

LEARNING ENGLISH IN BRAZIL: CHALLENGES IN THE MIDST OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate how Brazilian scientific papers describe and question the historical landmarks of public education in Brazil, considering English language teaching. It also aims to infer what perspectives are expressed in the texts, from the beginning of the 21st Century to nowadays. The research is subsided by the findings of Brazilian education being marked by profound social disparities since the Colonial Era. Such characteristics persist to the present historical period, and its consequences result in several structural problems (such as social, educational and workforce exclusion), especially towards marginalized people. Given the scope of the investigation, a systematic review of literature was done, based on the materials extracted from *Periódico Capes* and Google Scholar. In order to analyze the documents, Corpus Linguistics and Content Analysis were the chosen methodologies. The 81 compiled texts consisted of papers, undergraduate thesis, master's and doctorate's thesis. It was noticeable in the analysis that the selected corpus focused on identifying effective ways to transform public education in Brazil, with proposals to overcome the existing challenges in each context.

Keywords: Education. Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Brazilian Public Schools. Corpus Linguistics. Content Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Brazil's education underwent diverse initiatives and transformations through the ages, which influenced the ways of teaching a foreign language, among them, English. The teaching and the presence of English in school curriculums were not immune to the challenges in public education implementation in Brazil, especially since 1759 (SAVIANI, 2007). One of the challenges revolve around the coexistence of religiousness and secularity to permeate academic activities in public schools until the finishing years of the 19th Century, a shifting period from the Monarchy to the Republic. When considering the "Reformas Pombalinas" established both the use and the development of the portuguese language knowledge, also during the Colonial Era, some questions have been raised: since when.

Considering that the Pombaline reforms had established both the use and improvement of the Portuguese language, including in Colonial Brazil, from what moment did the teaching of English begin to be included in the set of curricular components of public schools in Brazil? What demands was the curricular component of the English language meant to meet?

These and other guiding questions of this work seek to understand how English teaching in public schools has developed and what are the advantages and challenges of public education recorded in scientific articles. Therefore, this research intends to investigate how scientific articles describe and understand the public teaching of English. To this end, a systematic literature review was constructed.

The year 1837 is one of the official historical milestones regarding public foreign language teaching in Brazil. This milestone aligned with the creation of Colégio Pedro II, which made Latin and Greek mandatory as classic languages; and English, German, and French also obligatory. This put modern languages in a position of equivalence with the classical languages (CHAGAS, 1976).

The process of mandating foreign language teaching may have influenced the spread of English language teaching in Brazil. In an effort to answer this question and to systematize data, scientific research published on the subject was tracked, and convergences, divergences, and characteristics of English teaching in the Brazilian public network were identified.

With this, the aim is to delimit the concrete context(s) of the evolutionary state of English language teaching in Brazil in public schools, with an emphasis on the period from 1996 to the present (2022). Specifically, the aim is to analyze the perspective that scientific texts express about the teaching of English in Brazilian public schools, considering the characteristics described by the texts and whether there were advances and challenges. The aim is also to ascertain whether scientific works presented any bias on the teaching of English within the cited context.

1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

1.1 TEACHING ENGLISH IN BRAZIL

English language teaching in Brazil dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. Camargo and Silva (2017) stress the year 1855, which was considered the official beginning of foreign language teaching in the Brazilian context. One of their reference bases was the HELB⁵ (*História do Ensino de Línguas no Brasil*) project. The magazine, developed by the University of Brasília (UnB), aims to disseminate scientific knowledge concerning language teaching in Brazil, from the colonial period to the present.

In a new consultation, based on Silva (2014), it was observed that language teaching, including English, is older than imagined. In 1808, with the arrival of the Royal Court in Rio de Janeiro, two modern languages stood out - French and English. Both languages were highly regarded in Europe and in international trade thanks to the United States' independence (1776) and the French Revolution (1789), which led them to be included in the school curriculum.

In 1810, the Royal Military Academy was established based on the Charter Law of December 4, which proposed a language teaching staffed by teachers who knew English, German, and French. The teachers should know all three languages and be ready to replace each other when necessary. There could be no gaps in student learning, especially when it comes to military education.

As already mentioned, in 1837, the English language was included in the curriculum of Colégio Pedro II, in Rio de Janeiro, which consolidated its inclusion in Brazil's Secondary Public Instruction. Its institutionalization was regulated by the Decree of December 2, which considers that the school should teach the classic languages (Latin and Greek) and the modern ones (English and French).

It is noticeable how the teaching of foreign languages was notable, with a greater number of languages available, compared to the present, as Camargo and Silva (2017) draw attention to. During this period, the Classic Method or Grammar-Translation Method prevailed, which emphasized reading and writing. The main teaching methods were through grammar rules, interlingual translation, and dictation.

In 1889, the Proclamation of the Republic took place, and the following year, Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca created the Ministry of Instruction, Post and Telegraphs. English and German became optional in the new curriculum, being reinstated as

⁵ For more information, visit: <http://www.helb.org.br/>

mandatory in 1892 by Fernando Lobo, and in 1900 by Epitácio Pessoa. Also in 1900, Machado, Campos and Saunders (2007) emphasize that the first International Congress of Living Languages took place, where the Direct Method gained prominence. Its assumptions were antagonistic to the Classic Method, favoring orality, and students had direct contact with the language, in order to contextualize it in use.

In 1911, the educational reform of Rivadavia Corrêa took place, implemented by Decree No. 8.659 (BRASIL, 1911), which removed from the Union the sole responsibility for creating educational institutions at both basic and higher education levels. Similarly, private universities began to emerge. Among the various measures adopted by educational institutions was the reduction of study time for both classical languages (Latin and Greek) and modern ones (German, French and English). It was possible to choose between German or English, making them, to some degree, elective subjects.

Machado, Campos and Saunders (2007) highlight that in 1931 the Francisco de Campos Reform and the rightist movement of language teaching in Brazil took place, that is, the Direct Method became the base methodology to be used in all public schools. It states that classes on a certain language should be taught through the language itself (L2), without translation into the mother tongue (L1) for support. For example, English should be taught in English, which gave modern languages a prominence over classical languages. The positions of full professors ceased to exist, leaving the process of hiring up to the school director. The minister supervised and guided the process.

The teaching of modern languages was further detailed with the instructions published for the implementation of Decree No. 20,833, in which the direct method was explained. In Article 1, it was determined that the teaching of foreign language should be conducted in the language itself that is desired to be taught, starting from the first day of class, with the indication of the most recommended contemporary writers, whose works should be read accordingly. The Portuguese language could only be used exceptionally, when there was a need for an indispensable explanation in the native language⁶ (GOMES, 2017, p. 66).

Still in the 1930s, in 1934 it was founded the *Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa*⁷, in which Great Britain sought to regain its economic influence in Brazil after

⁶ “O ensino de línguas vivas foi mais detalhado com as instruções publicadas para o exercício do Decreto n. 20.833, e nas quais o método direto foi explicado. Já no artigo 1º, ficou determinado que o ensino de língua estrangeira deveria se dar na própria língua que se deseja ensinar, desde o primeiro dia de aula, havendo a indicação dos escritores contemporâneos mais recomendáveis, e que, dessa forma, deveriam ser lidos. A língua portuguesa só poderia ser utilizada excepcionalmente, quando houvesse a necessidade de uma explicação indispensável na língua materna” (GOMES, 2017, p. 66).

⁷ To learn more about the Brazilian Society for English Language Teaching (Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa), please visit: <https://www.sbcirj.org.br/historia.html>

the First World War. Ambassador William Seeds proposed the creation of the said society to expand relations between Brazil and the British. Literature courses in Brazil also began to emerge with the creation of the University of São Paulo (USP) and the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters. Before, the study and training of teachers was done in a self-taught way, and the main institution that trained language teachers was Colégio Dom Pedro II.

In 1942, Machado, Campos and Saunders (2007) highlighted the importance of the Capanema Reform, which resulted in a peak of language offers, organized by the then Minister of Education and Health, Gustavo Capanema. He was the one who created the University of Brazil, today recognized as the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. During this period, education was mainly focused on preparing citizens for the job market.

As Camargo and Silva (2017) emphasize, through Decree-Law No 4.244 (BRASIL, 1942), on April 9, 1942, concerning the Organic Law of Secondary Education, such a school stage was divided into two cycles: the gymnasium (4 years) and the classical and scientific courses, which students had to choose to follow. Ancient languages were studied more intensely in the classical course, such as Latin and Greek, not forgetting modern languages. In the gymnasium course, Portuguese, French, English, and Latin were studied, with an emphasis on spoken languages.

In 1961, Machado, Campos and Saunders (2007) emphasize the emergence of the first Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB), signed by then-president João Goulart, called Law No. 4.024, of December 20 (BRASIL, 1961). At this time, behaviorist ideals and the audiolingual movement began to be questioned. In general, audiolingual-inspired classes were concerned with the repetition and reinforcement of correct attitudes and phrases expressed in the target language. Influenced by Paulo Freire's proposals, education sought theoretical foundations and ways in which the student could become the protagonist of teaching, considering social practices and the cultural understanding of the language phenomenon, which the audiolingual method, at the time, could not approach as expected.

During the same historical period, there were also two political groups debating which party philosophy would underpin the law: the statist, generally associated with the left, and the liberals, with right-leaning ideals. The statist, as stated by Machado, Campos, and Saunders (2007), placed greater importance on the power of the state, which had the main role of providing education to individuals, with the purpose of preparing them for life in society. The individual is public and should act for the collective good.

The liberals, on the other hand, argued that the state should only respect natural rights but not guarantee or deny them. The individual was considered more important

than the collective, and thus, the family was already seen as the institution responsible for the education of children, even from other perspectives, allowing them to choose from a range of private schools. For the less fortunate, the state should provide scholarships to ensure access to schools.

Machado, Campos, and Saunders (2007) note that liberalist ideals prevailed at the time, and the LDB made foreign language teaching (FLT) optional. The world was in the post-World War II era, which, according to the authors, may have increased the desire to learn English. English was the preferred language, with the belief that Brazil could expand its economic and cultural relations with the United States. Language schools began to emerge at this time (around the mid-1960s). The LDB made FLT optional in regular schools, and the combination of these factors led to the belief that English is not learned in regular schools but only in language courses.

In 1971, the LDB was revised and became known as Law No. 5,692, dated August 11, 1971. In it, English and foreign languages remained optional. However, as discussed by Ribeiro, Costa, and Abdalla (2007), the period Brazil was experiencing was the Military Dictatorship, during which the slogan of the government was “Brazil, love it or leave it.” This extremist slogan, as the authors suggest, seems to have distanced Brazil’s cultural relations with other nationalities, which may have had a negative impact on FLT. Cultural differences and similarities were no longer analyzed, as the regime did not pay attention to the various traits expressed by language.

In 1978, the communicative language teaching movement in Brazil gained prominence, which was an expansion of the Direct Method. As indicated by Almeida Filho (2009), the first National Seminar for Communicative Language Teaching took place at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). This approach emphasized the importance of notions related to the functionality of language in its natural use, as a way to oppose the audiolingual method (based on repetition). The individual learns within a political-cultural context where interaction serves a purpose to be achieved. Therefore, it emphasized the affective, socio-cognitive, and physical variables of the person, as well as the available teaching materials.

In 1996, there was the new publication of the LDB No. 9,394 (BRASIL, 1996), which established that from the fifth grade (current sixth year), at least one modern foreign language would be mandatory, with the school having the discretion to choose which language based on its availability.

As noted in the excerpt above, it is in the late 1990s (20th century) that foreign language teaching became mandatory from the fifth grade (current sixth year), as observed through the mentioned excerpt. As Abreu and Baptista (2011) mention, the

Law was a milestone in the country's history, proposing a humanistic and citizenship-focused education based on a standardized curriculum across the country. Given Brazil's historical preference for the English language, English has had and continues to have a strong presence in regular schools and language courses. The Law reinstated the importance of foreign language teaching as a process of identity construction.

The LDB was updated in 2016 by the Provisional Measure No. 746 (BRASIL, 2016), on September 22, which rectified certain aspects of language teaching. The Measure was transformed into Law No. 13,415 (BRASIL, 2017), on February 16, 2017, which updated the terminology from "fifth grade" to "sixth year" of elementary education and, furthermore, made English a mandatory language.

Abreu and Baptista (2011) highlight that between 1998 and 2000, the National Curricular Parameters for Elementary Education (PCN-EF) and High School Education (PCN-EM) were introduced. The main objective of these documents is to update, complement, and expand the LDB, with an emphasis on sociointeractionist teaching. According to the authors, the documents aimed to promote the work of social discursive practices, through which students could develop critical thinking about the formations of discourse in different social contexts, in order to learn how different cultures and individuals identify themselves.

In 2009, the *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD)⁸, through Resolution/CD/FNDE No. 60 (BRASIL, 2009), ensures the free distribution of foreign language textbooks to public elementary and secondary schools starting from the years 2011 and 2012. The aim was to democratize educational materials for the Brazilian population.

In 2010, the *Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio* – ENEM (National High School Exam) included languages in its test, giving students the option to choose between Spanish and English. In 2011, the program *Inglês sem Fronteiras* (IsF) was founded to meet the demand of the program *Ciência sem Fronteiras* (CsF), which aimed to internationalize Brazilian researchers and research centers. In 2014, IsF became an integral part of the *Idiomas sem Fronteiras*⁹ program, which is currently in operation.

Another important factor in 2014 was the implementation of Plano Nacional de Educação 2014-2024, "a moment that influences Brazilian education up to the present moment. The law No. 13.005, A law with a validity of 10 years, advocates for the valorization of teachers and the training of foreign language teachers, as well as increased investment in the field of education. One of its main proposals is to eradicate illiteracy and universalize access to education in Brazil.

⁸ To learn more about the Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático, visit: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/component/content/article?id=12391:pnld>

⁹ To learn more, visit the following link: <https://isf.mec.gov.br/>

1.2 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN BRAZIL

Alongside the trajectory of public English language teaching in Brazil, the school curriculum was also being developed. The curriculum is constructed in line with the historical, political, social, economic, and cultural context of a nation. The curriculum of an academic subject, such as education, is adapted to align with the way schooling is carried out at that particular moment, with similar objectives (SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2022).

Throughout the historical eras, it is possible to notice curriculum characteristics, such as the mandatory or non-mandatory regime of foreign language teaching in regular schools, as well as the definition of necessary course hours for these lessons. This process is noticeable on the table below, adapted from Silva and Oliveira (2022, p. 4):

TABLE 1 – Curriculum Modifications on Foreign Language Teaching during the Imperial and Republican Eras

Reform	Modification concerning English Language Teaching
Decree 4.468, February 1st, 1870	English loses its pragmatic character and absorbs humanistic and cultural characteristics.
Decree 6.130, May 1st, 1876	Workload reduction for all foreign languages.
Decree 6.884, April 20th, 1878	English workload amplified
Decree 8.051, March 24th, 1881	English is taught for only two years.

SOURCE: Silva and Oliveira (2022, p. 4, adapted)

Therefore, it can be highlighted that the fragility in the advance of formal teaching of foreign languages resulted from some factors. The first one is the inconsistency and constant advances and drawbacks on the mandatoriness of foreign language teaching (SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2022).

Furthermore, during the Brazilian Imperial Era, according to Lima (2021), since England had the hegemony and economic domain, English language teaching in Brazil aimed to exclusively develop labor market skills for professionals. Both during the Imperial and Republican Eras in Brazil, there was a systematic exclusion of the marginalized population (people of lower social classes). Initially, the argument of Moacyr (1936, p. 61 apud MARQUES, 2021, p. 3) is highlighted:

[...] there being, hence, so generally and notoriously known the necessity of usage of the French and English languages, such as those which among the living have the most distinct position, and it is of high utility to the state for the amplification and prosperity of public [education] instruction, a Chair for the French language and English language shall be created¹⁰.

¹⁰ “[...] sendo, outrossim, tão geral e notoriamente conhecida a necessidade de utilizadas línguas francesa e inglesa, como aquelas que entre as vivas têm mais distinto lugar, e é de muita utilidade ao estado para aumento e prosperidade da instrução pública, que se crie na Corte uma cadeira de língua francesa e outra de inglesa” (MOACYR, 1936, p. 61 apud MARQUES, 2021, p. 3).

Although there is an emphasis on the prosperity of public instruction, the accessibility of the poor was notoriously hindered. Concurrently to this process, it is known that the access to culture, as well as political and economical power domain were monopolized by the dominant class, in order to perpetrate and reproduce its values. Thus, education can be found connected to the ideological interests of the elites (SILVA; SANTOS, 2019). This way, still according to Silva and Santos (2019), Imperial Brazil was marked by aristocratic and elite-based education, being distanced from the majority of the population.

It is possible to highlight that the educational model of the imperial era had certain characteristics: a) classist, for being destined to the elites; b) racist for not being destined to black people, even the free ones; c) dual for reinforcing the hegemonic power which detained the control of federal apparatus, which legitimates its dual character. (SILVA; SANTOS, 2019, p. 39).

According to Vidotti (2012), during Republican Brazil, English teaching was institutionalized by the Decree nº 29, putting it in a prestigious position. In that moment, the pragmatic-only purpose was amplified (that is, for labor market insertion) in language teaching. It started to consider the existing scientific, cultural and economic knowledge at the time. The educational interests were still revolving around, however, the Brazilian aristocracy. Such classist strategy hence maintained knowledge distanced and secluded from lower social classes.

The evolutionary process of curriculum policies in English language teaching perceptively kept, even after the beginning of the Republican Era, the transitory pattern between mandatory and facultative teaching. The main moments were synthesized in the table below (SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2022, p. 8):

TABLE 2 – Main Curricular Marks of English Teaching in Brazil continua

Year	Mark	Information
1809	Decree nº 29, July 14th, 1809.	Creation of a French language school and English language school.
1837	Inauguration of Colégio D. Pedro II (D. Pedro II School)	English language teaching on the curriculum.
1889	Educational System reforms made by the Minister (Benjamim Constant)	English excluded from mandatory curriculum.
1892	Alterations made by the minister Amaro Cavalcanti	English language teaching is facultative.
1931	Francisco de Campos Reform	English language teaching becomes mandatory and done through the Direct Methodology.
1942	Capanema Reform	35 hours of weekly classes of foreign languages, through the Direct Methodology.

TABLE 2 – Main Curricular Marks of English Teaching in Brazil

conclusão

Year	Mark	Information
1961	Lei de Diretrizes e Bases (LDB) 4024/1961	Facultative inclusion of the English language to the curriculum (to be defined by each state).
1971	LDB 5692/1971	Workload reduction. Foreign language becomes an extra.
1996	LDB 9394/96	Foreign language teaching is mandatory in Elementary School and High School.
1998	PCN	Inclusion of foreign language teaching with emphasis on reading skills.
1999	PCNEM	Foreign language teaching for oral and written production.
2002	PCNEM+	Foreign language teaching with emphasis on linguistic structures and text interpretation.
2006	OCEM	Foreign language teaching with cultural aspects and multimodal aspects.
2017	Lei nº 13.415/2017	English language teaching has become mandatory. Spanish language teaching becomes facultative.
2017	BNCC	The English language is viewed as a lingua franca and its teaching is based on social practices.

SOURCE: Silva and Oliveira (2022, p. 8)

Silva and Oliveira (2022) emphasize, finally, that it is necessary to stimulate and reflect on the necessity of the implementation of specific linguistic policies which follow the real demands of English teaching in public education. The researchers comment, also, that it is important to foster a school community mobilization, as a way to raise awareness and engagement around the importance of learning and teaching English.

Several authors, such as Lima (2021), Marzari and Gehres (2014), Mattos (2011) and Perin (2003), mention the social, economic and cultural relevance of the English language in today's society. Furthermore, they highlight the necessity of accessibility and inclusion of socially and economically marginalized people. This must be done in a transformative and conscientious way, not through imposing and oppressing.

Therefore, through mother language and foreign language literacy, the student is able to interpret verbal and non-verbal linguistic elements, expand their repertoire and world perspective, and additionally develop critical thinking concerning the situations which surround them. Among the contexts in which the individual may find themselves, it is emphasized the contact with technology and technological innovations, in which English is essential to comprehend the historical context and usage.

2 METHODOLOGY

In order to outline the trajectory of English language teaching in Brazilian public schools, the methodology of systematic literature review was chosen. As mentioned by Galvão and Ricarte (2019), this methodology aims to enable the understanding of the logic within a corpus or set of documents, which often consists of a large volume of written texts. If the research focuses on quantitative results, it is referred to as a meta-analysis, but if the objective is to analyze qualitative data, it is called a narrative review. In this study, the aim was to integrate both quantitative and qualitative results, aligning the present investigation with the type of qualitative meta-analysis or meta-synthesis.

According to the authors, meta-synthesis aims to summarize and organize common themes found in the corpora, in order to analyze new insights into the research topic. To analyze and systematize the quantitative data, Corpus Linguistics, as proposed by Sardinha (2004) and Hardie and McEnery (2012), was utilized. For the qualitative data, content analysis, as proposed by Bardin (2011), was employed.

As stated by Bardin (2011), content analysis is a set of methodological tools applied to discourses, in which the researcher makes inferences about them in order to extract categories and models that enable their investigation and comparison. The categories are based on the content expressed in the discourses, allowing for the analysis of communication in its historical process of sharing.

On the other hand, Corpus Linguistics (CL) enables systematic studies of natural language (HARDIE; MCENERY, 2012). In order to conceptualize this area of Applied Linguistics, it is necessary to define corpus: it is a unique text, produced with natural languages, without the artificial generation of texts, meaning that they are texts produced by humans (SARDINHA, 2004).

Thus, the corpora (plural of corpus) of this research are the selected scientific texts. Considering that the works were a research design, it is understood that the corpus itself is artificial, as it reflects this specific selection. In other words, according to Teubert (2005, p. 4), “[...] the discourse is not an ontological reality; it is a construct, the object of research constructed by the linguist”. That is to say, this study reflects upon the researcher’s influence in the research, understanding that neutrality pertains to a type of discourse with a purpose, an intentionality, which in turn can influence the way data is analyzed.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: the periods between 1996 and 2022, the former being the date of the second update of the LDB, with more humanistic and social proposals, while 2022 aims to consider the current state of articles. For article selection, keywords were used in Google Scholar and Capes Journals.

The keywords used in this research were: English language teaching, Brazilian public education, public schools, English language, teaching English, public English language teaching in Brazil. The boolean operator “AND” was used. Articles that did not discuss the relationship between English language teaching in Brazilian public schools were not included in the scope of the research.

3 RESULTS ANALYSIS

The collection of articles began on February 6, 2023, on the digital platforms Capes Journals, Google Scholar, and Scielo Brazil. It was observed that the keywords that yielded the most results were the association between public schools and the English language. In the advanced search filters, the years from 1996 to 2022 were primarily delimited, and the articles were in the Portuguese language. We limited the articles found up to page 5, both in Capes Journals and Google Scholar. It is worth noting that the oldest period found was 2005, while the most recent was 2022.

In Periódicos Capes, 300 digital resources were found, however, only 163 underwent peer review, indicating a scientific nature. Among the 163 articles, 61 were in Portuguese, 124 were in English, and 10 were in Spanish. It is evident that there seems to be a tendency among authors to publish articles in English when studying the English language. This highlights the importance of bilingual education, allowing the Brazilian audience to access different forms of knowledge through the English language. Out of the 61 articles in Portuguese, 21 did not fit the inclusion criteria as they deviated from the topic or were in another language (such as English and Spanish). In other words, 40 articles were used as the main focus of the research, considering the inclusion criteria proposed in the methodology.

Regarding the articles from the Google Scholar platform, the applied filters included the same dates (1996 to 2022), as well as the language (Portuguese), and they were sorted by relevance, meaning that the order of the articles is guided by the results with the highest number of citations, popularity, and/or best matching the keywords used for the research (in this case, public schools AND English language). From this platform, a total of 41 academic texts were used.

It was observed that in Google Scholar, there was a higher number of theses and dissertations compared to Periódicos Capes, which focused more on scientific articles. In total, 3 theses, 3 dissertations, 2 undergraduate final papers, and 32 articles were collected, totaling 81 academic-scientific works. It is worth noting that Google Scholar presented texts that were not peer-reviewed and, therefore, were not used in the analysis of the research. It was also noticed that there were no articles that deviated from the topic, although some were not peer-reviewed.

After categorizing the scientific texts by themes, they were compiled in the Sketch Engine tool to facilitate the study through Corpus Linguistics (CL). Textual analysis resources were used to observe the most frequently used terms in the texts, both individually (in each text) and comparatively (between texts).

Considering all the words used in the texts, the sample consisted of 923,130 words compiled in the digital platform Sketch Engine. The sample, according to Sardinha (2004), falls within the average range, which is between 250,000 to 1 million words. With the help of the Wordlist tool, which allows for the selection of word classes (such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, conjunctions, among others), it was possible to identify the most frequent words in the corpora, considering their contexts and meanings. This research focused on the adjectives present in the articles, which, according to Cegalla (2020, p. 159), are “words that express the qualities or characteristics of beings.”¹¹ Therefore, adjectives can indicate the biases or tendencies of positions and characteristics of the topics presented by researchers in their articles.

Verbs and their inflections or conjugations were also included. According to Cegalla (2020, p. 194), “the verb takes on different forms to indicate the person of discourse, number, tense, mood, and voice.”¹² In this research, it is understood that verbs indicate the action taken by the researcher during their investigation, allowing for inferences about attitudes, ways of acting, and the purposes of the target texts.

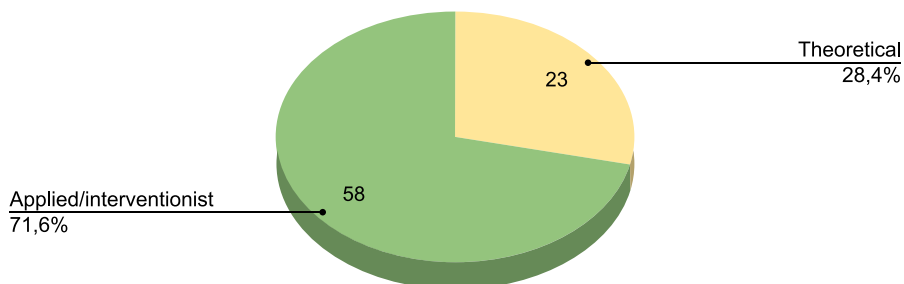
The scientific texts were initially divided into two main categories: Theoretical Research and Applied/Intervention Research. In order to classify the found works within each category, the analysis of the types of data collected by the authors was conducted: primary or secondary data. Primary data corresponds to data that the researcher collects directly from the source, through interviews and field research, for example. These were associated with the category of applied/intervention research. Secondary data, on the other hand, are data that the researcher analyzes from existing research, under a new context, objective, or purpose. These were associated with the category of theoretical research, which can be exemplified by systematic literature reviews (as in the present research).

The mentioned data were systematized in the graph below, which shows a predominance of Applied/Intervention Research, with 71.6% of the samples, equivalent to 58 scientific articles. The 23 research studies related to the Theoretical category correspond to 28.4% of the corpus of analysis.

¹¹ “palavras que expressam as qualidades ou características dos seres” (CEGALLA, 2020, p. 159).

¹² “o verbo reveste diferentes formas para indicar a pessoa do discurso, o número, o tempo, o modo e a voz” (CEGALLA, 2020, p. 194).

GRAPH 1 — Types of Research - Theoretical and Applied/Interventional



SOURCE: The authors (2023)

A tendency in the production of intervention researches in the context of Brazilian public schools was noticed. The texts, in general, demonstrated the necessity of applied practices to transform and better the conditions of English language teaching in Brazil.

Through the analysis made via Sketch Engine, using the Wordlist tool, the most used verb was “ser” (“to be”) in the paper *As representações do ser professor e do ser aluno: um olhar discursivo sobre o “ensinar o básico do básico” de língua inglesa na escola pública* (The representations of being a teacher and being a student: a discursive outlook on ‘teaching the basics’ of English in public schools). The term ‘to be’ was identified 102 times throughout the text, also considering its conjugations.

With the usage of the Concordance tool, based on this keyword, many snippets of the text were identified as to provide context of usage. For example, the paper’s author, Makiyama (2013, p. 5), analyzes the discourse of teachers, emphasizing the resignification of ‘being’ a teacher as an agent of transformation, as shown below:

Furthermore, in both comments, it is possible to foresee that it is the teacher’s figure which must change the adversities faced in school, by using means to develop an adequate job with Foreign Language Teaching¹³.

As aforementioned, the paper aimed to question the idealizations revolving around being a teacher and being a learner, in contrast with what is the reality of the teacher’s role and their interaction to the student, in certain social conditions. The author questioned the authority position of the teacher, indicating that this worker is subject to reproducing authoritarian discourses that are merit-based.

Since many students of the marginalized classes are socially seen as uninterested, the cultivated idea is that they are not deserving of learning a foreign language, which

¹³ “Além disso, em ambas as falas, é [grifo nosso] possível entrever que é a figura do professor quem deve reverter a adversidade enfrentada na escola, ao usar meios para desenvolver um trabalho adequado em ELE [Ensino de Língua Estrangeira – adição dos autores]” (MAKIYAMA, 2013, p. 5).

affects the student-teacher relationship. The transformation process involves, according to the researcher, the deconstruction of the deeply rooted prejudices that exist in Brazilian society and culture, to improve the learning process.

When analyzing the theoretical papers, the transformative purpose was found similar to the intervention researches. For instance, in the text *O racismo cordial no livro didático de língua inglesa aprovado pelo PNLD* (The cordial racism in the English coursebook approved by the PNLD), the authors Ferreira and Camargo (2014) analyzed and criticized the positions occupied by the black people figures represented in the English coursebook. The researchers observed that the image of black people was present in the material, however, there were no discussions oriented towards racism, which opposes the proposal of inclusion in the PNLD document. It is important to state that PNLD stands for Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático (National Program of the Book and Coursebook).

When using the Wordlist to analyze this same paper, the most used verb was also 'to be' and its conjugations (identified 162 times). Below, there is an excerpt of how these coursebooks were constructed throughout time, as mentioned by the paper's researchers:

The coursebooks are an example of the ethnical division and concealed racism in schools, many books have a biased posture, which is misogynistic and classist – especially the English materials, which are market by the ideology of whitewashing, which overlap the white people over the black people. (CAMARGO; FERREIRA, 2014, p. 180, tradução nossa).¹⁴

The authors emphasize that school evasion occurs more with black people rather than white, and that black figures were treated in a stereotypical way, which may aggravate this situation. This public loses the possibility to relate to the learning situations in foreign language teaching, and thus the authors propose that the discussion about ethnicity and race is included in school materials and coursebooks, in order to follow the 10.639/03 Law (BRASIL, 2003), which defends the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture.

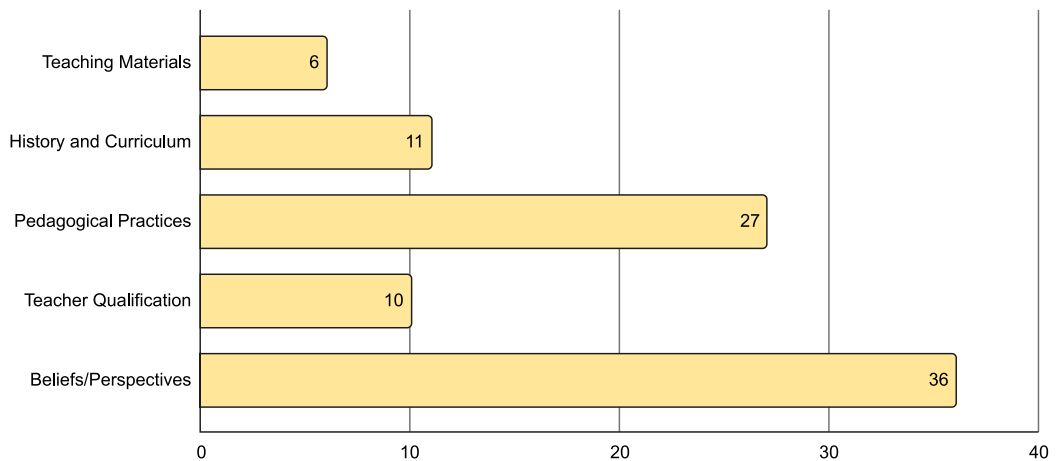
Besides the categories of Theoretical and Applied/Intervention researches, there were other categories constructed, based on the themes discussed in the scientific texts. The themes or topics were classified in: Courseware (6 papers), History and Curriculum (11 papers), Pedagogical Practices (27 papers), Teacher Qualification (10 papers), and Teachers and Students Beliefs (36 papers). It is important

¹⁴ “Os materiais didáticos são [grifo nosso] um exemplo da divisão étnica e do racismo velado na escola, muitos livros têm uma postura preconceituosa, machista, classista – em especial os materiais de Inglês, esses são marcados pela ideologia do branqueamento, a qual sobrepõe os brancos em relação aos negros” (CAMARGO; FERREIRA, 2014, p. 180).

to highlight that some papers discussed more than one emphasis (more than one theme). This means one paper may be part of two themes in this research analysis.

Thus, there are examples of theoretical researches which utilized secondary data, in categories such as Courseware. Within it, there are papers which critically analyze already existing documents. In Applied/Intervention researches, there are papers under the Teachers and Students Beliefs which interviewed teachers and students directly.

GRAPH 2 — Topics discussed in the papers



SOURCE: The authors (2023)

It was observed that the research with focus on teachers and students beliefs was the most found theme, followed by the study of pedagogical practices. As an example, the texts related to beliefs, in general, aimed to investigate how teachers, students and school staff perceive education and the interactions in the classroom. The paper titled *Um olhar crítico para a cultura do desinteresse nas aulas de Língua Inglesa* (A critical eye towards the uninterest culture in English lessons), written by Amorim (2022), investigated what is called uninterest cultured.

To comprehend how the disinterest culture affects the learning process, it was researched, in this case, the noun 'aluno' ('student') associated with some verbs and adjectives in different contexts. This term was selected because it was one of the most frequently cited words in the paper, identified by Wordlist, with 137 mentions. When analyzing the noun, Sketch Engine's Wordsketch showed the terms most frequently associated with 'student'. When selecting the option "show visualization", the graph below was generated:

GRAPH 3 — Visualization of terms most frequently associated with 'student' (aluno)



SOURCE: Sketch Engine (2023)

Throughout the paper, Amorim (2022) added final reports about teacher activities, from the PIBID program (Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência) – Institutional Program of Scholarships of Teaching Initiation. One of the teachers suggested an activity based on the clothes people were using. The theme of the class were 'clothes' and the teacher brought clothes and accessories for students to simulate a fashion show catwalk. With an English song playing on the background, the students should say what they were wearing in the target language. The teacher noticed that student participation was positive and they demonstrated a bigger accuracy of knowledge on the topic after the activity.

As Amorim (2022) comments, in the beginning the teacher demonstrated fear of applying the activity, since they knew there was some degree of uninterest demonstrated by the students in that school. However, when providing the students with an interactive and dynamic environment for learning, the uninterest culture was overcome. Through the activity, a new perspective of interest was developed, not only for the students, but for the teacher as well.

The pedagogical practices category was the second theme of highest presence amongst the collected papers. A pattern of themes was noticed, which revolved around the development of literacy, skills and activity application in classes of public institutions (with a qualitative analysis of results).

A notable example is found on the paper titled *Descoleções e remixes na aprendizagem de língua inglesa: um estudo de caso em uma escola pública* (MULICO; MAIA, 2016): Decollections and remixes in English language learning: a case study in a public school. In this paper, the authors connect the use of technologies to literacy as a way to develop English learning in public schools. The applied and analyzed activity was the production of a trailer produced by a student, which brought the conclusion that language teaching through language in use (and with the aid of technology) was effective in that delimited context.

Concerning the category History and Curriculum, it was noticed that, in general, the papers which investigated historical aspects of English language teaching also commented on the curriculum development of the subject. For instance, the paper *Ensino de línguas como palco de política linguística: mobilização de repertórios sobre gênero* (Language teaching as a stage for linguistic policies: mobilization of repertoires about gender) aims to associate politics, linguistics and English lessons, considering that learning a language involves learning social patterns connected to language.

According to Pessoa and Hoelzle (2017), official documents such as the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCNs) infer that classes generally must include citizenship, cultural diversity, ethics and topics such as gender and sexuality. Many of the motivations for learning English are related to economic policies, such as better jobs, international possibilities, expanding communication and the use of the internet. However, in many cases, social matters which relate to language are ignored, for instance, to comprehend that, on many occasions, women's salaries can be smaller than men's.

The way in which the individual identifies themselves and reconstructs themselves with the languages involves not only qualification, but also the socialization and subjectivity of what is learned in school. Curricular activities, therefore, must incorporate multimodal tasks, which search for the resignification of the individual in its relations with others. For example, Pessoa and Hoelzle (2017) mention an activity called Wrinkled Wanda, where students must write rude words on a paper shaped like a human body. After writing them, they must crumple the paper and visualize the marks left on this representation of the human body, to symbolize the way people who suffer with bullying feel, and how this mark remains throughout their entire lives.

As it can be depicted, the History and Curriculum category, in this case, also permeates the Pedagogical Practices category, which suggests that the themes intersect. Another important category, which permeates all others, is Teacher Qualification. Amongst the found texts, one of them, written by Santos (2011), is titled *Professores de língua inglesa para crianças: interface entre formação inicial e continuada, experiência*

e fazer pedagógico (English language teachers for children: interface between initial qualification and continued qualification, experience and pedagogical actions). It aims to investigate the initial and continued qualifications of teachers. It also researches how qualification may amplify experience-sharing and how this may improve the professional's life.

The paper's author considers the teacher as a permanent learner, who must revisit and relearn its role as an educator, the school's role, the students' and the processes and contexts which involve teaching and learning. The continued qualification involves, in general, the development of reflection spaces which allow the teacher to repurpose their pedagogical practices, under supervision and experience exchanges with their peers.

The main aim of this paper, and the other papers under the Teacher Qualification category, concerns both the technical, practical and theoretical teaching aspects and the emotional life of the teacher. The continued qualification allows network building through which the teacher may discover other ways of acting and thinking their practices and, therefore, have the possibility to rethink their teaching with others, who are simultaneously different and similar to them.

The teacher may exchange knowledge and update themselves through what they know and incorporate new educational ideas to their praxis. It is not about treating the teacher as an outdated worker, but as a person who needs to constantly repurpose their ways of thinking and acting in social relations.

The topic Material Didático had the lowest incidence among the collected articles. In relation to this theme, there is a predominance of theoretical research that analyzes existing materials. The focus is on political and social representations of the English language, considering, for example, the language as a lingua franca, the difficulties encountered, the use of textual genres, among others. It also addresses culture and society, exploring issues such as racism, considering the context of public education.

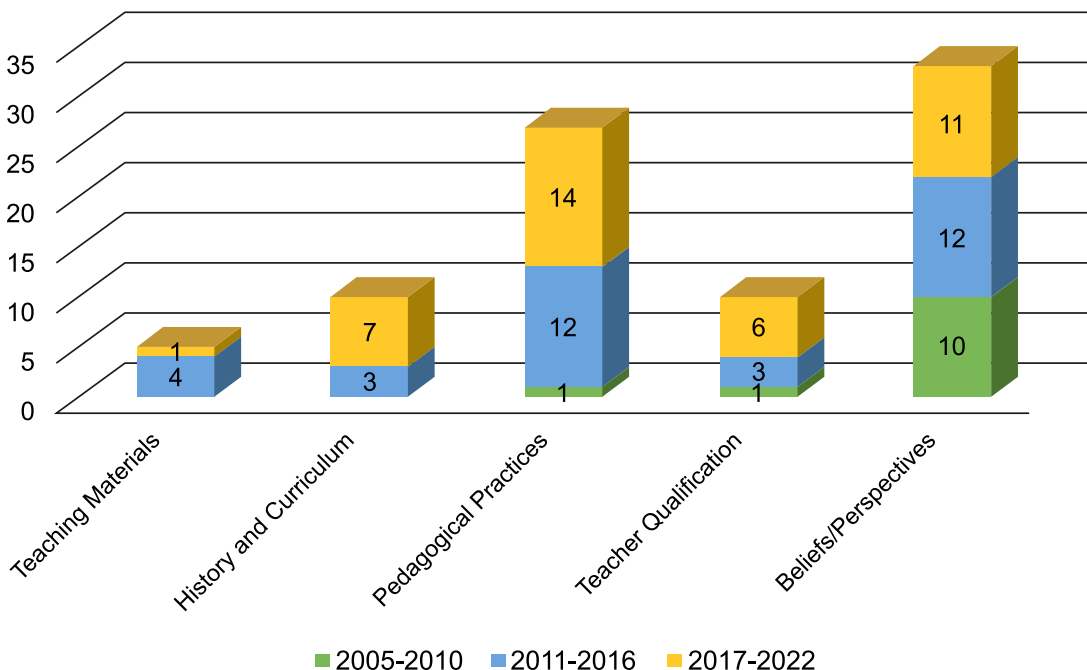
As an example, the article "Gêneros textuais e língua inglesa em uso: uma análise das coleções aprovadas pelo PNLD/LE no Brasil" (OLIVEIRA, 2012) stands out, which analyzes English language textbooks approved in 2011 by the Programa Nacional do Livro Didático, targeting public schools. The researchers study the approaches to textual genres found in the educational materials, noting the existence of a practical focus in which language should be used as a social practice. They demonstrate a positive perspective on language teaching, as the books include oral textual genres (previously disregarded in language teaching) and provide access to basic concepts about textual genres.

To investigate whether there is any research trend over time, Graph 4 below separated the articles using a temporal line, every five years. The initial year is 2005,

and the final year is 2022. The periods correspond to 2005-2010 (green color), 2011-2016 (blue color), and 2017-2022 (yellow color).

It was observed that the 12 articles found from 2005 to 2010 are all related to the theme of Beliefs/Points of View, while the other themes varied throughout these 17 years. In the graph, the texts on Pedagogical Practices had a significant increase starting from the year 2011, as well as research focused on History and Curriculum and Teacher Training.

GRAPH 4 — Number of articles for each theme per time period



SOURCE: The authors (2023)

It is worth noting that the Google Scholar platform prioritizes recent articles on the first pages, which may have influenced the earliest publication date being 2005 and the present sample having more recent articles than older ones. As it is a small sample, with 81 scientific papers, the above Graph (4) aimed to synthesize and illustrate how the found articles were divided over time.

It was observed that the theme of Pedagogical Practices had a significant increase in articles, while Beliefs and Perspectives remained stable in this collection. Over the course of 17 years, it seems that there is a trend among teacher-researchers to investigate how Pedagogical Practices affect the classroom and the teaching-learning relationship. It is worth noting that between 2020 and 2022, there was a lockdown in Brazil and worldwide to prevent the spread of Covid-19, which may contribute to the

interest in considering pedagogical practices. One article titled “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on English classes” by Denardi, Marcos, and Stankoski (2021) was found.

The present article focused on issues related to multimodality, virtual platforms, access to information, the digital world, the World Wide Web, technological resources, and emergency remote teaching (the latter being one of the keywords of the article). The authors applied a questionnaire to investigate the positive and negative aspects of online teaching and learning. There is a likelihood that in the coming years, more articles with this theme will emerge due to the pandemic having created not only compulsory online education but also hybrid systems of study and work.

“Crenças e Pontos de Vista”, on the other hand, appears to be a relevant theme for researchers in this period, being consistently investigated within the found sample. Therefore, the two categories of “Práticas Pedagógicas” (Pedagogical Practices) and “Crenças/Pontos de Vista” (Beliefs/Points of View) represent, according to the sources found, the main interest, while the themes of “Formação do Professor” (Teacher Qualification), “Histórico e Currículo” (History and Curriculum), and “Material Didático” (Teaching Materials) seem to be complementary topics, that is, they assist in the construction of pedagogical practices and the perspectives of teachers and students in the classroom.

In addition to individual and thematic research, a comprehensive investigation was conducted on word categories and prominent terms across the entire corpus, comprising the 81 articles. With the support of Wordlist, focusing on adjectives, an analysis was carried out on the words “social,” mentioned 1,892 times, and “critical,” cited 793 times throughout all the texts. It is worth noting that the two most frequently encountered adjectives were “English” (3,687 times) and “public” (2,341 times). However, these terms were part of the search keywords for the articles, so their frequent use is expected, unlike “social” – the third most used adjective – and “critical,” the tenth most used term. The frequency at which “social” and “critical” appear indicates that Brazilian researchers consider the social dimensions and critical understanding in the process of teaching and learning English in public schools.

When using Concordance to analyze the context of the adjective “social,” it was noticed that the article “A construção do agir docente por professoras de língua inglesa para crianças: um olhar para o ensino como trabalho” by Brossi and Tonelli (2021) associates this term with various other words, such as “discourse,” “practice,” “social role,” “place,” among others. This text deserves attention as it falls under two categories, both “Teacher Training” and “Beliefs/Points of View.”

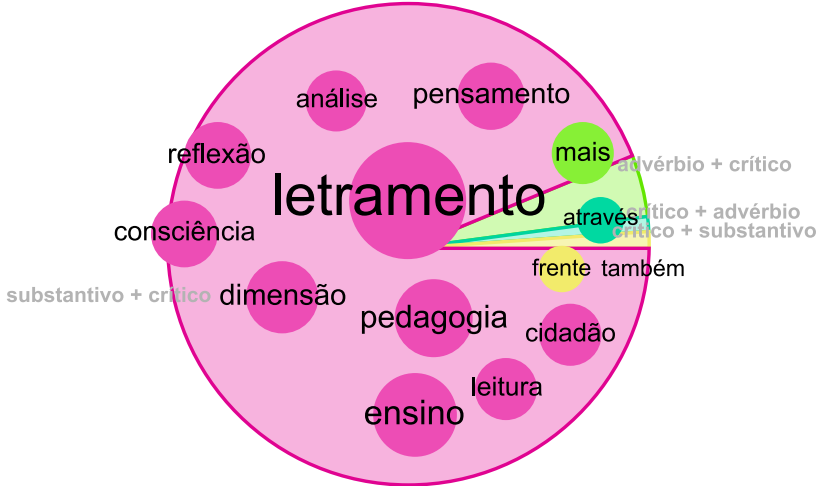
The cited article consists of a case study and was presented as a final project for the Bachelor’s degree in Letters. The authors investigated two teachers of English for

Children (LIC) with the aim of generating a well-founded reflection on teaching practices. Throughout the text, they brought up the frustrations of the teachers, such as assessing whether they felt prepared to teach children from 1st to 5th grade, which was not the case for either of them. Thus, by exploring the various aspects of teachers’ discourse and social practices, the researchers aimed to advocate for the preparation of teachers for working with children in Language Studies programs.

Considering the adjective “critical” and its concordances with gender and number, it was observed that the associated nouns were: “perspective,” “citizens,” “practice,” “topics,” “teaching,” among others. It was noticed that the idea of “criticality,” in general, seems to indicate the ability of teachers and students to discern and question the social, political, economic, and individual dimensions of a particular context. It involves considering a worldview constructed through social interaction, in which the subject is active and autonomous. Using the visualization tools in Sketch Engine, Graph 5 was created below, which shows the associations between the term “critical” and nouns and adverbs.

GRAPH 5 — Visualization of terms most frequently associated with “critical”

crítico



SOURCE: Sketch Engine (2023)

It is evident that this adjective is implicitly or explicitly related to the work of the teacher, meaning that the teacher needs to be critical in order to develop this ability in their students. At this point, we enter into a cycle because when we talk about the critical formation of the teacher, the teacher, in this case, is also a student. It seems that the capacity to be critical is a becoming, meaning it refers to a potential to be developed.

As an example, the article entitled “A língua inglesa na escola sob o ponto de vista de alunos e professores: implicações no ensino e na aprendizagem” by Eidelwein and Mottin (2021) aims to discuss, through data collected from semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, the beliefs of each party and how they influence pedagogy within the English language discipline.

The authors observed the importance of English as a language in use, both in national and international situations. Therefore, many students, for example, desired to study the language in a practical, creative, and non-repetitive way. On the part of the teachers, they considered not only grammar in context but also sought to make English meaningful for the students. One of the teachers also stated that having empathy with the students helped develop the classes, as well as the students’ interest in learning from her.

By integrating the views of the teachers and the students, the authors of the study highlight critical formation considering the living, the acting, the creativity, the diversity, and the reality in which teachers and students are immersed. For all these characteristics to develop, the researchers propose a critical look at how English language teaching is proposed by official documents, such as the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN), and how methodologies are applied in the classroom.

Eidelwein and Mottin (2021) argue that schools and teachers should focus on social practices, using language for future possibilities. Grammar, therefore, is one aspect circumscribed by the social environment, meaning it serves as a support to understand real language use rather than memorizing rules. Thus, the tasks and projects proposed by teachers need to be structured, with defined objectives and considering textual genres in their communicative process. They also argue for the need to create spaces within the school for the broad discussion of English language learning and teaching, aiming to recognize its importance in practical contexts.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The studies and analysis made on this research aimed to analyze the evolutionary state of English language teaching through the perspective of Brazilian scientific papers. As a conclusion, initially, it is noticeable that English teaching in Brazilian public schools is a highly relevant topic amongst education-related researches. The researches cataloged in this paper were focused on the following categories: Courseware, History and Curriculum, Pedagogical Practices, Teacher Qualification, and Teachers and Students Beliefs.

Under the Courseware used in schools, the studies focused on a critical analysis of their content. Under the History and Curriculum category, the papers focused on the historical and evolutionary perspective of English teaching in Brazil and how the curriculum modifications were made. Such modifications reflect, consequently, the learning and teaching process in the classrooms, since changes of methodological focuses generate certain effects in the process.

Furthermore, since the methodology is altered, it consequently causes changes in teacher qualifications and future pedagogical practices, which will be applied in classrooms. This leads to the alteration of beliefs of teachers and students about the learning and teaching process in the Brazilian context. The discourse about education perpasses all the different topics presented by the researchers. Therefore, the purpose of the majority of the analyzed papers is to propose ways to overcome existing challenges in English teaching in public education. The texts signal the necessity of transformation and development of each topic pointed out in analysis. If one of these aspects is improved, the others may follow the same movement.

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