CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS: THE NATIONAL CURRICULAR COMMON BASE AND THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

ANÁLISE CONTRSATIVA: BASE NACIONAL COMUM CURRICULAR E A SALA DE AULA DE INGLÊS

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Abstract: Numerous barriers have been broken as to the practical way of teaching the English Language (EL). Having as main motivation the process of globalization, which narrows the universal relations, then arises the need to investigate new teaching approaches that shelter this generalized integration of cultures. In order to do it, a training document was made available that reconsidered the educational practice and presented a new thematic focus to teaching, the National Curricular
Common Base (BNCC). Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the new proposals evidenced in the BNCC for the discipline of EL as a língua franca, in recognizing the teaching of languages based on the relations between language, territory and culture; as well as to reflect on the possible challenges encountered by EL teachers for the effective application of their proposals in the current Brazilian educational context. It is a bibliographical research with theoretical contributions such as Almeida Filho (2001) and Miccoli (2006).

Keywords: English Language; National Curricular Common Base; Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

It can be said that with the emergence of technological advances and the internet, multiple barriers have been broken with regard to the practical way of teaching English. Due to the globalization process, the link that narrow global relations have led to the investigation of new approaches to English language teaching that encompass this generalized integration of cultures, not just approaches that prioritize grammar-normative teaching.

Considering this need, the Ministry of Education has recently published the National Curricular Joint Base (BNCC), a document that reconsiders educational practices in the classroom and proposes a new thematic focus for teaching. According to Brazil, (2017, p.239), the learning of English Language (EL) has a formative character because it emphasizes the teaching of English in a conscious
and critical perspective, which considers the relations between language, territory and culture. The BNCC, as well as other current documents, which may mention the National Curricular Parameters (NCPs), favors the teaching of EL with a focus on the social and political function of English, treating it as a *lingua franca*.

The proposals evidenced by the BNCC come to meet the emerging needs in the educational scenario, but also the questioning with regard to the implementation of them in a functional way. The main study seeks the investigation of effective means to establish the organizing axes mentioned in the document. It is a research that is initially bibliographical based on theorists such as Almeida Filho (2001), Miccoli (2006) and later it will be carried out a qualitative research with English teachers of elementary school from public and private education systems, in order to investigate the opinion of the view in relation to the document, as well as possible adversities in the application of the proposal in the classroom.

1. **National Curricular Common Base and its proposals**

Following the recent publication of the National Curriculum Base in December 2017, a major discussion about the document has been maintained into its specifications and skills that will be developed throughout the school period. The BNCC "... is a normative document that defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of Basic Education (Our translation. BRAZIL, 2017, p.7). According to Neto et. al. (2017) the purpose of BNCC creation was based by a popular participation, and with that, it makes the document meets several prerogatives, in order to benefit the desire for transformation in the Brazilian educational scenario.

The BNCC was inspired by other documents such as the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs) and the National Curricular Guidelines (DCNs). But according to BRAZIL (Our translation. 2017, p. 31), the document seeks to ensure greater clarity, precision and clarification in relation to what is expected that is learned by all students of basic education, and provides valuable guidance for the elaboration of curricula adapted to the different contexts observed in the regions of the country.

It is believed that the Brazilian educational system is lacking of improvements and new reformulations so that the educational competence is a reality for the majority of the citizens. For this purpose, documents such as BNCC bring this
discussion to the current teaching plan in order to guide the teaching staff and consequently standardize teaching in public and private institutions throughout the national territory because "it will serve as a north, a guide for your classes. It will also reorganize the entire educational system, didactic materials, teacher training, assessments that will have the Basis as a reference (PALÁCIOS, 2015. p. 20).

The pedagogical foundations of BNCC Focus on the development of competences. The concept of competence adopted by the BNCC marks the pedagogical and social discussion of the last decades and can be inferred in the text of the LDB, especially when establishing the general purposes of Elementary Education and Teaching Medium (Articles 32 and 35).

1.1 The organizing axes

Brazil (2017. p. 239-240) points out that the study of the English language can facilitate students’ access to linguistic knowledge of the utmost importance for social engagement and participation, also contributing to the critical agency of students and the exercise of active citizenship, as well as to increase the possibilities of interaction and mobility, opening new possibilities for building knowledge and continuity in studies. These factors are related to the formative character that places the learning of English in a perspective of linguistic education, conscious and critical, in which the pedagogical and political dimensions are connected.

Thus, for Brazil (pp. 239-240), teaching the English language for this purpose has three important implications. The first one deals with this formative character of conscious and critical linguistic education, since it requires that the relations between language, territory and culture be revised, considering that the English language is the language of the globalized world, and thus, the speakers of the language are no longer found only in countries where English is the official language. The second implication reconsiders and seeks to broaden the vision of literacy, which is also achieved through the social practices of the digital world. (…)

knowing the English language strengthens the possibilities of participation and circulation - that bring together and intertwine different semioses and languages (verbal, visual, corporal, audiovisual) in a continuous process of contextualized, dialogical and ideological signification. Conceiving language as a social construction, the subject "interprets", "reinvents" the senses in a situated way, creating new ways of identifying and expressing ideas, feelings and values. In this sense, by assuming its status as a lingua
franca - a language that materializes in hybrid uses, marked by fluidity and opens to the invention of new ways of saying, driven by pluri / multilingual speakers and their multicultural characteristics - language English is a symbolic asset for speakers around the world (Our translation - Brazil, 2017, p. 240).

Therefore, the third implication makes reference to teaching approaches. By placing the English language in its lingua franca status, it is understood that certain beliefs, such as that of "better English" to teach, need to be relativized. This posture demands from the teacher an attitude of acceptance and legitimation of the different forms of expression of a language. These three implications guide the proposed organizing axes for the English Language component, and they are:

Orality Axis: Oral use of the English language has as its main axis the understanding and the elaboration of the speech to build knowledge and from this direct contact of the interlocutors, to work orality. According to Dolz and Schneuwly (2004, p. 168):

For a didactics in which the question of the development of the oral expression is put, the essential thing is not to characterize the oral in general and to work exclusively the surface aspects of the speech, but, rather, to know several oral practices of language and the very variable relations that these keep with the writing (Our translation).

Through orality there is the possibility of developing a sequence of actions and actions, "how to risk and make themselves understood, give voice to the other, understand and welcome the perspective of others, overcome misunderstandings and deal with insecurity, for example" (Our translation - BRAZIL, 2018, page 241). It should be noted that media resources are fundamental to accelerate the practice of orality in the classroom and to discover that such applications can be employed, since they establish significant factors.

Reading Axis: The Reading Axis discusses reader's dialogue practices with written text, based on the interpretation of the genres that appears in the work. The habit of reading in English extends the development of several strategies to recognize the text and enrich processes of meaning and reflection, since according to the Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines: (...) the text is not the priority way to use the language. It's the only way. The required form. There's no other. Grammar is constitutive of the text and the text is constitutive of language activity. Everything that should interest us in the study of language culminates in the
Students’ contact with the most varied written and multimodal textual genres supports them for critical reading progress and a sufficiency to build a creative course in EL learning.

Written Axis: The writing corroborates the opportunity for the students to be protagonists of their own ideas when they are transferred to the paper even if it is with few verbal resources, but that can be worked varied linguistic resources. This creates creative and autonomous writing.

Linguistic Knowledge Axis: The linguistic knowledge is always fixed in contextual analysis and assisting the oral, reading and writing axes. The study of grammar, phrasal structures and other connectives aims to get students to know the systemic performance of the English language. A distinct analysis of the similarities and differences between the mother tongue and the English language useful metallinguistic performance that should be worked on with students.

Cultural Dimension Axis: Cultures are currently in a constant system of interaction and approximation. Different groups of different places have a different and plural linguistic collection. Through contact these people build an open and living identity. English provokes a problematization of these different relations among peoples due to the role of the English language in the world. In this sense the intercultural competence of the students will be developed taking as priorities the challenges with EL.

According to the BNCC, in Primary Education, interculturality and the vision of English as a lingua franca - hence "deterritorialized" in its uses by different speakers around the world - as well as the social practices of the digital world were considered. In middle school, it is a matter of expanding the linguistic, multi-semiotic and cultural repertoires of students, enabling the development of greater awareness and critical reflection of the functions and uses of English in contemporary society - to problematize the reasons why it became a language of global use, for example.
2. The intercultural communication

The English Language brings an increasingly broader participation in the globalized world, where borders are shortened through technology. The interaction between cultures makes linguistic mobility lead new directions to build a path of knowledge and educational linkage. "It is this formative character that inscribes the learning of English in a perspective of linguistic education, conscious and critical, in which the pedagogical and political dimensions are intrinsically linked." (Brazil, 2017, page 239)

As believed by Brazil (2017), in order for the process of teaching languages in the Brazilian educational scenario to occur satisfactorily, it is necessary to relate three essential elements: language, territory and culture, since English as a lingua franca has a significant presence in countries, not only in countries whose English is the official language.

English has established its position as the global lingua franca beyond any doubt; along with this status, it has become one of the symbols of our time, together with globalisation, networking, economic integration, and the Internet. Like other zeitgeist symbols, it has been subject to much debate and has raised many fears. English has been seen as a threat to local languages and cultures, or alternatively, its global uses have been seen as a threat to Standard English (MAURANEN and RANTA, 2009. p. 1-2).

Culture can be understood as the main characteristic that directly implies the construction of the identity of a people, but we are not connected to a single culture. In conformity with John R. BALDWIN et al (2014, p.4) culture is defined as "the lifestyle of a group of people, including symbols, values, behaviors, artifacts, and other shared elements." To that end, Bizarro (2011, p.832) stresses the importance of promoting the teaching and learning of culture (s) in the foreign language classes in a reflexive way, in an open and democratic debate space, so that the contrasts of the different perspectives present in our multicultural community are highlighted. Thus, teaching will favor the cultural elements that a language carries with it, such as the lexicon, in addition to boosting the debate about the relevance of cultural differences. In this proposition the linguistic and cultural copilation brings a new vision that there is not a correct English but cultures peculiar to communities peculiarities.

To conceive the learning of Foreign Languages in an articulated way, in terms of the different components of the linguistic competence,
implies, necessarily, to give importance to the cultural questions. Learning, then, is seen as a source of expansion of cultural horizons. By knowing other culture(s), another way(s) of facing reality, students also reflect much more about their own culture and expand their capacity to analyze their social environment with greater depth, having better conditions to establish links, similarities and contrasts between their way of being, acting, thinking, and feeling and that of other peoples, enriching their formation. (Our translation - BRAZIL, 2000, p. 30)

Interculturality is responsible for the diffusion of culture. Correio, Letícia (Our translation – 2016, p. 9-10) affirms that the constant need to discuss interculturality in the English-language classroom is to "promote the relationship between people of different cultural groups, which would reduce the existence of many conflicts, since problems such as racism, homophobia, religious clashes, for example, occur because of the lack of capacity to live with the different". For the author interculturality is a position of respect. It is concluded that a language is influenced by culture such as culture is influenced by language. Gimenez (2008) affirms that the main objective of the intercultural approach is in fact the intercultural teaching which involves cultural learning, comparison between cultures and the exploration of the meaning of culture.

The intercultural teaching was pointed by the Common European Framework of reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, Assessment:

In an intercultural approach the central objective of language learning is to promote the development of the student's personality and his / her sense of identity, aiming at an enriching experience of otherness in language and culture (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2001, p1.).

Fleming et. al. (2003) affirm that the intercultural communication is becoming important in the study of foreign languages because “...the potential encounter with different social or national groups, who speak different languages, is evident”. Thus, the teaching based on the intercultural approach complements the traditional approach by establishing the idea that for foreign language communication to take place satisfactorily we must be sensitive to the social constructions of the other.

3. Context: BNCC and the English language classroom

Gimenez (2008) guarantees the existence of a division about English language teaching in schools. The first point of view would be the existence of documents that direct the teaching of the language as well as the BNCC, but in contrast, it is easy to
see that these documents or laws are not ensured within the classroom. Some of the reasons that can explain this fact are the lack of motivation or lack of knowledge of the teachers about the document and the structural conditions of support within the school environment and the students' preconception of their cultural construction, of which the English language is a complex and unreachable object. Despite frequent discussion about these factors, teachers receive little or no guidance on how to deploy these theories within the classroom. Teachers are primarily instigated in the use of specific teaching methods, without given sufficient theoretical knowledge about the language in use in the classroom.

This dogmatic view of language teacher training basically involves training in the use of teaching techniques, which are taken as the last word on language teaching, and which should be used by the teacher in the classroom exactly as recommended by manuals or by the teacher former (Our translation - LOPES, 1996, p.180).

It is important, then, that training professionals and teachers are aware that their role in the educational cycle is not only to reproduce decontextualized manuals, but also to provide knowledge inherent to the communicative and student needs, specifically supported by theoretical and practical knowledge.

Miccoli (2006, p.153) affirms that the "need to address the issues that afflict foreign language teachers in their practice, from their experiences." The author (2007) states that the studies on the experiences of these teachers are still in the beginning, which reveals a certain negligence with what happens in the classroom, eventually lengthening the distance between theory and practice. There is also a considerable rejection of teachers because they believe that the theoretical knowledge comes from researchers who do not know or know only superficially the reality experienced by teachers who work in language teaching.

The proposals evidenced by the BNCC come to meet the emerging needs in the educational scenario, but also the questioning regarding the implementation of the same in a functional way. Almeida Filho (op. cit., p. 23) points out the clear difference between what is practiced in language teaching in classrooms and the projections made by academics, theorists and researchers in the university scene of the courses of Letters and programs of postgraduate studies in EL, Letters and Language Studies.
3.1 Possible challenges found by EL teachers

BNCC brings significant changes to the teaching of English as a foreign language, benefiting the curricular organizational plan and leveling the content taught in both public and private institutions, but also the questioning about the Brazilian educational scenario and its capacity to shelter changes. Possibly, when applying BNCC's intended proposals in an educational program that is extremely lacking in resources, numerous difficulties will be encountered, ranging from the lack of teaching materials that will accommodate the changes, as well as the poor training of the teachers currently in practice.

According to the PCNs (Our translation - 1998, p.21):

one should also consider the fact that the conditions in the classroom of most Brazilian schools (reduced hours, overcrowded classes, poor mastery of oral skills by most teachers, didactic material reduced to chalk and didactic books, etc.) may impair the teaching of the four communicative skills.

The workload available for EL teaching makes it impossible to teach the four communicative skills that are necessary for the formation of students. With little class time, teachers are forced to work only the obligatory content, most of the time, based simply on grammatical rules, which neither motivates nor arouses the interest of the student.

Teacher training implies a number of factors that may favor or hinder their teaching practice. The poor training of a teacher makes it impossible for him to promote dynamic classes in a short time because he does not have basic notions of the students' needs. A teacher with a good background and pedagogical knowledge is able, even with little time, to transform his classes instead of interaction place where students are motivated to learn due to diversified teaching practice. The teacher needs to be constantly in the process of training, that is, he should seek continuous training to keep up with the advances and changes that occur over time.

The lack of technological resources and didactic material is another challenge to be faced by the EL teacher. In order to diversify their classes, the aid of technological resources is essential, but in most Brazilian schools these resources are not available to teachers. Some schools have the equipment, but they are not working, which creates an uncomfortable situation for the teacher who needs to change the script of his/her class.
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It can be said that documents of a formative nature such as the BNCC, meet the structural needs for improvements in language teaching in Brazil. By prioritizing English as a lingua franca, the document reconsiders the practical mode of teaching EL as well as the social and political function of such a rich and comprehensive language, benefited and influenced by cultures of several countries that have or do not speak the language as an official language. Relevant factors such as the communicative approach and intercultural teaching come into question, complementing and challenging teachers and students towards improvements in teaching. It is known that in Brazil, language teaching, especially in public schools, faces daily challenges, ranging from reduced working hours, which makes it difficult to apply some methodological tools so that the content is better absorbed and goes on to structural problems, such as the lack of didactic resources that accompany the updates. There is still a long way to go towards satisfactory completion of the proposal, but with the emergence of new public policies that prioritize education in the country, the current educational framework will have progress.

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