p. 2), being symbols one of the objects of semiological studies (SAUSSURE, 1970). The chosen methodology for the present research was based on the interconnectivity between semiological theory and the description of the qualitative research approach.

Furthermore, the research is limited by a qualitative approach within the semiological field, in which there is a possibility of application of the results (in the case of the present analysis) in various contexts, depending on the similarities among them. “Qualitative research is an interpretative approach” (PALMER; BOLDERSON, 2006, p. 16). Moreover, according to Palmer and Bolderson (2006, p.06), the qualitative research is about meanings and behaviors “experienced in a certain social phenomena” (PALMER; BOLDERSON, 2006, p. 06). Which means that qualitative research (PALMER; BOLDERSON, 2006, p. 06) and semiological analysis (BARTHES, 1957) of semiological texts (icon, index and/or symbol) are both connected by the analysis of the meaning and interpretation. While the quantitative method focuses on fixed and structured analysis and data, the “qualitative methods use descriptions and categories (words) to study human experiences and realities from the subject’s perspective” (PALMER; BOLDERSON, 2006, p. 16).

The bibliographic investigation will take into consideration the forms of the Industry of Culture inside Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and face a further analysis within *Mythologies* (1957), by Roland Barthes, who presents the method of semiological analysis, applying the myth to sign dichotomy, proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), in which something (a sign) is divided by the signifier and the signified.

Described by Barthes (1957), a myth is “a type of speech” (BARTHES, 1957, p. 107), yet “not any type: language needs special conditions in order to become myth” (BARTHES, 1957, p. 107). While the language has its literal manifestations by images, speeches and others, the myth is a version of

a linguistic sign that has faced changes in its definitions by the usage, transforming the real concept of a form (object) into a connotative signification. The myth overlaps a particular linguistic or artistic sign, changing its real meaning to a universal idea of the previous denotative sign, that is historically agreed by events and its social usage and cultural definitions (BARTHES, 1957) and its analysis can provide a critical review on signs that are part of a culture:

The Barthesian myth problematizes the social and historical usage that speakers of a language are capable of doing, in which objects and subjects start to mean a different thing beyond the nomenclature of the World” (FONTANARI, 2016, p. 146).<sup>63</sup>

A myth is created by the linguistic sign being applied to various contexts, and its repetition and power transforms a possible concept into its major meaning. It means that the mythological sign is the product of the union of the signifier and the signified of the linguistic sign, that brings the idea of a literal representation of something (e.g., Linguistic Signifier: F-I-R-E and/or an image of fire; Linguistic Signified: the fire, in its core and pure idea; Linguistic Sign: Fire) to the semiosis created by that sign in specific conditions (e.g.: Mythical Signifier: Fire; Mythical Signified: a chemical process of transformation that can bring destruction; Mythical Sign/Myth: a weapon to be used against books).

The idea of using the analysis of myths on *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) proposed by Roland Barthes (1957) is present during the preface:

The starting point of these reflections was usually a feeling of impatience at the sight of the ‘naturalness’ with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history. In short, in the account given of our contemporary circumstances, I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display

<sup>63</sup> From the original in Portuguese: O mito barthesiano consiste numa “dobra”, num giro em falso, isto é, problematiza o uso social e histórico que os falantes da língua são capazes de fazer, de tal maneira que os objetos e as matérias passam a significar uma outra coisa para além de uma nomenclatura do mundo (FONTANARI, 2016, p. 146)

of what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there (BARTHES, 1957, p 10).

There are masks of the ideology behind codes and signs produced by the media and the industry of culture, covering reality and transforming what is socially agreed as natural. (FONTANARI, 2016, p. 145). The daily usage of a language creates and perpetuates the status quo of some myths, that contain signs which represent negative impacts on people's lives and maintain the mask on the oppressive ideology created and imposed by the industry of culture.

Therefore, the objective of the article is to analyze and understand the impacts of the myths created by the Industry of Culture on big events, everyday life, and minor conversations inside *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and, understanding that the “myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form” (BARTHES, 1957, p. 107). The analysis is being conducted focusing on the connotative meanings produced by the signs found throughout the book.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 BEFORE FAHRENHEIT 451 (1953)

Although the events of *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) are fictional, its story is based on real-world events and connections to past moments. Applying Barthes' (1957) methodology of contextualized signs, it is necessary the further and broader understanding of *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)'s historical context in which it was written. Ray Bradbury (1920–2012) was an American writer, born during a time where uncertainty arose, due to the involvement of the United States of America in the Cold War (1946–1991). Those events directly influenced the ideas of the writer. His first texts were written during the Great Depression, in 1929, using parchment paper, and later in 1953, Bradbury “wrote *Fahrenheit 451* at the UCLA library, on typewriters that rented for 10 cents a half hour” (ROGERS, 2012).

The world has faced tremendous transformations and witnessed great terror since Bradbury was born. During Bradbury's elementary school

years, in 1933, books were burnt by German members of the Nazi party, with the allegation of the so-called “un-German spirit” within some titles, as said by *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, which affirms that burning books are the start of fascism and nazism taking over in Italy, in 1933. In 1936, in the Soviet Union, the regime started a repression of those who were against them, an event that is modernly called the Great Purge. Bradbury, about the 1933 book-burning episode:

That grieved my soul. Since I’m self-educated, that means my educators—the libraries—are in danger. And if it could happen in Alexandria, if it could happen in Berlin, maybe it could happen somewhere up ahead, and my heroes would be killed (BRADBURY, 2005).

Later, in 1945, the United States of America tests and uses their first atomic bomb, starting the Cold War, spreading fear of an imminent war throughout the globe, a very similar context which is found in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). The rise of technology, the cultural crisis of book burning, and the increase of nuclear armament during the 20th century are present in the book as well. Before publishing it, Bradbury had published short stories involving a possible future in which humanity has been facing social and cultural problems similar to his particular context.

In 1951, *The Pedestrian* is released, exploring an evening of a citizen who, literally, wants to go for a walk, which alarms his neighbors, and the police are called. In the course of the story, it is discovered that police are ceasing to exist, society gives enormous importance to television and technology. Working with arts is understood as jobless and the act of walking around without a technical and specific reason is seen as “a regressive tendency” (BRADBURY, 1951, p. 153). *The Garbage Collector* (1953) describes a day of a man, whose job changed from collecting garbage to collecting corpses because of the nuclear war they were facing.

Ray Bradbury presents glimpses of a possible *what if* society throughout his short stories, that culminates in *The Fireman* (1951), the story of Guy Montag, a firefighter that, differently from the other firefighters, forgets about how books are burnt, and reflects about *why* he does it. The plot

found in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) follows the previously presented idea, with a similar historical context and the same names presented in the short story. A book about burning books. A book about books.

#### **4.2 FAHRENHEIT 451 (1953): BURNING CULTURE AND WORSHIPING TECHNOLOGY**

A book about books. In a forthcoming unspecified future, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) presents a society ruled by firefighters, whose jobs are to burn books and imprison anyone who possesses forms of literature not accepted by the government. For those in charge, “it was a pleasure to burn” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 1). It is always a pleasure to reinforce power for those who have them. The main character is Guy Montag, a firefighter whose life could be seen as “good” in the presented society. Montag’s fulfillment is noticed right in the beginning of the book: “While the books went up in sparkling whirls and blew away on a wind turned dark with burning. Montag grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 2).

However, how long can one be happy whilst one’s ideas do not trespass the criticality of its own mind? In her first appearance, Clarisse McClellan deconstructs Montag’s entire sentiment of fulfillment, by asking a simple question: “Are you happy?” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 7). Differently, from the inhabitants of the uncertain future, Clarisse pays attention to the tiny details of life. “It was a kind of gentle hunger that touched over everything with tireless curiosity” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 3). Captain of the fire department, boss, and friend of Montag, describes, later in the book, Clarisse’s nature. By the words of Captain Beatty: “She didn’t want to know how a thing was done, but why. That can be embarrassing. You ask why to a lot of things, and you wind up very unhappy indeed, if you keep at it. The poor girl’s better off dead” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 57–8). The descriptions made by both Montag and Beatty reflect not only their perception of the young lady, but what society presents to be during the story.

Though stills unknown the exact period when the books’ story might be happening, a society’s description is given by some dialogues and symbols used during conversations or lying on the background of the main

events. During an intermission between firefighters' calls "a radio hummed somewhere. "...war may be declared any hour. This country stands ready to defend its..." The firehouse trembled as a great flight of jet planes whistled a single note across the black morning sky" (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 30). In another moment, Montag reflects upon the quantity of planes and the terror of the existing yet not visible war:

The bombers crossed the sky and crossed the sky over the house, gasping, murmuring, whistling like an immense, invisible fan, circling in emptiness. "Jesus God," said Montag. "Every hour so many damn things in the sky! How in hell did those bombers get up there every single second of our lives! Why doesn't someone want to talk about it? We've started and won two atomic wars since 1960. Is it because we're having so much fun at home we've forgotten the world? Is it because we're so rich and the rest of the world's so poor and we just don't care if they are? I've heard rumors; the world is starving, but we're well-fed. Is it true, the world works hard and we play? Is that why we're hated so much? I've heard the rumors about hate, too, once in a long while, over the years. Do you know why? I don't, that's sure! Maybe the books can get us half out of the cave. They just might stop us from making the same damn insane mistakes! (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 69)

The collective fear of a nuclear attack during the Cold War (1946–1991) is reflected through the pages and in-between dialogues, having a major role by the end of the book. Society's anxiety has no explanation on the scope of the book, but when compared with its similarities with the historical context, it can be understood as a critique of political decisions, added to Bradbury's thoughts and terror felt by the author reflected on his piece of literature.

The captain's description of Clarisse, quoted previously, presents another idea of how society is represented during the story. If Clarisse's thoughts on why things work instead of how they are done bring the idea of someone with a bad reputation; by the looks of the authority, it can be understood that this line of thought is commonly reproduced by others in the same period.

How things work represents an industrial replication, a model of an ‘old-fashioned’ education, which sees the quantitative more valuable than the quality and reason of things, while why is more focused on the existence, necessity, and criticality of it. Critical thinking is the process of analyzing critically a pan semiotic text (FACIONE, 2018), that can vary from images, songs, behavior, and other forms of cultural manifestations, asking not only how, but when, where, who and, as done by Clarisse, why (FACIONE, 2018).

A step towards authoritarianism starts with censorship, cultural control that has two possible manners to manifest itself: by a coup or democratically being spread by the majority of people. “The memory of fascism is keen in Europe and Europeans know that book burning marked the beginning of fascism in Italy and Germany” (The Washington Post, 1953). The act of book burning can be understood by one of censorship’s expressions, which happened many times in human history and has its reflections during the plot of *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Prohibiting the act of spreading ideas is a way of ceasing critical thinking.

During a great discussion between Beatty and Montag, a timeline of facts starts to exist. According to Beatty, it was not a coup that occurred, but people that actively chose to stop analyzing their current condition in a critical tone and opted to live based on how things are, not why:

It didn’t come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God. Today, thanks to them, you can stay happy all the time, you are allowed to read comics, the good old confessions, or trade journals (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 55).

“Technology, mass exploitation and minority pressure” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 55) are blamed for the dystopian condition found. Beatty also affirms that intellectualism saw its end while schools did not graduate thinkers (those who want to know why), but people who could produce, copy and do (those who want to know how) (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 55). The word intellectual became marginalized. The reason for that is also given by Beatty:



Surely you remember the boy in your own school class who was exceptionally ‘bright,’ did most of the reciting and answering while the others sat like so many leaden idols, hating him. And wasn’t it this bright boy you selected for beatings and tortures after hours? Of course it was. We must all be alike. Not everyone is born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make 56 them cower, to judge themselves against (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 55).

Due to society’s feeling of intellectual inferiority, knowledge decay and books are blamed for the differences created in the world. “A book is a loaded gun in the house next door” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 56).

Happiness is what motivates Beatty to continue. He claims that people’s feeling of joy and optimism is necessary, and he is ready to do so by destroying what might present a threat to a socially tranquilized state (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 58). “Any man who can take a TV wall apart and put it back together again, and most men can nowadays, is happier than any man who tries to slide-rule, measure, and equate the universe” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 58).

Clarisse, during a conversation with Montag, starts describing stories told by her uncle, a man who was once arrested by walking during the evening, not only similar but exactly equal to the main character in *The Pedestrian* (1951), creating a connection between both works. It is told by Clarisse that houses had front porches that allowed people to sit, observe the movement and reunite with people to talk, but they were taken away due to the disapproval of the authorities on people having time to do nothing but think and reflect (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 60).

Social life represented a threat to the government concerning the act of reflecting upon current events. What was once rocking chairs and people having conversations, observing life, is now replaced with seashell radios and wall-mounted televisions. By the first time, Montag’s wife is introduced, Mildred Montag is focused more on the technological device than in the presence of her beloved husband. “And in her ears the little Seashells, the thimble radios tamped tight, and an electronic ocean of sound, of music and talk” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 10).

The role of technology brought by Beatty as one of the responsible of human decay and the ignition of book burning has its reflection on real life events, similarly to the Cold War (1946–1991) and nuclear crisis context. By the end of 1930 until late 1960's, radio stations started increasing their numbers, and what was once a society without access to democratic information, was, at that time, privileged to gain sound devices that could introduce culture and globalization to family houses all around the globe (Memorial da Democracia, c2017). Bradbury, however, could not understand it in a corresponding manner. In fact, dystopian genre literature increases its numbers in the 20th century by using technological advancement as a background to a possible not-good future, and classical works such as George Orwell's *1984* (1949), Thea Von Harbou's *Metropolis* (1925), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) encounters terrain to get acknowledged as famous and important pieces of literary work of their time.

The culture consumed by the population is decided by the authority. If the government approves, people can have it; if they disprove it, "burn 'em to ashes, and then burn the ashes" (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 6). With the impossibility of obtaining culture freely, people must get entertained by the productions the authorities provide, and given the context in which books are prohibited, society has only one way to obtain culture, that is by technology. The Industry of Culture presents itself pulling the strings of the governmental choices during the events of *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). The technological advancement added to the censorship of critical thinking presented is a process of standardization of what people can and cannot consume and, therefore, think. "The technology of the culture industry confines itself to standardization and mass production and sacrifices what once distinguished the logic of the work from that of society" (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2001, p. 42).

Houses are fireproof, and technological advancement has reached many areas of life, from sleeping tablets (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 11) to hunting machines, the Mechanical Hound (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 21). Human interaction is now replaced by wired and electronic devices, and people's addiction is reflected in Montag's thoughts about his wife:

And in her [Mildred] ears the little Seashells, the thimble radios tamped tight, and an electronic ocean of sound, of music and talk and music and talk coming in, coming in on the shore of her unsleeping mind. (...) There had been no night in the last two years that Mildred had not swum that sea, had not gladly gone down in it for the third time (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 10).

Nature is replaced by recreated computer sounds. Houses abound with devices, and as a consequence of less human interaction, time is spent with technological instruments instead of other people. And the Industry of Culture alongside the capitalist system presented in the dystopian society understands it. Although other wages are not illustrated, Montag's conversation with Mildred proves that Capitalism has its continuity, while he affirms that two thousand dollars is a third of his yearly salary, and it is an excessive amount to buy a "fourth screen" of their wall-mounted television:

How long you figure before we save up and get the fourth wall torn out and a fourth wall-TV put in? It's only two thousand dollars." "That's one-third of my yearly pay." "It's only two thousand dollars," she replied. "And I should think you'd consider me sometimes. If we had a fourth wall, why it'd be just like this room wasn't ours at all, but all kinds of exotic people's rooms. We could do without a few things." "We're already doing without a few things to pay for the third wall. It was put in only two months ago, remember? (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 18).

Another clue presented by Bradbury is the television devices and their programs. TVs are mounted in the wall, sized from the floor to the ceiling of the living room, displayed as the centerpiece of furniture, and normally connected with another wall-mounted television, to present an immersive quality of the programs to the viewer:

"Books aren't people. You read and I look around, but there isn't anybody!" He stared at the parlor that was dead and gray as the waters of an ocean that might teem with life if they switched on the electronic sun. "Now," said Mildred, "my 'family' is people. They tell me things; I laugh, they laugh! And the colors!" (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 69).

Every television comes with a device that adapts the names of the families to who are watching, to present a suitable and relatable experience, creating the illusion of belonging to the family seen on screen.

The physical structure of a house is composed, mainly of the foundation, pillars/columns and walls. On *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), televisions participate actively in the process of cultural censorship, creating the previously introduced idea of relatability and familiarity. This idea gets more evidence when analyzing the way interactions between television and spectators happen. When the characters of the telenovela say something, Mildred literally answers them, eventually calling them members of her own family.

Literally not just one wall but, so far, three! And expensive, too! And the uncles, the aunts, the cousins, the nieces, the nephews, that lived in those walls, the gibbering pack of tree-apes that said nothing, nothing, nothing and said it loud, loud, loud. He had taken to calling them relatives from the very first (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 41) [our highlight].

The Collins Dictionary presents the definition of the noun family as “a primary social group consisting of parents and their offspring, the principal function of which is provision for its members” (FAMILY, 2021), while Merriam-Webster dictionary understands it as “a group of people who are related to each other” (FAMILY, 2021). The connotative meaning of the word family, applying Barthes’ theory of myth (1957), in the context given by Bradbury, implies that the television programs represent the pillars of society, demonstrated by the size and quantity of the TV devices in the living room, mounted on walls, or in that case, being the walls, added to the usage of familiar names such as aunt, uncle, and cousin to describe the actors. This argument gets stronger when Rengel (2012) describes television becoming the center of the room, replacing the familiar moment with the technological device, confirming that Bradbury’s worry about television is noticed throughout *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)’s pages.

The strict control of the cultural production and, later, the censorship and prohibition of literary works are the product of the excessive amount of television, fear displayed by Bradbury during an interview to L.A.

Weekly, that “I [Bradbury] wasn’t worried about freedom [when he wrote *Fahrenheit 451*], I was worried about people being turned into morons by TV” (JOHNSON, 2007). Bradbury’s fear was that the amount of useless information presented by television could have an enormous impact on society. However, what is understood as useless for scholars and intellectuals can have a positive connotation to an authoritarian government.

Recalling what Beatty says about happiness, anything that does not bring joy should not exist:

“Colored people don’t like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don’t feel good about Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Burn it. Someone’s written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Bum the book. Serenity, Montag. Peace, Montag. Take your fight outside. Better yet, into the incinerator. Funerals are unhappy and pagan? Eliminate them, too. Five minutes after a person is dead he’s on his way to the Big Flue, the Incinerators serviced by helicopters all over the country. Ten minutes after death a man’s a speck of black dust. Let’s not quibble over individuals with memoriams. Forget them. Burn them all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean.” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 57).

Any cultural manifestation that did not cover the majority of people’s perception on happiness should be banned and, literally, burnt. Beatty’s idea of equality was based on exterminating the different, and the marginalization of knowledge and Artistic manifestations were critical to achieve such plan. Therefore, knowledge, arts and books can be understood as information that could make people reflect and “hurt” their emotion and make them feel different, so they must be ended. “Forget them. Burn them all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 57).

Montag’s question to Beatty concerning their profession presents one last reflection upon society.

“Yes, but what about the firemen, then?” asked Montag. “Ah.” Beatty leaned forward in the faint mist of smoke from his pipe. “What more easily explained and natural? With school turning out more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkerers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and

imaginative creators, the word ‘intellectual,’ of course, became the swear word it deserved to be (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 55).

Intellectuals lost their jobs. When recalling the existence of a person he met on the subway, it is understood that teachers and other forms of intellectual jobs started to fade due to technological advancement.

The old man admitted to being a retired English professor who had been thrown out upon the world forty years ago when the last liberal arts college shut for lack of students and patronage. His name was Faber. (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 70)

Another passage that reinforces the idea is concerning the philosophy course shutting down, and atomic engineering taking its place. “This is Fred Clement, former occupant of the Thomas Hardy chair at Cambridge in the years before it became an Atomic Engineering School” (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 143).

Firefighters gained more prestige as intellectualism decayed. And yet the term more appropriate to the 21st century is indeed Firefighter, the word used throughout the entire book is fireman. Yet the word fireman presents itself as outdated, the terminology finds its connotative meaning reasonably applied in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by its proposition and period of time. Analyzing the morphology, the denotative meaning of the word fireman is “a man whose job is to stop unwanted fires from burning” (FIREMAN, 2021). The word fireman is composed by the union of fire, “the light and heat and especially the flame produced by burning” (FIRE, 2021), and man, “an individual human” (MAN, 2021).

In the dystopian society of *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), society went through unimaginable changes because of the lack of critical thinking, changing the roles and rules of simple functions in society. What fireman should represent is now wicked by the literal junction of the words fire and man, which can be understood as a man who puts fire, not puts it out. The role of the industry of Culture in the process of rearranging facts and definitions is seen during the conversation between Montag and Clarisse and later on Beatty’s reassuring the “history” and fireman’s mission during an intermission:

“Is it true that long ago firemen put fires out instead of going to start them?” “No. Houses. have always been fireproof, take my word for it.” “Strange. I heard once that a long time ago houses used to burn by accident and they needed firemen to stop the flames.” He laughed (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 6).

“Established, 1790, to burn English–influenced books in the Colonies. First Fireman: Benjamin Franklin”(BRADBURY, 1953, p. 32); in which presents former politician Benjamin Franklin as being the founder and pioneer of burning books. Changing historical facts in order to profit and gain political power is a perfect example of the Industry of Culture manifested in the book. Benjamin Franklin, in 1790, established the first fire brigade in Pennsylvania, but Beatty created a rulebook in which Benjamin Franklin is said to be the first firefighter to burn books, making all the firefighters believe it.

Given the further previous analysis of some aspects of the book, there are some points to be concluded by the present data analysis. Firefighters burning books, that represent knowledge, that represent a threat to people’s happiness. And even though Bradbury affirms *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) is not about censorship, there are some passages throughout the book that can be seen focused on the act of forcing the extinguishment of cultures. And ironically, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) was banned several times around the world:

Despite the school district’s assurance that students can opt for another assignment, some students plan to start a petition to ban *Fahrenheit 451* from Santa Rosa District Schools for good (BANNED BOOKS 2018 – FAHRENHEIT 451 – MARSHALL LIBRARIES, 2018)

In ironic circumstances, Bradbury’s story was banned from libraries throughout the years 2000– 2009, after controversy brewed from one of the burned books mentioned in the story being the Bible. (THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, 2018)

Yet happiness is subjective and not measurable, the excessive amount of technological input creates the illusion of fulfillment present in Montag’s life, and in the necessity of Mildred to occupy her life with more technology to fill the lack of social interaction, created by the authority to control cultural manifestations that may represent a threat to society’s happiness,

forcing people to consume culture produced by the government that aims at the audience's lack of social interaction, creating the illusion of necessity of technological devices to achieve... happiness. "He was not happy. He said the words to himself. He recognized this as the true state of affairs. He wore his happiness like a mask" (BRADBURY, 1953, p. 09).

## 5. FINAL REMARKS

*Fahrenheit 451* (1953) describes a dystopian society in which cultural control, authoritarianism and the lack of critical thinking collides and ignites a wave of book burning and censorship throughout the globe, transforming books into evil objects and readers into public enemies. The book about ending books, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) represents the fear felt by Ray Bradbury during the political conflicts of the Cold War (1946–1991) and his perception of technology invading houses and indoctrinating nations. To understand the further meanings behind literary signs, the historical context and the possible implications within the work are necessary. Everyday language is an important tool to maintain the status quo of oppressive signs, and the analysis of it in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) presents a major view on society and the manners they function.

The decay of human society caused by the excessive amount of technology, the fear of its impacts in a near future, the increase in authoritarianism, political and monetary power obtained by a minority that suffers from lack of empathy and the excessive amount created with the purpose of entertaining and creating profit without critical impact on people are discussed through Bradbury's most famous work, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), a book about books and the end of them. And yet the author affirms that the plot was about the rise of television, ideas brought by *Mythologies* (1957) by Roland Barthes provides a reflection upon any text and its possible connotative meanings.

The choice of the semiological approach of the myth proposed by Roland Barthes (1957) presents an effective, yet broad, method of analysis. Effective because signs are easily transformed into myths when used frequently by certain social groups; broad because they are possible to



be analyzed under various scopes, and each culture has manifestations of myths in their language.

During the analysis, some key points of the dystopian society are presented. Although it is never said in the book, previous wars had been fought and militarism is a current lifestyle and enforcement of governmental and political power on people, similarly to the events of the 20th century, from the beginning of World War I (1914–1918) to the end of the Cold War (1946–1991). The authoritarianism, however, has its arrival by a democratical decision of censorship and pursuit of those with critical thinking. The end of humanity courses on universities around the globe to be occupied by technical ones was the starting point of the decay of intellectualism and creativity. As a result, people became more rational, technology evolved and human relationships changed. Books were seen as delusional and filled with lies and empty promises of happiness. Every house had wall-mounted televisions that were a representation of the base of society, and the programs “talked” to the spectators, using not only their names but calling them family.

The investigation of the myths held on *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) concludes that the process of resemiotization of books, intellectualism, knowledge, culture, television and firefighter to myths within the literary piece are representations of the political influence that the industry of culture possesses over societies ruled by authoritarian governors. The lack of critical thinking and the excessive amount of social and literal power that the *firemen* have, represent the decay of emotional and empathetic humanity, and the technological advancement alongside the decrease of human interaction presents a reflection: are we happy?

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# 8. Chained To the Altar: Marriage as A Perpetuation of Women’s Submissive Role in “Bridgerton” (2020) And “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009)

Thayná Pereira Pasini

Marcio Henrique de Almeida Soares

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, gender roles have been defined by social expectations and norms associated with femininity and masculinity. In Beauvoir’s work “The Second Sex” (1956), it can be observed that this idea has been formed since the earliest societies. As an example, according to Beauvoir, Aristotle asserts that “The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities” (Beauvoir, 1956, p. 15). By taking Aristotle’s statement into account, it’s possible to observe that within the idea of gender roles, there are the notions of femininity and masculinity, notions related to an active masculine and a passive feminine.

On a similar note, Bourdieu (2001) points out that in western societies, the idea of phallocentrism emerged from the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve, where the woman was created from one of Adam’s ribs, leading to a supposed natural dependence of the female sex on the male. Such narrative persists and legitimizes intolerable situations, such as male dominance, which is deemed acceptable or even natural (Nader, 2002, p. 468). In this light, we can assume that the performance society expects women to fulfil, due to their

female condition, is that of submission and passivity, while for men, on the other hand, there is the role of activity and self-sufficiency (Nader, 2002, p. 462).

Even though women always fought against such oppression, it was only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that an organized collective force was put together to lead this fight, bringing up the first wave of feminism. The discussion topics and demands of First-wave feminists were quite diverse, including: the fight for equality, suffrage (through which the basic civil rights were to be achieved),

access to formal education and a school curriculum that was not focused on domestic activities, reform of matrimonial law (which subjugated wives to husbands, allowed the exploitation of women's property by husbands, unequal treatment in cases of adultery, prevented divorce, etc.) (Zirbel, 2021, p. 13, our translation) among others (Zirbel, 2021, p. 12, 14).<sup>64</sup>

The second wave of feminism, which started around the 1960's, initially brought to light issues regarding motherhood and civil rights in the United States, while in countries that had invested in a universal education project and where many women were included, something unprecedented was happening:

a new generation of minimally or highly educated women was moving through these social realities. [Consequently,] feminist books and texts reached an increasing number of people, and studies on women and feminist studies began to be organized (Zirbel, 2021, p. 16, our translation).<sup>65</sup>

In 1976, the Decade of Women was established, and issues regarding gender inequalities in the fields of education, civil rights, access to work, and domestic activities once again became the main topics of discussion. From

64 From the original in Portuguese: "acesso a educação formal e a um currículo escolar que não fosse voltado às atividades domésticas, à reforma do direito matrimonial (que subjugava as esposas aos maridos, permitia a exploração dos bens das mulheres pelos esposos e um tratamento desigual diante do adultério, impossibilitava divórcio etc.) [...]".

65 From the original in Portuguese: "uma nova geração de moças minimamente ou muito instruídas circulava por essas realidades sociais. Livros e textos com conteúdos feminista atingiam um número crescente de pessoas. Estudos sobre as mulheres e Estudos Feministas começavam a ser organizados".



that moment on, in almost every continent, various groups and collective activities were organized to support women and motivate them to fight for their demands, which were, again, diverse. However, as Freeman (1972) puts it, two common points are noticeable among this variety of demands: the feminist critique of society and the idea of oppression (Zirbel, 2021, p. 18).

The third wave blew up around the 1990s as a response to the supposed failures of the second wave, such as their strong emphasis on the experiences of upper-middle-class white women. Snyder (2008, p. 180) characterizes diversity as a central feature of third-wave feminism, where each third-wave feminist portrays a distinct version of feminism, usually describing it as more inclusive and racially diverse than the second-wave. In addition to the environmental, economic, and social justice emphases of third-wave feminism, there is also an emphasis on gender activism, where Judith Butler is the main presence. During this period, Butler developed her theory of gender as performance/performativity in “Gender Trouble” (1990), which served as the basis for the queer theory that was developed in greater depth throughout the 1990s.

Zirbel also states that from the 1980s on, the United States media began labelling young adult and teenage North American women as a post-feminist generation, who were simply enjoying certain social gains, implying that the goals of feminism had been achieved. Thus, from this perspective, feminism ceased to be considered necessary. In 1992, however, Rebecca Walker had an important function in reigniting the flame of the feminist movement with her essay documenting the persistent sexism of the early 1990s and calling on women to join the feminist struggle (Zirbel, 2021, p. 21).

The fourth wave of feminism, which some authors state that has never existed, is summarized by the “digital feminism” for Rosa (2024) and began to emerge around 2013. This wave is characterized by its massive online mobilization, and, consequently, the feminism of this era has spread across all geographical regions. In this wave, “old” issues that have already been claimed in previous waves are emphasized and claimed according to each woman’s context.

However, despite feminist achievements, the perception and social pressure surrounding marriage persist. From a young age, women often

encounter societal expectations to find a partner and settle down. The fear underlying this pressure is that if women delay marriage and even childbirth, they may be perceived as failing to fulfil their societal role, and therefore, labelled as unhappy or incomplete. According to Patel (2018), “For women, a lot of this [pressure] was due to gender roles and stereotypes [...]”. This expectation not only places undue stress on women but also perpetuates outdated norms regarding women’s worth and personal accomplishment being tied to their relationship status and reproductive choices. This ongoing struggle highlights the necessity of studies that investigate the role of marriage in maintaining women’s submission in contemporary societies, especially peripheral ones (Bonnici; Zolin, 2010, p. 217).

It is with the intention of attending this necessity, and considering the importance of diversity to feminist studies in times of a globalization that erases the heterogeneity of developing countries, that we decided to work in a comparative analysis between the creations of two female authors from highly different backgrounds. One of these authors is Chimamanda Adichie, a black Nigerian writer who published, amongst many notable pieces of fiction, the short story “The arrangers of marriage” (2009). The other author is Julia Quinn, a North American writer who is responsible for the original idea behind the television series “Bridgerton” (2020), based on her series of novels of the same name.

Having in mind the differences between the aforementioned authors, and building on theoretical understandings of the role of marriage in society and masculine domination over women, this study seeks to perform a critical comparative analysis of the short story “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009) and the script of the first season of the television series “Bridgerton” (2020), examining the societal imposition of marriage on women and how gender relations constructed by the dominant ideology take place within the institution of marriage.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to carry out this research, it is necessary to recur to the feminist literary criticism approach, which emerged around the 1970s during the

second wave of feminism. Candraningrum and Vitayala describe the feminist theory as “a framework that examines and deconstructs gender inequality, emphasizing the understanding of gender roles, power structures, and the pursuit of equality between women and men” (2024, p. 11).

According to Bonnici and Zolin (2010, p. 218), feminist literary criticism questions the patriarchal academic practice and establishes gender as a fundamental analytical category, in which its approach seeks to uncover how gender relations are constructed by the dominant ideology, also considering their interaction with other social relations. Despite this understanding, the notion of gender itself is also challenged by contemporary feminist authors for its tendency to universalize the male/female opposition, pointing to the need of broadening the concept.

Judith Butler, the author of “Gender Trouble” (1999), describes gender as the “discursive/cultural means by which ‘sexed nature’ or ‘a natural sex’ is produced and established as ‘prediscursive,’ prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts” (1999, p. 11). In other words, Butler critiques the common belief that biological sex is a natural, pre-existing category that exists independently of society, being our understanding of biological sex a social product itself. This way, the author introduced the concept of “performativity” to explain how gender identity is established in a social context through repetitive actions, discourses, etc. that reinforce certain behaviors and deem others inappropriate for men or women.

In Bourdieu’s view, these power relations and discourses are “naturally” justified through the social construction of the body as a sexual object and the creation of the biological division between the sexes (2001, p. 11). This way, the author observes that “the social order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending to ratify the masculine domination [...]” (2001, p. 9). Bourdieu emphasizes that women’s history is marked by a high degree of constancy and permanence, that is observed through the agents and institutions which permanently contribute to the maintenance of this permanence, such as the Church, the State, the educational system, and so on (2001, p. 83).

Bearing that in mind, marriage, a “destiny traditionally offered to women by society” (Beauvoir, 1956, p. 415) is one of the instruments used by the Church to maintain women’s social status of permanence. In light of this, Beauvoir asserts that the single woman is socially explained and defined concerning marriage (1956, p. 415). The author points out that, once marriage takes on a contractual form, it has always been a vastly different experience for men and for women, as in a social context, men are seen as independent and complete individuals. This perception contrasts with the experience of young women, for whom marriage seems to be the only means of support and justification of their existence (Beauvoir, 1956, p. 416).

With all that in mind, this work employs a feminist literary critical approach in the comparative analysis of the short story “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009) and the script of Season One of “Bridgerton” (2020) to examine in the contemporary fictional narratives the societal imposition of marriage on women and how gender relations constructed by the dominant ideology take place within the institution of marriage. The theoretical perspectives of Butler (1999), Bourdieu (2001) and Beauvoir (1956) are used as the main basis for the construction and conclusion of this investigation.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted as a comparative analysis which aims to examine the societal imposition of marriage on women and how gender relations constructed by the dominant ideology take place inside marriage in the contemporary fictional narratives “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009) and television series *Bridgerton’s* Season One (2020) through qualitative and bibliographical approaches.

In a study on qualitative research, Lima (2018, p. 5, our translation) asserts that in Arouca’s (1999) view, “qualitative research is the vehicle for valuing the text and the context of the social object [...]”<sup>66</sup>. In this work, qualitative research allows for a nuanced and wide-ranging investigation of the chosen fictional narratives, while values their complexity and acknowledges multiple interpretations.

66 From the original in Portuguese: “a pesquisa qualitativa é o veículo de valorização do texto e do contexto do objeto social [...]”.

Furthermore, the bibliographical approach is also an indispensable method for this study, as it ensures a coherent and contextually aware study with an enlightening analysis, as observed in Severino's (2007, p. 122, our translation) description: "the bibliographical approach is the one that is conducted based on available records resulting from previous research [...]. It relies on data or theoretical categories that have already been studied by other researchers and properly documented"<sup>67</sup>.

Finally, the comparative analysis method is essential for this study as, according to Carvalhal (2006, p. 7), it offers the researcher comprehension autonomy concerning the narratives analyzed and is a specific way to examine these narratives interacting, in a dialogical perspective, with other narratives. Carvalhal (2006, p. 6) points out that there is not a specific guideline to follow when it comes to comparative literature, since it can be observed in recent studies that the method (or methods) does not precede the analysis, but derives from it. This way, the present analysis focuses on particular themes within the selected narratives, where these themes are examined by comparing the narratives to identify their commonalities.

Through the combination of these approaches, this study seeks to analyze the aforementioned narratives within the framework of feminist literary criticism, based on the studies of Butler (1999) and Beauvoir (1956), and the social aspect of power relations in Bourdieu's (2001) view. With that in mind, we aim to examine the societal imposition of marriage on women and how gender relations constructed by the dominant ideology take place within the institution of marriage.

#### 4. ANALYSIS

The focus of this analysis is on the narratives' themes of marriage as a social imposition on women and power relations. Through the prior reading of the narratives, some discussion topics were gathered considering their apparent prevalence. These discussion topics, which function as axes in the exploration of the narratives are: the cultural imposition upon women;

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67 From the original in Portuguese: "A pesquisa bibliográfica é aquela que se realiza a partir do registro disponível, decorrente de pesquisas anteriores [...]."

the role of family in maintaining women's submission within marriage; and the protagonists' economic powerlessness.

It is important to notice that the selected narratives also delve into racial and postcolonial issues, exploring themes of identity, power dynamics, and historical repercussions, revealing the complex interactions between colonizer and colonized, as well as the enduring legacies of colonialism in contemporary societies. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to address such deep and multifaceted issues. Therefore, while acknowledging their importance, this study does not explore these racial and postcolonial dimensions in detail.

Despite their stories being set in different eras and countries, the short story "The Arrangers of Marriage" (2009) shares some similarities with the inaugural season of the TV series "Bridgerton" (2020). The first one was written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and is featured in the collection of short stories "The Thing Around Your Neck", which was published in 2009.

Set in the early 2000s, the narrative brings to light the story of Chinaza, a Nigerian woman who moves to the United States right after an arranged marriage by her aunt and uncle to the Nigerian doctor Ofodile, who goes by *Dave* in the United States. Upon arrival, *Chinaza* faces the challenges of adapting to a new culture and the sacrifices she is expected to make, especially by her husband, in order to fit into her new environment.

The second narrative is a romance television series released in 2020 on the streaming service *Netflix*, which was based on the book series of the same name by Julia Quinn. The series is set in the 1800s, during the London Regency era, in which the viewer can observe the highly competitive social season, where young marriageable nobility and gentry are introduced into society.

The narrative follows Daphne Bridgerton (Phoebe Dynevor), the eldest daughter of the Bridgerton family, as she makes her societal debut in a competitive marriage market. Daphne initially catches the eye of Queen Charlotte (Golda Rosheuvel) and is deemed the season's "Incomparable," but her expectations decline due to her overprotective brother, Anthony (Jonathan Bailey), scaring off potential suitors. To solve their respective

problems, Daphne comes up with a ruse that consists of pretending to have a fake courtship with Simon Basset (Regé-Jean Page), the Duke of Hastings, who does not intend to marry. Eventually, their fake courtship leads to real feelings and they end up getting married, though they face several obstacles in their relationship.

With all that in mind, some of the narratives' similarities can be observed mostly through the protagonists' journeys, Daphne and Chinaza, in which marriage is imposed on them by their families. The protagonists' families seem to be motivated to do so, especially, by the social position of the future husbands, since the young wives would be economically dependent on their partners. Moreover, Daphne and Chinaza also seem to have been raised to perform traditional and submissive gender roles established by society. Considering all this, we intend to comparatively analyze the aforementioned narratives regarding the aspects of marriage as a social imposition on women and women's submission to power relations within the framework of feminist literary criticism.

#### **4.1 THE CULTURE OF SUBORDINATION IMPOSED UPON WOMEN**

This section examines through cultural lenses the themes of gender, power relations and marriage inside the selected narratives using the comparative method. Based on the previously mentioned theories, we expect to find out how the protagonists' opinions are treated by other characters, what level of decision-making power they have, and whether they have other prospects besides being wives in the stories.

Concerning the plots of the narratives and considering the studies of Butler (1999), culture appears to be used as an indoctrination instrument of women in both narratives in order to maintain their place of submission in gender relations. In both narratives, it can be observed that this indoctrination seems to begin when marriage is treated in the same way by the protagonists' families, as the man who is considered the head of the family is in charge of searching for the best match. As a result, the opinions of the protagonists are not considered and their decision-making power is erased in this context.

In Adichie's "The Arrangers of Marriage" (2009), Chinaza presents a lack of decision-making power since the beginning of her journey, a situation that can be seen in this excerpt of the short story: "What have we not done for you? We raise you as our own and then we find you an ezigbo di! A doctor in America! It is like we won a lottery for you!" Aunty Ada said" (2009, p. 90). Similarly, Daphne's lack of decision-making power in "Bridgerton" (2020) can be observed in this dialogue between Anthony and Lady Bridgerton, in which two members of her family appear to be competing to determine her future:

**Anthony** – You have suitors. You do not have what matters: proposals. Except, of course, from Lord Berbrooke. [...]

**Lady Bridgerton** – Daphne has charmed a duke, Anthony. You must know that changes everything (Lin, 2020, episode 2, season 1, 10.45 – 10.57).

In this context, Beauvoir (1956) asserts that femininity is not a natural state but is culturally and historically constructed, which imprisons women to roles that reinforce their subordination. This way, the excerpts mentioned above show that the members of the family, who are responsible for the protagonists, act mostly based on their cultural biases. These actions, thus, contribute to the maintenance of the protagonists' positions of submission and, consequently, lack of decision-making power.

In this regard, Bourdieu (2001) states that the very origin of culture understood as a social order is dominated by the masculine principle and is deeply intertwined with power relations that relegate women to the position of submission. In other words, culture, as a method of social ordering, is produced by dominant, often male, groups. This situation results in the marginalization of women and their reduction to subordinate roles.

Likewise, the narratives illustrate how women are reduced to positions of submission by the masculine principle, as can be seen in this extracted quote in which Ofodile says to Chinaza: "*You don't understand* how it works in this country. If you want to get anywhere you have to be as mainstream as possible. If not, you will be left by the roadside." (Adichie, 2009, p. 90,



emphasis added). The highlighted passage showcases a dynamic where the man holds the knowledge and the woman is supposed to follow his ideas and decisions, even though there is no proof his ideas are as correct as he thinks they are. Also, Ofodile's statement can be seen as an expression of the culture as a method of social ordering that suggests social success and acceptance require conformity to the dominant norms, which, in turn, are often defined and produced by masculine ideals. In this context, Chinaza's need to "be as mainstream as possible" can be interpreted as a pressure to conform to the male-dominated cultural order, where failure to do so could result in her marginalization.

Concerning this, it is possible to observe a similar situation in this interaction in which Anthony reduces Daphne to a position of submission:

**Anthony** – I want you to know I am not angry with you. I do not blame you for what transpired.

**Daphne** – Do not treat me like a child. I did this.

**Anthony** – He took advantage of you.

**Daphne** – No less than I took liberties with him. [...] You think that just because I am a woman, I am incapable of making my own choices? (McDonald, 2020, episode 4, season 1, 43.20 – 43.45).

Assuming that marriage is one of the instruments of indoctrination of women created by the Church and used to indoctrinate women and maintain male dominance (Bourdieu, 2001), Beauvoir (1956) emphasizes that men voluntarily assume the charge of marrying, while women become their husbands' vassals when married. "She takes his name, [...] she breaks more or less decisively with her past, becoming attached to her husband's universe; she gives him her person, virginity" (1956, p. 418 – 419).

The situation described above becomes perceptible when Chinaza questions Ofodile about the reasons behind his decision to marry her: "Why did you marry me?' I asked. 'I wanted a Nigerian wife and my mother said you were *a good girl, quiet*. She said you might even be a virgin.' He smiled." (Adichie, 2009, p. 97, emphasis added). This interaction highlights the social expectation that a woman's value lies in her obedience, virginity

and ability to be the socially expected wife, reinforcing Beauvoir's claim of marriage as an instrument of women's oppression. Not only this, but the assumption Odile's family make, that the main quality of a good girl is being quiet, reinforces the view that the less a woman voices her own ideas and opinions the better.

In the same way, we can observe that in "Bridgerton" (2020) Daphne is raised solely for the purpose of marriage and she seems to understand it in the following quote: "You have no idea what it is to be a woman. What it might feel like to have one's entire life reduced to a single moment. This is all I have been raised for. This... is all I am, I have no other value. If I am unable to find a husband, I shall be worthless" (McDonald, 2020, episode 1, season 1, 32.32 – 32.49). The quote also underscores the pressure that society places on women to fulfil societal values, just as the worthlessness that society assigns to a woman without a husband. In addition, this idea aligns with Beauvoir's assertion of marriage as a tool for women's oppression.

With all that said, the analysis of gender, power relations, and marriage through cultural lenses in the selected narratives reveals the influence of patriarchal structures in shaping the roles and identities of women. The protagonists in these narratives are portrayed as having little or no decision-making power, a portrayal that appears to be reinforced by cultural norms that reduce women to the roles of wives and subordinate them to masculine authority. The theoretical perspectives of Butler (1999), Bourdieu (2001) and Beauvoir (1956) provide a framework for understanding how the narratives illustrate the function of marriage as an instrument of female oppression, perpetuating gender inequality and the marginalization of women. This perpetuation is performed, in many instances, by social institutions, as we are going to discuss in the following section.

#### **4.2 THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN MAINTAINING WOMEN'S SUBMISSION CONCERNING MARRIAGE**

This discussion topic explores the theme of women's submission concerning marriage, as it seems to be perpetuated by the families. By applying the comparative method and drawing on the previously discussed

theories, we investigate the similarities this theme presents across different narrative contexts.

According to Bourdieu (2001, p. 85), the reproduction of social structures that perpetuate and support the dominant ideology – masculine, by definition – has been traditionally carried out by three main agencies: the Church, the educational system, and the family. In this context, the author interprets the family as the institution that plays the central role in the reproduction of social structures. This way, by reproducing these social structures and perpetuating the dominant ideology, the family also contributes to the maintenance of the submissive role that is expected of women by society.

In both narratives, it is possible to observe that the family can be described as an institution that seeks to maintain women’s role of submission, as can be seen in “Bridgerton” (2020), when Lady Bridgerton, the matriarch of the Bridgerton family, talks about marriage with *Daphne*:

**Lady Bridgerton** – I have taught you to believe that marriage is the best that life has to offer, and that remains true. But it is not simply a partner that marriage provides. You will have comfort and a house to tend, and most importantly, children. You will throw yourself into raising your family, and you will find much joy. I am certain (Lin, 2020, episode 2, season 1, 39.18 – 40.08).

Similarly, this situation can be observed in “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009) when Chinaza narrates how her uncle and aunt would react if she told them she was getting divorced: “‘You left your husband?’ Aunt Ada would shriek. ‘Are you mad? Does one throw away a guinea fowl’s egg? Do you know how many women would offer both eyes for a doctor in America? For any husband at all?’ And Uncle Ike would bellow about my ingratitude, my stupidity [...]” (Adichie, 2009, p. 98).

Concerning the maintenance of women’s submissive role, especially in marriage, by the family, Beauvoir (1956) states that marriage has been constructed to subjugate women, becoming something that can be seen as an imposition upon women by social structures and, subsequently, by women’s families. The author identifies two reasons for that imposition:

“The first reason is that she must provide the society with children. [...] the second reason why marriage is enjoined is that a woman’s function is also to satisfy a male’s sexual needs and to take care of his household” (1956, p. 416).

In light of this, Daphne appears to be driven by a desire to fulfil the expectations imposed upon women by society, particularly concerning marriage. This desire seems to be a result of influences from her family background. The following quote from Daphne herself illustrates this situation: “We will all need to find love one day. Indeed, a love as pure as what mama and papa once shared, if we are so fortunate. *I merely hope I am able to continue such a grand tradition*” (McDonald, 2020, episode 1, season 1, 09.40 – 09.51, emphasis added). The highlighted phrase indicates the character’s need to fulfil the traditions of her family, as she asserts that lovingly successful marriages are a long-standing tradition in her family, a tradition which she seeks to continue.

Just as Daphne seems to be seeking to fulfil the societal expectations placed on women regarding marriage due to her family subjugation, so does Chinaza. This can be observed when the protagonist talks with Ofodile about their first lunch together as a couple, in which she reflects on what advise her aunt would give about the situation: “We could go home so I can cook,” I said. “Don’t let your husband eat out too much,” Aunty Ada had said, “or it will push him into the arms of a woman who cooks. Always guard your husband like a guinea fowl’s egg” (Adichie, 2009, p. 94).

With all this in mind, it is possible to conclude that both narratives highlight the role of family in perpetuating women’s subordination within the context of marriage. This seems to be evidenced by the manner in which familial structures reinforce societal expectations that prioritize marriage and the subjugation of women, with marriage being portrayed as the ultimate goal for women. This aforementioned perpetuation appears to be rooted in societal norms and ideologies that, according to Bourdieu (2001) and Beauvoir (1956), maintain the dominance of patriarchal structures. Despite the influence of culture and social institutions, however, this dominance can only be maintained once women do not have power to impose their own

views and ideas. That sort of power, in the capitalist system, can only be achieved through money. This is the topic of our next discussion.

### 4.3 THE PROTAGONISTS' ECONOMIC POWERLESSNESS

In this section, we explore the theme of the economic powerlessness of the protagonists. Based on the aforementioned theories and the comparative method, we expect to show how the protagonists of both analyzed narratives seem to be completely economically dependent on their spouses, a fact that contributes to the maintenance of women's submission.

In both narratives it can be observed that marriage is treated as a commercial matter by the families of the protagonists, as the head of the family is responsible for finding the best match for them, motivated by the social position of the future husbands. In this regard, Beauvoir (1956) asserts that when marriage assumes a contractual form, women who are dowered or have their share in inheritance appear to have civil standing as persons, however, the practice of dowry and inheritance continues to enslave women to their families. This is due to the fact that dowry and inheritance are controlled by the family unit, which has the power to select the women's spouses.

Correspondingly, this contractual form of marriage can be observed in this excerpt from "The Arrangers of Marriage" (2009): "Uncle Ike would probably smile into the phone, the same kind of smile that had loosened his face when he told me that the perfect husband had been found for me [...] 'A doctor in America,' he had said, beaming. 'What could be better [...]?'" (Adichie, 2009, p. 90). In the same way, a similar situation can be observed in "Bridgerton" (2020) when Anthony selects a potential suitor for Daphne and describes the reasons behind his decision: "Lord Berbrooke's barony is over 200 years old. His lineage is legitimate. He has had an excellent education, possesses no debts, never hurt an animal or a woman, and is even a decent shot" (McDonald, 2020, episode 1, season 1, 47.06 – 47.16).

In this regard, these selected excerpts from the narratives align with Beauvoir's statement that "woman as a slave or a vassal, is integrated within families dominated by fathers and brothers, and she has always been given in marriage by certain males to other males" (1956, p. 416). Moreover, concerning Beauvoir's (1956) previously discussed claims, it is possible to

conclude that the subjugation of women to their families persists even after marriage, whereby the husband assumes the role of the family and the woman becomes economically enslaved to him.

For instance, in “The Arrangers of Marriage” (2009), Chinaza seems to be economically enslaved to her family, and after marrying Ofodile, she becomes similarly dependent on him. In this context, Ofodile/Dave appears to explore this dynamic in order to exert control over his wife, as we can notice in this excerpt when Nia, a neighbor, offers Chinaza a job:

“You know, my sister’s a manager at Macy’s,” she said. “They’re hiring entry-level salespeople in the women’s department, so if you’re interested I can put in a word for you and you’re pretty much hired. She owes me one.” Something leaped inside me at the thought, the sudden and new thought, of earning what would be mine. Mine. “I don’t have my work permit yet,” I said. “*But Dave has filed for you?*” “Yes.” (Adichie, 2009, p. 96, emphasis added).

Upon observing the highlighted phrases, it is possible to suggest that Ofodile is exploring Chinaza’s economic dependence on him in order to exert control over her, as the narrative unfolds, the reader is left uncertain if the work permit was, in fact, filed.

Similarly, in “Bridgerton” (2020) Daphne’s subjugation seems to persist even after a marriage, as in the Regency Era, women were not permitted to possess property or financial assets. It was the responsibility of their father or guardian to safeguard their interests and provide for their financial needs. This way, when a woman became a bride at that time, the man responsible for her was also responsible for presenting her dowry to her future husband and after the marriage, the husband took ownership of anything the bride had, including clothing, jewelry, children, the bride’s body, and so on (Jacobson, 2021).

Regarding this, it is possible to see that Daphne appears aware of the subjugation of women to men in marriage in this dialogue:

**Simon** – You cannot possibly be thinking of marrying him.

**Daphne** – If I am unable to secure another offer, there may be no alternative. Unlike you, I cannot simply declare I do not wish

to marry (McDonald, 2020, episode 1, season 1, 50.30 – 50.40, emphasis added).

As Daphne herself states, she is unable to decline marriage, and, as the story unfolds, we can understand that the main reason for this seems to be due to her lack of access to property, financial assets, clothing, and so on. Thus, it can be concluded that her need to marry is justified by her need to secure financial provision, a situation that does not affect Simon.

Considering all this, the economic powerlessness of the protagonists underscores their submission within marriage, as depicted in the narratives. In this context, marriage is portrayed as a commercial transaction (Beauvoir, 1956), where families seem to prioritize social and financial benefits over women's autonomy. This dynamic leads to the maintenance of women's economic dependence, initially on their families and subsequently on their husbands, thereby perpetuating a cycle of submission. In conclusion, the narratives highlight the entrenched patriarchal structures that maintain women's submission and marginalization through economic control.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the aspects of marriage as a social imposition on women and how gender relations, as constructed by dominant ideologies, are represented within the context of marriage in the contemporary fictional narratives "The Arrangers of Marriage" (2009) and the television series "Bridgerton" (2020). To carry out the research, we undertook a comparative analysis within the framework of feminist literary criticism of the narratives in order to identify similar elements present in the journeys of the protagonists.

Throughout the analysis, we discovered in the first discussion topic that the protagonists of the narratives in question are often portrayed as having minimal or no decision-making power. This portrayal appears to be reinforced by cultural norms that reduce women to the roles of wives and subordinate them to masculine authority, which is directly linked to the theories of gender and power relations proposed by Butler (1999) and Bourdieu (2001), respectively.

Moreover, the second discussion topic allows for the perception that both narratives underscore the role of the family in perpetuating women's subordination within the context of marriage. We can perceive this in the ways that the protagonists' familial structures reinforce societal expectations that prioritize marriage and the subjugation of women. This way, it seems that such reinforcements result in the framing of marriage as the ultimate goal for women by the families, which is related to the aspects of marriage as a social imposition on women (Beauvoir, 1956).

In the third section of the analysis, we noticed that the economic powerlessness of the protagonists emphasizes their submissive roles within their marriages. In the context of the narratives, marriage is depicted as a commercial transaction (Beauvoir, 1956), in which families seem to assign greater value to social and financial advantages than to women's autonomy. This dynamic results in women's ongoing financial dependency, initiated with their families and subsequently transferred to their husbands, perpetuating a cycle of subordination. Thus, the narratives illustrate the ways in which patriarchal systems enforce women's submission and marginalization through economic manipulation.

In conclusion, despite being set in different centuries, both narratives highlight women's submission to marriage, showcasing the persistence of patriarchal structures in western societies under the weight of cultural traditions, social institutions and economic control. It is important to acknowledge that, even though there are many similarities between the protagonists of the analyzed stories, there are also many differences, such as economic class, ethnicity and religion, all of which shape these women's experiences into singular narratives, just as it happens with women in real life. If we did not specifically address these differences, it was due to the scope of this study, which relied on laying out common ground for the experiences of different women with marriage, aiding in the understanding of how literature reflects the perpetuation of female oppression in patriarchal societies. We hope such differences can be approached in future



studies, expanding the overall knowledge of these complex and multifaceted experiences as well as pointing out directions for the improvement of gender equality in contemporary societies.

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