



FROM HISTORY TO MULTILITERACIES: ANALYZING THE ROLE(S) OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BRAZILIAN OFFICIAL EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS

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RESUMO: Compreender a trajetória do ensino de língua inglesa no Brasil, especialmente na educação pública, é fundamental para compreender as demandas de uma sociedade em constante transformação. Neste sentido, este artigo propõe um olhar analítico sobre o percurso histórico do ensino do idioma e as mudanças ocasionadas por normativas legais, como a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) e o Documento Curricular do Estado do Pará (DCE). Trata-se de uma pesquisa documental e bibliográfica que, além de recuperar elementos históricos, faz uma breve apreciação acerca das leis norteadoras da educação no ensino de Línguas Inglesas no Brasil, buscando apresentar algumas mudanças e alterações que resultaram na substituição de uma Língua estrangeira para a Língua Franca, como também, dentro desse cenário de transformações, propõe a perspectiva dos multiletramentos, conforme apresentada por Rojo (2012), como uma alternativa pedagógica frente às necessidades emergentes no processo de ensino-aprendizagem, especialmente em uma sociedade cada vez mais marcada pela presença das tecnologias e do universo digital.

Palavras-chave: Currículo. Língua inglesa. BNCC. DCE-PA. Multiletramentos.

ABSTRACT: Understanding the trajectory of English language teaching in Brazil, especially within public education, is essential for grasping the demands of a society undergoing constant transformation. This article offers an analytical overview of the historical development of English language instruction and the changes brought about by legal guidelines such as the Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) and the Curricular Document of the State of Pará (DCE). This is a documentary

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and bibliographical research that, in addition to recovering historical elements, makes a brief assessment of the laws guiding education in the teaching of English in Brazil, seeking to present some changes and alterations that resulted in the replacement of a foreign language for the Lingua Franca, as well as, within this scenario of transformations, proposes the perspective of multiliteracies, as presented by Rojo (2012), as a pedagogical alternative in the face of emerging needs in the teaching-learning process, especially in a society increasingly marked by the presence of technologies and the digital universe.

Keywords: Curriculum. English language. BNCC. DCE-PA. Multiliteracies.

1. INTRODUCTION

English has been present in Brazil since the colonial period and, over the centuries, has gained more space and importance. However, its growing presence within Brazilian territory was not matched by the same intensity in the educational system and, throughout history, has gone through moments of prominence and, at other times, exclusion: a dynamic still noticeable in the current scenario of a globalized society.

The history of English Language teaching in Brazil has been and still is a challenge. It is necessary to understand the complexity of a country marked by cultural diversity, a heterogeneity of customs, and, above all, immersion in technology, as these factors also place additional demands on the conditions required for teaching beyond mere preparation for the job market. Therefore, it is essential to consider the various aspects (social, political, educational, etc.) in order to foster an education capable of responding to an increasingly diverse and globalized society.

In this sense, the teaching of the English language today, among the many changes society has undergone, requires new perspectives – whether in its curriculum, methodologies, and in teacher education – in order to ensure a fertile and contextualized teaching and learning process within the school environment. Given this context, the present study has as its general objective to present a historical trajectory of the inclusion of English as a mandatory subject in the official Brazilian school curriculum and its transformations over the centuries. The specific objectives are: a) to present the historical context of the introduction of English in Brazil as a school subject; b) to identify how current school curricula, specifically the BNCC and the DCE-PA, address the English language and teacher education; and c) to understand how the perspective of multiliteracies can offer a fertile path for approaching the English language in the classroom.

Therefore, this is a bibliographic and documentary research study, in which the reality of English language teaching is examined based on the analysis of previous studies on the subject. According to Gil (2002, p. 41), the bibliographic survey assists the researcher in the “refinement of ideas or the discovery of intuitions,” which, in the case of this study, enables the historical tracking of official educational documents that outline the current directions of the English language as a curricular component. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will present contemporary teaching methodologies that contribute to improving the English teaching and learning process and foster greater student engagement with a language that is so present in our daily lives.

This paper is organized into five sections. Following the introduction, the second section presents the historical context of the language's arrival in Brazil and its fluctuating presence in the school curriculum until it became a mandatory component. The third section discusses the Brazilian National Common Curriculum (BNCC, 2018) and the Curricular Document of the State of Pará (DCE-PA, 2019), which serve as key national and state guidelines for English language teaching. The fourth section explores multimodality in English teaching, highlighting how students' daily exposure to English through social media and online games can be harnessed through multimodal texts to enhance language learning. Finally, some considerations about the work are presented.

2. THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BRAZIL THROUGH OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

To begin the discussion of this study, it is important to present a historical overview of the teaching of the English language in Brazil, aiming to understand how it is currently addressed in legislation, educational documents, and classroom practice. In this sense, the presence of English as an educational practice dates back to the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Brazil in 1808 (Silva, 2023). At that time, Brazil was still characterized as a Portuguese colony under the rule of Prince Regent Dom João VI. The arrival of the royal court led to numerous changes in the country, one of which was the inclusion of English and French as modern languages in public education.

The arrival of Dom João VI marked the influx of many English individuals, who maintained close ties with the Portuguese Crown. This movement encouraged the development of English language teaching in Brazilian territory. It is considered the beginning of the

presence of the English language in Brazil, which brought not only a new linguistic element but also strong cultural and social influences that quickly took root: a shift in lifestyle, as highlighted by Rodrigues (2003, p. 59) “the strong influence of English industrialist commercial interests, through changes in habits, housing styles, fashion, thick fabrics inappropriate for the Brazilian tropical climate. In Brazil, people now drank beer and ate bread like the English [...]”

According to Santana (2021, p. 23), the decree that made the teaching of both English and French mandatory was signed on January 17, 1809, with a specific purpose:

[...] The teaching of these languages aimed to prepare the population for the labor market, but, based on the decree’s wording, there was no explicit methodological guidance. [...] its creation was more focused on serving market demands rather than the needs of the population or a pedagogical structure.

In other words, the introduction of foreign language teaching in Brazil was linked to commercial interests and the need to respond to emerging realities brought by the strengthened ties between Portugal and England. The development and economic growth of Brazil created a demand for a workforce prepared to deal with a new language, as many spoke English and much of the documentation in commercial establishments was written in English. There was a need to prepare the labor force accordingly.

Over time, the teaching of modern languages became a permanent feature of the Brazilian school curriculum, as in the case of *Colégio Pedro II*, founded in 1837, which included English, French, Latin, and Greek in its curriculum (Santana, 2021). However, the permanence of foreign languages as school subjects began to alternate due to educational reforms. Supported by several studies, Santana (2021) points out that these changes began with the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889, when education became influenced by positivist ideals. As a result, schooling began to prioritize preparation for higher education, leading to the exclusion of language teaching. From then on, the removal and reintroduction of foreign languages in the school curriculum became a recurring process. What we observe today is not a total exclusion, but rather a reduction in the workload of these subjects and a growing preference for the English language.

Santana (2021) goes on to say that the milestone for English language education in Brazil was the emergence of free language courses starting in the 1930s. These courses offered Brazilians an alternative way to access the language. Many educational institutions partnered with British and American consulates, which led to changes in institutional names and the

creation of renowned English language centers, such as the Brazilian Society of English Culture and the Brazil–United States Cultural Union.

During this period, another educational reform took place. Decree No. 19,890, of April 18, 1931, made the teaching of English compulsory only in the second and third grades of the elementary cycle and removed it from the list of mandatory subjects in the complementary course (Santana, 2021, p. 24). From that point forward, there was a continuous debate about how English would remain in the school curriculum.

English language teaching during this time was heavily criticized due to the use of outdated methodologies based on translation and grammar exercises, which were considered ineffective. Consequently, teaching methods began to change, and a new approach – the Direct Method – was implemented. This method aimed to conduct classes entirely in English, enabling students to think, speak, and express themselves without relying on their native language, thus making the target language more integrated into students’ lives.

The teaching of foreign languages in Brazil has gone through periods of instability, with political contexts often influencing educational policy. As such, it became essential to regulate language education through legal instruments. One example of this process is the Capanema Reform of 1942, in which English became:

[...] mandatory in the gymnasium (middle school) curriculum only from the second year onward; in the classical course, it was optional in the first and second years; and in the scientific course, it was mandatory in the first and second years but not offered in the third year of either course (Santana, 2021, p. 24).

Another major change came with the Law of Guidelines and Bases (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases*) of 1961, which “established that modern foreign language teaching was mandatory only for the first cycle but recommended the inclusion of foreign language subjects whenever possible” (Santana, 2021, p. 25). During the Brazilian Military Dictatorship, especially under the presidency of Emílio Médici and Minister of Education Jarbas Passarinho, new changes were introduced from 1971 onward. Education adopted a vocational focus, leading to a significant reduction in foreign language instruction. One of the most damaging changes for language education was the reduction of total schooling years from 12 to 11, which effectively removed foreign languages from the school curriculum. From then on, schools could decide whether or not to offer foreign languages (Santana, 2021).

In the 1990s, another educational reform occurred, bringing Brazil closer to the current model of foreign language education. In 1996, a new version of the LDB was enacted, establishing that:

[...] foreign language teaching remained mandatory in what was now called Ensino Fundamental (former primary education), as part of the diversified curriculum, and in Ensino Médio (former secondary education), as part of the common core, allowing for the inclusion of an additional foreign language as an optional subject (Brasil, 1996, p. 25).

From this point on, both elementary (initial and final years) and high school students were required to receive foreign language instruction, with schools typically choosing English as the compulsory language and Spanish as the optional one. The 1996 LDB reform also brought the creation of new educational policies, such as the National Education Plan (*Plano Nacional de Educação*), the National Council of Education (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*), and later the National Curriculum Parameters (*Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*). These documents aimed to guarantee basic education and students' overall development, while also addressing the initial and continuing training of education professionals.

The 1998 PCNs presented a socio-interactionist approach (Santana, 2021), emphasizing the development of competencies and skills, in line with the LDB (1996), aiming at a common education for all. These guidelines also supported English language instruction as a communicative skill essential for participating in the information society, in business, and in technological environments, such as preparation for the job market.

Despite being considered innovative, the PCNs were criticized for their proposal regarding English language teaching. While they encouraged communicative competence, they did not specify a clear methodology or teaching approach. Furthermore, the emphasis was placed largely on reading skills in the foreign language. Added to that are many challenges still faced by public schools, such as lack of physical infrastructure and the absence of specialized teacher training, which continue to hinder the development of a more comprehensive and dynamic foreign language education.

Finally, we have the Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular*), published in 2018, which is Brazil's current curricular framework and serves as the foundation for the organization of state and municipal curricula. The BNCC outlines two parts: a mandatory core, which must be followed by all schools, and a diversified part, to be adapted by each state and municipality according to their specific regional

characteristics. As we will see next, it is within this diversified part that foreign language teaching is situated.

3. BNCC AND DCE-PA: THE MAIN GUIDELINES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING ENGLISH

The BNCC is a document that had already been foreseen in the LDB of 1996. The first movement toward the construction of a curriculum with unified content was the PCNs, which served much more to support education professionals, in light of recent changes, than for the actual development of curricula. Still, they were fundamental in laying the groundwork for thinking about a common curriculum for all basic education institutions in the country.

For the construction of the BNCC, it was necessary to divide the process into stages. Initially, discussions focused on the base for Elementary School and only later moved to High School. These discussions began in 2015, under the government of President Dilma Rousseff. The new text sought to guide the elaboration of school curricula, giving even more support to previous educational guidelines, and introducing a model based on competencies and skills that students should develop throughout their education. The BNCC for Elementary School was approved in 2017, with a deadline for implementation by 2020 in all educational institutions in the country. The BNCC for High School was approved in 2018 and was expected to be implemented by 2022.

With regard to the teaching of the English language, there is a significant change. The BNCC's approach to this subject is less content-based and more focused on structuring axes such as competencies, knowledge, and skills. English becomes mandatory from the 6th grade of Elementary School through High School. Another significant issue is the identification of the English language as a *lingua franca*. In this regard, the analyzed research seeks to challenge the idea of a foreign language centered on the ideal of the native speaker and instead proposes an understanding of English as a language with countless communicative possibilities.

In this sense, Lopes and Baumgartner (2019, p. 6) explain that the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) “becomes denationalized/deterritorialized, that is, it is not – or should not be – connected to the values and assumptions of North American or English culture.” This understanding helps us recognize how the English language takes on new forms, as the aim of promoting communication makes it denationalized, according to the authors. From this perspective:

“[...] Lingua Franca is not – or should not be – based on the linguistic and sociocultural norms of native speakers, since, in principle, it is neutral in relation to the different cultural contexts of the interlocutors, whose identities and attitudes do not have to accommodate Anglo-American or English culture.” (Lopes; Baumgartner, 2019, p. 6)

For many years, English language teaching was strongly linked to the notion of a foreign language. This approach reinforces the idea of the native speaker as an ideal model and perpetuates British and American linguistic imperialism, so that English spoken in other countries does not find space in the school context (Santana, 2021). One of the main problems caused by this exclusion is that Brazilian students, especially those from public schools, begin to perceive English as something distant from their realities. In the words of Santana (2021, p. 44),

[...] This character of a foreign language, with the striking feature of being the language of the other, did not configure itself as a language that the student could realistically learn and feel part of the process of using. It is instead considered more as a language the user takes from the other to express themselves, being judged as imperfect in appropriating it, since the stereotype of the native speaker is seen as the perfect one.

In other words, through the way English is presented in many educational institutions across the country, the language is still perceived as an ideal to be achieved, with a constant comparison between the native and the new speaker. The concept of EFL seeks to break this distance. According to Lopes and Baumgartner (2019, p. 11),

The ELF brings us a pedagogy that presupposes a practice concerned with repositioning itself in the face of monolithic and monological views; that is, it proposes a movement of confrontation and rupture against a language discourse that perpetuates inequalities. Thus, instead of accepting a label of deficiency or non-native, it proposes that we be reflective and critical agents of linguistic change in the face of dominant monolingual ideologies.

Another criticism lies in the fact that English teaching is often not contextualized and is even seen as useless, despite its recognized social importance:

[...] One learns something without communicative utility or expansion of communicative competence, based on traditional teaching centered on the teacher and that does not consider the student's needs. [...] It uses the native

speaker as an example to be achieved, disregarding sociolinguistic relations that arise in multilingual interactions. (Santana, 2021, p. 45).

Professionals working in language teaching unanimously agree that continuous practice of the skills learned makes all the difference. The more students practice writing, listening, reading, and especially speaking, the greater their success will be in developing these skills. It is evident that contact with the English language occurs constantly in various social spaces, but the opportunities to practice it remain scarce, especially for many students from public schools who only have the school environment to develop their language skills.

It is from this perspective of language use that the understanding of what a lingua franca is becomes essential. According to Santana (2021, p. 46),

ELF is considered a phenomenon that facilitates the use of various varieties of English beyond the hegemonic ones, including bringing the student or speaker closer to the language by valuing local uses and varieties that make more sense to them. It is not about replacing some varieties with others, but about making visible the global use of English, including speakers who are not privileged by hegemonies, and about recognizing real possibilities for students to use the language. Lingua franca is a phenomenon of contact resulting from the meeting of multiple native and non-native varieties of English.

It is important to clarify the notion of linguistic varieties mentioned here, which relates more to the different ways of speaking English in various realities, rather than *a notion of a new English language*. Hence, adaptations related to ELF concern communication situations where flexibility in the language is important due to speakers' diverse realities. This applies to both native and non-native speakers. Jordão (2014, p. 23) explains that

the focus falls on the functionality of communication more than on pre-existing norms that would regulate linguistic structures in a decontextualized and a priori way from more concrete situations of use. The non-native speaker is seen as a builder of norms as much as the native speaker, since both learn ELF in the situation of a non-mother tongue.

From this perspective of promoting more concrete dialogic situations in English, teaching can become more accessible to students, especially those from public schools. In other words, if students are encouraged to practice English based on their own realities, their learning process will likely be more meaningful and not perceived as distant. ELF values the different

uses of English without neglecting the contextualized teaching of its grammar, and the BNCC incorporates this understanding, recognizing that the English language is global and diverse.

These changes lead to the reflection that ELF, according to the BNCC (Brasil, 2018), enables students to communicate more effectively and under more favorable conditions; in other words, it expands their communication to an international level. However, this understanding of lingua franca goes beyond a mere change in terminology, as it carries broader implications and focuses on “a pedagogy that challenges hegemonies, overcoming linguistic imperialism and providing contact with other ways of speaking, other cultures that bring language teaching closer to the learner’s universe” (Santana, 2021, p. 47).

Regarding the English language, the BNCC defines four axes that organize learning, and the author Luiz Scaglione (2019, p. 96) presents them in a simplified way:

- The Orality axis involves language practices in oral use and production. Pedagogically, it would be interesting to work with media resources (cinema, internet, television, etc.);
- The Reading axis works with the reader's interaction with the written text. Methodologically, reading should be organized into pre-reading, reading and post-reading, which would enhance learning and increase the meaning for students;
- The Writing axis is a social practice that gives students the opportunity to act as protagonists; the Linguistic Knowledge axis involves practices of use, analysis and reflection on the language, but in a contextualized, articulated way and in the service of oral, reading and writing practices.
- The axis of the Intercultural Dimension, which is based on the principle that cultures, especially today, are in constant interaction and (re)construction, are the setting for the English language as a lingua franca, but which must prioritize reflection on the relationships between language, identity and culture and the development of intercultural competence.

Common language development practices are present in the axes of reading, writing, and speaking. What is newly included is the intercultural dimension, which understands English as a lingua franca. This learning process values the interaction between culture and identity, making students perceive a greater connection with the language.

It is clear that the intention of the BNCC is to update the way the English language is worked in the classroom, moving away from traditional teaching, which for the years that English is present in the school environment is still understood as distant from the reality of the students. However, there is a very strong criticism regarding the lack of support theoretical in the BNCC related to the learning process and the novelties for teaching of the English language.

Because the BNCC is a foundational document for the construction of municipal and state curricula, we will now analyze the Curricular Document of the State of Pará (*Documento Curricular do Estado do Pará*, hereinafter DCE-PA), from 2019, and examine how the curricular component of the English language is presented. The DCE-PA is organized, like the BNCC, according to educational stages. In the same document, the Department of Education of the State of Pará (SEDUC) brings together the curriculum for Early Childhood Education and for the initial and final years of Elementary School. However, English language teaching is only included in Elementary School (final years); there is a separate document, published in 2021, for High School.

The 2019 DCE-PA provides an introduction to the teaching of the English language in Brazil, highlighting the main changes that have occurred with this curricular component. The document clearly states the intentionality that should guide English teaching, aiming to:

[...] awaken in the student a perception of language that goes beyond its instrumental character as a means of expression and communication so that it reaches its meanings, knowledge, and values; therefore, a communicative approach is essential in the teaching of English, in which the student develops the four skills in the language for real communication situations, namely: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing, aiming at learning and emphasizing authenticity, focusing on the real use of the language in everyday communicative practices, taking into account that there is a wide variety of authentic materials from literature, CDs, DVDs, news, films, TV programs, leaflets, and menus. (DCE-PA, 2019, p. 218)

The document supports what is established in the BNCC – essentially functioning as a copy of the national base. However, it does not mention the identification of English as a *lingua franca*, despite frequently discussing the globalization of the world. Nevertheless, it does emphasize the importance of the English language in the school environment:

The work with the English Language takes into account the structuring axes proposed in this document, making the teaching and learning of the English Language more complete in the sense that the focus will always be on the individual as an agent of a globalized, communicative, and technological society that uses the foreign language for social, political, and economic purposes. (DCE-PA, 2019, p. 223)

On the other hand, the DCE-PA for High School introduces the English language as a modern language and a *lingua franca*, demonstrating that the curriculum seeks to stay up to date and to value the diversity present in society, as shown in the following excerpt:

The field of knowledge and practices of foreign language teaching breaks down borders and begins to experience a linguistic education oriented towards interculturality – that is, towards the legitimation of differences, the tolerance of heterogeneity, and towards understanding how the uses of the English language, in their local contexts, are produced in various social language practices, which provides for reflective consideration of different conceptions of observing and studying the world, others, and oneself. (DCE-PA, 2021, p. 144)

Similarly, the document follows the BNCC guidelines, presenting the general competencies and skills from the base and from the area of knowledge *Languages and their Technologies*. The curriculum reiterates that, according to the LDB (Brazil, 1996), the teaching of English is mandatory, although schools may offer another foreign language as an elective, depending on their local reality. Currently, due to this law, English has become more prominent in schools compared to other foreign languages.

To conclude the presentation of English as a curricular component, the DCE-PA for High School highlights the need to promote interdisciplinary education, as the area of *Languages and their Technologies* includes: Arts, Portuguese Language, Literature, Foreign Language, and Physical Education. It is therefore important to relate and integrate this knowledge. As the document states, “the field of knowledge and practices of foreign language – English teaching will seek to dialogue with the other fields that make up the area of Languages and their Technologies, aiming to articulate the area categories within the field” (DCE-PA, 2021, p. 149).

As shown in the subsection, it is clear that the BNCC and the DCE-PA aim to organize the content that curricular components must develop both inside and outside the classroom. While the BNCC represents the mandatory part that all curricula across the country must include, the DCEs correspond to the diversified part, which contains content tailored to the specific realities of each region. Moreover, when municipalities have an education council, it becomes possible to further enrich the diversified curriculum by incorporating additional elements. This process makes teaching more meaningful and brings it closer to students’ lived experiences.

4. ADVANCES AND CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The main document that regulates teacher education in the State of Pará is the *Plano Estadual de Educação* (State Education Plan, hereinafter PEE-PA), enacted in 2015 with a ten-year validity. Therefore, only in 2025 will a new PEE begin to be discussed. Within this plan, goals 15, 16, and 17 establish the objectives and intentions related to teacher education.

Another important piece of legislation addressing teacher education is the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (LDB, 1996), which is updated as needed to reflect Brazil's educational reality. These documents complement each other: each aims to implement educational policies within the scope of its respective level of government, taking into account regional specificities.

Let us now examine the PEE-PA goals related to teacher training:

Goal 15 aims to contribute, in cooperation with the Union and municipalities, to ensuring that, within one year of the PNE's enactment, a national policy for teacher education is in place. This policy must guarantee that all basic education teachers possess specific higher education, obtained through a degree program in the subject area they teach (PEE-PA, 2015, p. 105).

Although the intent is clear, the one-year timeframe is overly ambitious, as actions like expanding continuing education opportunities require time to be effectively implemented. Goal 16, on the other hand, refers to postgraduate-level continuing education:

To contribute to the postgraduate training of 50% of basic education teachers by the final year of this PEE, and to ensure that all basic education professionals receive continuing education in their area of expertise, considering the needs, demands, and contextual specificities of the education systems. (PEE-PA, 2015, p. 105)

Unlike Goal 15, Goal 16 sets a longer timeframe (ten years) for implementation. This is consistent with recent trends: the number of postgraduate programs has increased significantly in Brazil, both in public universities and private institutions. According to CAPES data published on the federal government's website: "Brazilian *stricto sensu* postgraduate programs grew by 48.6% over the past decade, increasing from 3,128 programs in 2011 to 4,650 in 2020." (Gov.br, 2021). This growth aligns with the PEE's timeline and shows positive progress toward Goal 16. It is worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021) played a role in

popularizing online courses and remote learning, thus expanding access to continuing education.

More recent figures from 2023 reinforce this trajectory: “Students enrolled in Brazilian postgraduate programs exceeded 400,000 (411,000) in 2023, with over 90,000 graduates (91,463), distributed across 475 higher education institutions.” (Gov.br, 2024) This increase in availability (across formats and institutions) indicates that continuing education, including postgraduate studies, is a growing reality for education professionals. However, the reality faced by English language teachers in public schools remains challenging.

Many researchers agree that English continues to be viewed as a subject of secondary importance, especially when compared to Portuguese or mathematics. Students are often encouraged to focus on the so-called ‘core subjects’, which marginalizes English language instruction. Oliveira (2021, p. 15), for instance, emphasizes that:

Studying a new language requires intensive contact with it, which doesn’t mean it is necessary to be in an English-speaking country or interact exclusively with native speakers. It includes regular practice with reading, writing, listening, and speaking, even remotely – especially during the pandemic, when many interactions took place online.

The growing access to digital resources (podcasts, games, and social media) offers students new opportunities to engage with English in authentic and meaningful ways. Thus, English should not be treated as a secondary subject, but rather as a language of real-world communication.

Despite these advances, structural issues persist in the school system. In elementary and high schools (both public and private), the English language often receives only one or two 50-minute classes per week. In addition, overcrowded classrooms in public schools hinder the development of dynamic, student-centered activities. These conditions are barriers to the effective practice and learning of the language.

From the perspective of English as a lingua franca, the goal of the curriculum is to bring language teaching closer to students’ realities. Eidelwein and Mottin (2021, p. 2) argue that this approach aims to form “more participatory, critical, and active citizens in society.” However, to achieve this goal, structural challenges must be addressed through public policy.

Eidelwein and Mottin (2021) also emphasize that the objective of English teaching is not only immediate communication, but also deeper engagement with the language’s functions and uses. The school environment plays a crucial role in this process by providing opportunities

for meaningful interaction, moving beyond grammar drills toward dialogical, experiential learning. This approach aligns with intercultural perspectives on English language teaching, which emphasize linguistic and cultural plurality.

According to Silva (2019, p. 159), “the teaching of a foreign language from an intercultural perspective values students’ diverse experiences, enabling co-construction of learning through interaction with multiple knowledges.” The intercultural perspective emphasizes proximity to students’ realities, fostering connections and meaningful language use. It acknowledges the coexistence of multiple cultures and promotes an innovative approach to teaching English.

Milroy (2011, *apud* Silva, 2019, p. 161) warns that a consequence of standardizing English is the belief in a single “correct” form of language – an ideology that fosters prejudice based on race and class. Therefore, English teachers must embrace methodologies that reflect the language’s heterogeneity and challenge normative biases. In this pursuit of innovation, the internet becomes a powerful ally. Since students already spend significant time online, their engagement with digital platforms (social networks, games, forums) can be integrated into English classes.

As Silva (2019, p. 167) states, “the school must take a more active role in implementing practices that promote the plurality of English, integrating school contexts with students’ everyday practices, such as participation in digital forums where diverse English varieties are used to share ideas.” Thus, English language instruction no longer needs to rely solely on traditional methods. It can incorporate new methodologies that make learning more engaging and show students how the language can expand their communicative possibilities.

In conclusion, this section has outlined both the progress and the challenges in English language teaching in Pará. While access to ongoing teacher education – especially postgraduate education – is becoming more widespread, basic conditions within schools must also improve. Innovative pedagogical practices are vital, but without the necessary infrastructure, teachers may feel frustrated and students may remain underserved. The following section presents an approach to English language education that aligns with more contemporary and contextualized perspectives.

4.1 English language education through the lens of multiliteracies

It is clear that there is still much to be done to achieve a language education process capable of surpassing traditional models, already mentioned here, and that aligns with the parameters indicated by the PCNs, BNCC, and other guiding principles of school education. This pursuit goes far beyond outdated methods, making it essential to adopt practices contextualized within the social realities of students.

Language teaching is becoming increasingly relevant, as we encounter it daily in various forms – through technologies, music, clothing, advertising, and many other means frequently present in our lives. Thus, thinking that teaching English is not important is, at the very least, to hinder the construction of knowledge in another language and to limit communication with other cultures.

Society is increasingly embedded in new cultures, and the school, as the center of the educational process, needs to keep up with the rapidly occurring changes – a result mainly caused by the constant advance of technology. That said, it is worth questioning: in what ways can language education be based on a perspective that undermines traditional approaches?

Knowing how to read and write, in a reality driven by communication technologies, requires more than the mere acquisition of writing/speaking standards. It demands practices that go beyond the written word and embraces a more contemporary notion of language, one that is consistent with current demands. What was accepted and widely used in the past is now obsolete for the teaching process involving new technologies. It is necessary to incorporate more dynamic and stimulating teaching processes that contribute to the formation of more conscious, critical, and reflective citizens – prepared to live in and transform the reality in which they are embedded.

These technological advances are increasingly reflected in the teaching processes used today, with education being challenged to make use of technological and digital means in the learning environment. Within this educational context is the teaching of *English as a Lingua Franca*, which is even more conditioned by the need to adapt to the emerging changes in the current school scenario.

The current context is that of a society in which literacy alone no longer meets the demands of the avalanche of communication and information possibilities brought about by the technological era. The widespread use of technological tools increasingly explores the use of different languages (images, videos, audios, etc.) which go beyond the traditional literate

medium and give way to multiliteracies. This term was introduced in 1996 by a group of researchers called the New London Group (NLG), who, amongst the changes in the communication landscape, sought to understand this new society and proposed the approach of multiliteracies to face the challenges of this digital and technological age. Regarding these changes in the educational landscape, Rojo (2012, p. 12, emphasis in the original) states:

The NLG also pointed to the fact that this youth — our students — already had fifteen years of experience with other and new tools for access to communication, information, and social agency, which entailed new literacies of a multimodal or multisemiotic nature. To encompass these two 'multis' — the multiculturalism characteristic of globalized societies and the multiculture of texts through which multiculturalism communicates and informs — the group coined the new term or concept: *multiliteracies*.

Thus, we can understand that, with the increasing combination of multiple forms of communication and languages, there is an ever-growing space for discussion and the inclusion of a pedagogy of multiliteracies, with methodologies suited to this contemporary technological society. However, these changes require not only debates, colloquia, and conferences, nor are they limited to legal guidelines as they depend on radical transformations in English language classrooms.

5. FINAL REMARKS

Seeking to finalize the discussion proposed in this work, we highlight that the arrival of English as a foreign language in Brazilian territory was initially related to the demands of the labor market, and we can affirm that, even today, the English language still bears this mark. However, we have observed a growing need for communication through this language, especially on social media and in online games.

Another persistent issue in the discussion of English language teaching is the type of methodology adopted in the classroom. Since the inclusion of English as a school subject, educators have sought the most effective way to approach its teaching: from the well-known direct method to more recent active methodologies. In this text, we advocate for the *perspective of multiliteracies* as a real possibility for students to exercise their right to learn another language and to be inserted in the contemporary world.

Through this research, we found that English language teaching in Brazil has undergone numerous instabilities, from inconsistencies in workload to methodological issues, always influenced by the political agendas of the ruling governments. These interferences have continuously impacted teaching practices and have extended to current official documents such as the BNCC and the DCE, which also serve as instruments of educational regulation.

We observed that the BNCC and other curricular documents approach *English as a Lingua Franca*, going beyond the hegemonic countries where the language is spoken. This helps students understand that there is a diversity of pronunciations and ways of communicating – thus, expressing themselves through their own linguistic repertoires is also valid. English as a lingua franca promotes a form of teaching that is connected to students’ realities – less focused on decontextualized content and more on dynamic and meaningful practices.

It remains essential that students develop the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) as it is the constant practice that fosters success in learning. However, structural problems faced by English teachers in the classroom significantly interfere with this process, and these issues can only be addressed through political will and investment. Problems such as the lack of teaching materials, reduced class hours, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate school infrastructure demand urgent attention.

Finally, we argue that the pedagogy of multiliteracies offers a fertile path for English and other language teachers to develop innovative methodologies that integrate students’ experiences in digital environments, fostering their interest in using the language in diverse and meaningful ways. Within this framework, reading and writing, when combined with various technological tools, can align with both grammatical structures and the linguistic adaptations required by the digital spaces students frequently navigate. This approach creates opportunities for learners to engage with English in real-life situations marked by greater dynamism, interaction, and motivation, while also cultivating critical thinking and creativity. These pedagogical possibilities are intrinsically connected to the principles of interculturality, the concept of English as a lingua franca, and the implementation of multiliteracies, always grounded in students’ realities and lived experiences.

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