

English language teaching and the historical-critical pedagogy: contributions to a counter-hegemonic pedagogical practice

O ensino da língua inglesa e a pedagogia histórico-crítica: contribuições para uma prática pedagógica contra-hegemônica

Enseñanza del idioma inglés y pedagogía histórico-crítica: aportes a una práctica pedagógica contrahegemónica

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How to cite: Marques, H. J., & Baruki-Fonseca, R. (2022). English language teaching and the historical-critical pedagogy: contributions to a counter-hegemonic pedagogical practice. *Revista Tempos e Espaços em Educação*, 15(34), e17924. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20952/revtee.v15i34.17924>

ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to analyze the contributions of English language teaching towards an omnilateral human formation, under the historical-critical pedagogy perspective. The study includes discussions about the pedagogical conceptions found in education policies and a proposal of teaching strategies for the second year of elementary school. The pedagogy of competences is strongly inserted in the school education and, based on the concepts of employability and labor capacity, reinforces productivity and qualification goals. The English language teaching, enlightened by historical-critical pedagogy, has the potential to contribute to an education that goes beyond hegemonic perspectives, thus enabling the appropriation of rich and more significant knowledge in the search for human emancipation.

Keywords: Purposes of Education. Teaching-Learning Process. Language Teaching. Historical-Critical Pedagogy.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar as contribuições do ensino da língua inglesa para a formação humana omnilateral, sob a perspectiva da pedagogia histórico-crítica. O estudo inclui debates sobre as concepções pedagógicas presentes nas políticas educacionais e uma proposta de ensino para turmas de segundo ano dos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental. A pedagogia das competências está fortemente inserida na educação escolar e, com base nos conceitos de empregabilidade e laborabilidade, reforça metas de produtividade e qualificação. O ensino de língua inglesa, a partir dos fundamentos da pedagogia histórico-crítica, tem o potencial de contribuir para uma formação

que supere as perspectivas hegemônicas, possibilitando a apropriação de conhecimentos ricos e mais significativos na busca da emancipação humana.

Palavras-chave: Finalidades da Educação. Processo de Ensino-Aprendizagem. Ensino de Línguas. Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar los aportes de la enseñanza del idioma inglés a la formación humana omnilateral, desde la perspectiva de la pedagogía histórico-crítica. El estudio incluye debates sobre conceptos pedagógicos presentes en las políticas educativas y una propuesta didáctica para clases de segundo año en los primeros años de la enseñanza básica. La pedagogía de las competencias está fuertemente arraigada en la educación escolar y, basada en los conceptos de empleabilidad y trabajabilidad, refuerza las metas de productividad y cualificación. La enseñanza del inglés, desde los fundamentos de la pedagogía histórico-crítica, tiene el potencial de contribuir a una formación que supere las perspectivas hegemónicas, posibilitando la apropiación de saberes ricos y más significativos en la búsqueda de la emancipación humana.

Palabras clave: Propósitos de la educación. Proceso de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje. Enseñanza de idiomas. Pedagogía histórico-crítica.

INTRODUCTION

The school has historically constituted itself as a privileged locus for the socialization and appropriation of scientific, artistic and philosophical knowledge. The teaching and learning processes can either enhance human development, promoting reflections on social reality and the critical participation of individuals in society, or reproduce reductionist and utilitarian pedagogical practices, which detach curricular components and contents from the student's reality. In this study, we problematize the teaching of English in Basic Education.

In research on the teaching of the English language in school education, we read criticisms of the reproduction of classes whose background is the adaptive training of individuals, responding to the demands of the labor market and subjugating the teaching of English to the competences dictated by neoliberal logic (Rosa, 2003; Miranda, 2015; Cardozo, 2019; Marinho, 2019). The analyzes point out that the teaching of English can reinforce social inequalities when it is emptied of senses and meanings, obstructing access to critically and consciously systematized knowledge, that is, when it meets the productivist conceptions of education.

The contradictions in the objectives of teaching the English language in the formative processes are even more accentuated in the face of the profusion of policies that stress the role of the school (and end up being hegemonic) today, such as: the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC (Brasil, 2017a)), the reform of Secondary Education by Law n. 13,415 of 16 February 2017 (Brasil, 2017), and the National Education Plan - PNE (Brasil, 2014). Our findings are also elaborated in the light of readings, researches, debates, reports and observations in the Licentiate in Portuguese/English Language Course, at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), Campus do Pantanal (CPAN), especially in the disciplines of Fundamentals of English Language Teaching, English Language Teaching Practice, English Language Teaching Practice for the Initial Years of Elementary School and the Mandatory English Language Internships (I, II and III).

The formative potential of teaching the English language at school is not (or is little) explored in curricula and pedagogical practices when it is not used as an instrument of knowledge of the world for active and transforming participation in society. This fact leads us to reflect on new strategies for teaching English in Basic Education, taking as a starting point the social function of the school and school contents in human development.

The aim of this study is to analyze the contributions of English language teaching to omnilateral¹ human formation, from the perspective of historical-critical pedagogy. For the development of the work, we held debates around the teaching of English in Brazilian education, taking as theoretical support the concepts of school education and human formation supported by historical-critical pedagogy. In view of the key concepts for understanding the social role of the school, the teacher and the school contents in the formation of individuals, we propose some ways to plan the English language for a class in the early years of elementary school.

BNCC AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

The perspective of teaching English as an instrument for adapting subjects to the labor market gained strength with educational proposals aimed at developing skills (Cardozo, 2019). Such a conception, very present in national educational policies and in international guidelines of multilateral organisms, as an ultimate goal, defends a human formation adaptive to the needs dictated by capitalist social relations. As an example, the World Bank (World Bank, 2011), when analyzing the deficiencies in the formation of workers in the face of constant changes in society, indicates the need for reforms in educational systems to meet the international quality standards that schools and curricula must have.

The World Bank weaves justifications that guide the conception of education:

We are living in a period of extraordinary change. The impressive growth of middle-income countries, led by China, India and Brazil, has intensified the desire of many nations to increase their competitiveness by developing more skilled workforces. Technological advances are changing professional profiles and qualifications, while offering possibilities for accelerated learning. Persistent high levels of unemployment, especially among young people, have highlighted the failure of education systems to prepare young people with the right skills for the job market and have fueled calls for more opportunities and responsibilities (World Bank, 2011, p. v, our translation).

The principle of competitiveness for the labor market is based on the defense of “learning for all”. In addition, concepts such as quality, competences, skills and external evaluation (on a large scale) are constantly articulated and are increasingly present in educational reforms in Brazil, as is the case of the elaboration and approval of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC).

The BNCC, approved in 2017 and 2018, is a guiding document for the curricula of teaching networks and pedagogical proposals in public and private schools across the country (Brasil, 2017a). The proposal outlines knowledge, skills and abilities that must be developed in the different stages and modalities of Basic Education.

Among the areas that make up the BNCC, that of Languages considers multiple languages – verbal (oral or visual-motor and written), body, visual, sound and digital – as forms of expression and participation of individuals in society (Brasil, 2017a). In this area, the English language is inserted as one of the formative dimensions of individuals, combining both pedagogical and political issues, from the perspective of citizenship.

According to the BNCC, the constant social changes and the accelerated growth of globalization processes, in a context of political, economic and cultural interdependence between countries, are the starting point for the justification of language teaching in Basic Education:

¹ Omnilaterality considers the formation of subjects under different aspects, that is, it starts from the principle of overcoming the unilaterality of the training processes. On this perspective, see Gramsci (2010).

Learning the English language enables the creation of new forms of engagement and participation by students in an increasingly globalized and plural social world, in which the borders between countries and personal, local, regional, national and transnational interests are increasingly blurred and contradictory (Brasil, 2017a, p. 241, our translation).

At BNCC, the teaching of the English language is linked to the view of English as a *lingua franca*. This implies a broader understanding of territoriality, diversity and cultural identity. In this proposition, two other important considerations are intertwined in the document for the teaching of English: the expanded view of multiliteracies, seen as social practices, including digital media; and the reorganization of teaching approaches by teachers, with the intention of valuing the different forms of language expression, welcoming diversity (Brasil, 2017a).

The discourse of diversity and autonomy is associated with a process of competence development; the themes are recurrent in the pragmatic perspectives in the educational field. According to the BNCC, “[...] the treatment of English as a *lingua franca* imposes challenges and new priorities for teaching, among which the densification of reflections on the relations between language, identity and culture, and the development of intercultural competence” (Brasil, 2017a, p. 245, our translation). Along with the idea that English is a *lingua franca* and currently universal, mistakenly, is also the notion that the English language is natural, neutral and beneficial in its essence (Pennycook, 2017).

For Pennycook (2017), these characteristics are attempts at an apolitical representation of the universalization of English. However, for the author, all education is political. Although autonomy, diversity, interculturality and identity are relevant concepts in more critical reflections regarding active participation and the appreciation of subjects in social relations, the predominant characteristic in neoliberal ideology is the responsibility of the individual for his own learning. This corroborates the concepts of the World Bank, by encouraging the implementation of strategies that aim to “[...] promote accountability and improve results” (World Bank, 2011, p. 7, our translation).

Contrary to this conception, Pennycook (2017, p. 301, our translation), on the teaching of the English language in the world, postulates:

Whether people themselves are still interested in studying English or are compelled to do so by an education system, an approach to teaching that takes into account both the history of language imposition and the current conditions and implications of that expansion, certainly has much more to offer to its students than a teaching approach that claims that learning English is a natural, neutral and beneficial process.

The perspective that permeates the BNCC guidelines and that adopts the guidelines for the reforms of educational systems developed by international organizations is the pedagogy of competences (Lavoura & Ramos, 2020). The pedagogy of competences is on the list of pedagogies founded on pragmatism and is strongly inserted in the educational policies that guide school education in our country. This positioning brings the school closer to training based on the concepts of employability and workability. This has been widespread in Basic Education since Early Childhood Education, as investing in children's education, from an early age, benefits the productivity and qualification goals to be achieved. This is a strategy defended by the World Bank itself (World Bank, 2011).

According to Ramos (2002), the idea of competence-based formation is linked to a process of depoliticization and individualization of social relations. This means that, even if the collectivity continues to exist (since we live in society), the bases for human relations are in the precepts of

individuality, to the detriment of the collective and technical formation, as opposed to political formation.²

The consequences of this training affect the understanding of the importance of learning the English language in Basic Education. Since, when we reduce the justifications to the needs of the job market or the adaptation of students to the globalized world, taking as natural the relations of cultural domination seen in everyday life, we do not make possible the appropriation of relevant content for critical participation in different social contexts.

The critical awareness about the role of English language teaching in Basic Education permeates the training and work of the teacher himself who, oblivious to the debate and uncertain of his educational principles, can reproduce alienating teaching and learning situations. In a survey carried out exclusively for the British Council on the teaching of English in Brazilian public education, the CDE Plan Research Institute released relevant data on pedagogical practices and the perception of English teachers about the language as a curricular component in school education (British Council, 2015).

The study showed that, for teachers, the main difficulties regarding the teaching of English in public schools are: 1. The lack and inadequacy of teaching resources; 2. The devaluation of the area, both by students and by institution managers, who do not recognize the contributions of the curricular component to the education and reality of students; 3. Difficulties linked to teacher planning (lack of time, support and guidelines). The difficulties expressed by the teachers are added to the analysis of the teachers' own ideas about the contributions of language in the formation of students.

In general, according to the Institute, the answers were vague and varied, expressing a certain inconsistency and lack of conviction. Among the 1,269 teachers interviewed, from the five regions of the country, 28% affirm that the function of English is to make the student a citizen of the world; 20% say it is to expand the general culture; and 35% emphasize the role of language in providing tools for the job market or as a way to improve the curriculum. In view of the lack of a clearer definition as to the meaning of citizenship, of being a citizen, of the characterization of culture and of the objectives for its expansion in the research data, we agree with the researchers when they conclude that "There is no consensus among teachers about what role of the English language in students' lives" (British Council, 2015, p. 21, our translation).

Furthermore, the research reinforces that the educational field lacks broader and more systematic discussions about the importance of teaching English in Brazilian Basic Education, especially in public schools. However, even though the data are relevant for our reflections, the conclusions are, once again, based on the demands of the labor market: "Without a common sense, it is more difficult to plan actions that aim to expand access to quality education, especially in a context of internationalization of the Brazilian market" (British Council, 2015, p. 21, our translation).

The view of English language teachers, expressed by research conducted by the Plano CDE Research Institute (British Council, 2015), reinforces the conclusions of Cox and Assis-Peterson (2001) regarding the lack of critical and political awareness on the part of teachers at the area, allied to the lack of knowledge and mastery of a critical perspective of pedagogy itself, that is, of the possibilities of reflection and action in the field of teaching and learning. Criticality, for teachers, is restricted to self-assessment; the answers to the questions that revolve around the "why learn English?", so common among the students themselves, fall into superficial justifications or the choice to impose without even seeking adequate explanations (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 2001).

² This movement is clearly perceived in the attempts to empty the critical and politicized formation in Basic Education, through the defenses of the "school without political party" and the fading of areas of formation, such as Sociology, Philosophy and Literature, constant in the debates and educational policies in recent years. On this discussion, see Frigotto (2017) and Batista, Orso and Lucena (2019).

The research commissioned by the British Council, to a certain extent, supports national curriculum policies that outline objectives, strategies, competencies and skills for Basic Education. It even records the difficulty in standardizing and guaranteeing the quality of English language teaching without a single, common curriculum, which includes well-defined performance indicators, content and requirements for teacher training (considering that the BNCC had not yet been implemented) (British Council, 2015).

The curriculum based on the pedagogy of competences is not intended to further analyze or criticize social reality, with a view to its transformation, but ends up reducing knowledge to practical know-how for solving everyday problems. The teaching process focuses on methodologies. Scientific, artistic and philosophical contents, in their richest and most complex forms, are minimized. In other words:

Thus, in the pedagogy of competences, the teaching content is reduced to a resource or input for the development of competences, while the reference fields for the selection of content become everyday situations, life or work, instead of classical sciences. (Lavoura & Ramos, 2020, p. 57, our translation).

Regarding the methodologies adopted, Cox and Assis-Peterson (2001) assess that communicative teaching approaches a vision of competences, leaving aside the political-ideological aspects, as it is based on a constructivist educational perspective. That is, through a natural approach, it prioritizes the practical and immediate needs of the learner and “[...] presupposes the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the harmonious coexistence of differences” (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 2001, p. 18). At the same time, they argue that instrumental teaching “[...] it's just another trap. After all, nothing is more in line with these discourses than the pragmatism/immediacy of knowing how to read in English to consume information, technologies and so on” (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 2001, p. 19, our translation).

Notwithstanding the criticism of the teaching of merely adaptive English in Basic Education, Cox and Assis-Peterson (2001) defend the overcoming of reductionist classes, based on motivational and methodological issues or on teaching restricted to normative grammar. For the authors, English, as well as the other curricular components, makes up the movement of social, economic and political struggles. This context permeates, dialectically, the relationships that are established in all areas of educational work.

From this perspective, the student is not seen as a passive being of the hegemonic culture, but as a transforming agent of society. Likewise, the English language is valued as relevant and relevant content for the enrichment of individuality and human relationships. In view of this, we started to approach some fundamentals of historical-critical pedagogy that guide the teaching and learning process, highlighting its contributions to the teaching of the English language.

It is a distinct and antagonistic conception of what teaching contents are in the understanding of historical-critical pedagogy. Unlike the pedagogy of competences, the historical-critical pedagogy understands knowledge as mediations that enable human beings to apprehend reality for themselves, a consequence of the purpose of education (Lavoura & Ramos, 2020, p. 57, our translation).

We believe that, although there are legal guidelines and guidelines that need to be accepted by institutions and teachers, the debates about educational policies are not over: they are fruitful

and necessary for the counter-hegemonic movement. We need to find and fight for alternatives that advocate omnilateral human formation³, based on an emancipatory worldview.

HISTORICAL-CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE TEACHING OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The human being, when relating to other individuals and to nature, transforms the world around him and himself, producing human objectifications. Such objectifications come to constitute what we call humanity and have, in themselves, a historical character, as they re-signify ways of living and thinking about reality. Therefore, in the educational field, we consider the term “human formation” beyond individual existence, that is, there is a social need to form ourselves as human beings. This means that we need to create a second nature, through the appropriation of historical production that defines us as belonging to the human race (Saviani, 2013).

Educational work mediates between everyday life and more developed objectifications (Duarte et al., 2012), that is, between everyday life and the products of human work belonging to the culture historically accumulated in its most developed forms. This mediation starts from the need to raise awareness from the level of common sense to that of scientific, philosophical and artistic productions, as one of the essential conditions for critical reflection on the historical and social processes of production and reproduction of culture.

We emphasize scientific, artistic and philosophical knowledge as the richest and most developed objectifications, since they represent the highest degree of complexity of human products, including artistic and literary works, which, consequently, expands the potential for the formation of our individuality, as well as the potential of our relationships with the world.

The school is a privileged locus for the transmission and appropriation of this knowledge. It has the task of compiling, in the school curricula, the knowledge and essential activities for the formation of individuals. However, the teaching contents cannot be separated from the broader objectives for human formation. It is necessary to choose, critically and conscientiously, the necessary steps to guarantee a meaningful learning, which encourages us to assume a questioning posture in the face of reality. According to Saviani (2020, p. 30, our translation):

It is necessary to operate a turn of training towards a scientifically based culture that articulates, in a unified way, in a comprehensive complex, the human-natural sciences that are profoundly modifying the forms of life, passing them through the sieve of philosophical reflection and artistic and literary expression.

In the field of education, historical-critical pedagogy paves the way for the construction of a theoretical-methodological path based on the principles and arguments that we have seen so far. It is in defense of quality education, committed to the working class, to overcoming social inequalities and, above all, to the socialization of essential knowledge for an emancipatory human formation, marked by a concern with omnilaterality in formative processes.

A didactics based on historical-critical pedagogy must have, as a guideline, the intentionality:

Hence the didactic importance of planning, the proper use of directive teaching methodologies and the correct selection of forms of evaluation. In this sense, the intention is focused on teaching, producing a reason to learn. If we are not careful with the understanding we give to intentionality, we can fall into the easy speech of blaming the student, as one who does not

³ Based on the principle of omnilaterality, Gramsci (2010) proposes a “unitary school”, in which a more general, humanist culture is developed, which encompasses formation for manual work and skills for intellectual work..

learn because he is not interested, motivated, who does not have the desire to learn (Galvão et al., 2019, p. 95, our translation).

Thus, the educational act must be intentional and awaken new learning needs in the student. The role of the teacher is essential, as he mediates knowledge to the student. He is much more than a facilitator: he is responsible for creating conscious learning situations, outlining objectives and listing the fundamental means for the appropriation of previously defined contents.

Based on these premises, we believe that the teaching of English, in conjunction with the other curricular components, can contribute to a transformative school education. Thus, we highlight the content-form-recipient relationship as one of the central points for the elaboration of proposals for teaching English from the historical-critical pedagogy. Dialectically considering these three elements leads us to move beyond the spontaneity and immediacy seen in current educational proposals, which are guided by survival and not by the full formation of the individual.

In order to achieve this overcoming movement, historical-critical pedagogy adopts three fundamental principles:

- a) Identification of the developed forms in which objective knowledge produced historically is expressed, recognizing the conditions of its production and understanding its main manifestations as well as the current trends of transformation; b) Conversion of objective knowledge into school knowledge in order to make it assimilable by students in school space and time; c) Providing the necessary means for students not only to assimilate objective knowledge as a result, but to apprehend the process of its production as well as the trends of its transformation (Saviani, 2013, p. 8-9, our translation).

It is up to the teacher to master and be aware of the educational purposes that guide the pedagogical work, in line with the forms of selection and organization of teaching (content-form relationship) and with the objective conditions of reality and the development of students (recipient) (Galvão et al., 2019).

The transmission of knowledge through its systematized teaching in school education allows individuals to know and understand reality, in order to satisfy their needs. According to Martins (2011), this premise has, as a principle, the apprehension of objective knowledge about the world: "Thus, intelligibility about the phenomena of reality is an achievement of the historical development of human activity and, therefore, a condition for subjects to be inserted in it" (Martins, 2011, p. 45, our translation).

Likewise, historical-critical pedagogy proposes to the teacher the task of mediating the classic knowledge developed by humanity, which are the richest objectifications ever thought of by human beings in the field of non-material production. School knowledge, therefore, needs to start from science, art and philosophy to promote the appropriation of human objectifications that constitute the individuality of each subject, towards the formation of individuality. This enables the construction of a conception of the world that goes beyond appearances and seeks the essence of reality, that is, an emancipatory conception of the world.

POSSIBILITIES FOR TEACHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE EARLY YEARS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As we discussed, the teaching of the English language is still linked to a perspective of formation for the development of skills and meeting the demands of the job market. In addition, we present research that demonstrates that there is a lack of perception of teachers themselves regarding other teaching and learning scenarios, which overcome adaptive, reductionist and immediatist views of teaching. In view of this, we bring some possibilities for teaching English to

students in the 2nd year of elementary school, based on the principles of historical-critical pedagogy.

Our work is not intended to limit a sequence or instruction to teacher planning. On the contrary, we emphasize the need to consider the concrete student and the objective conditions in which teaching and learning must take place. Thus, our proposition lacks a more organic relationship with the school, with the class and with the real students. Our purpose is to encourage new and more teachers to reflect and elaborate teaching proposals articulated with the educational purposes of the school, as a place of transmission and appropriation of classic knowledge, relevant for social and individual development in its maximum potential. We list three points to consider in the analysis of the proposal to be published.

The first is the specificity of the child, his needs and his characteristics as an individual who learns and wants to learn what the world is like and the different ways of acting in it. According to Chaguri and Tonelli (2014), pedagogical work with the English language in the early years of elementary school needs to recognize the role of playfulness for children's learning, given that playing favors diverse significant experiences for human development. Teaching, therefore, linked to games and playfulness, enhances the educational process and stimulates development.

Another point is the mastery of knowledge by the teacher. For Lima (2008), it is essential that the teacher, to teach English in Basic Education, keep in mind the child and the ways in which he learns and develops. In other words, it is not enough for the teacher to master the language – it is essential to know the student and the different ways of teaching. In addition, offering situations of social interaction, providing rich and contextualized vocabularies and knowledge, helping children to understand the objectives of the English language in their education and provoking new interests and reasons for student learning through playing are some of the guiding objectives of teaching work in English language teaching in elementary school.

The third point concerns the importance of the principle of the spiral curriculum in the teaching of the English language, which is “[...] the resumption and expansion of content at different stages of schooling” (Guia... 2013, p. 12, our translation). Through the spiral view of the curriculum, students and teachers overcome a linear and fragmented formation, as the contents can (and should) be reviewed in a dialogic and interdependent way throughout the schooling process (Guia... 2013). This principle, far from being a model or a planning recipe to be followed, needs to be understood as part of the teacher's pedagogical praxis. An exercise that constitutes the dialectic of relationships and propositions to be built throughout the teaching and learning process.

Thinking about a spiral curriculum means that the scientific, artistic and philosophical concepts that constitute the school's pedagogical proposal are present in a dynamic way and at different moments in the student's education. That is, the same content is not seen only once; constitutes a list of knowledge to be continually revisited. The contents must have meaning and meaning and provoke new problematizations, relationships and levels of deepening.

This means that, at the same time that the contents are requested, they gain new contours and challenges, adapting to the needs and development of students. Which implies the constitution of a *habitus* around what is learned.

Acquiring a *habitus* means creating an irreversible situation. However, this requires insistence and persistence; it is necessary to repeat certain acts many times until they become fixed. It is therefore not by chance that the duration of primary schooling is set at least four years in all countries. This indicates that this time is the bare minimum. One can manage to decipher the writing, to recognize the codes in a year, just as with some practical lessons it will be possible to drive a car. But in the same way that the interruption, the abandonment of the steering wheel before the learning is completed, will determine a reversal, so it is with the learning to read. Conversely, once the process is completed, the *habitus* is acquired, second nature is reached,

the interruption of the activity, even for a long time, does not lead to reversal (Saviani, 2015, p. 292, our translation).

Therefore, the teacher needs, in addition to providing the recognition of the contents in a given year and taking care of its continuity during the other years, so that they are fixed and deepened, with new reflections. This perspective is based on the dialectical movement in pedagogical practice, that is, the feasibility of the teacher teaching something new and enriching previous learning, without excluding them (Saviani, 2015).

Next, we bring some contributions to the pedagogical planning of the English Language discipline for a 2nd year elementary school class, based on the perspective of historical-critical pedagogy. The choice for the group took place within the scope of the formative activities of the Mandatory Internship in English Language I, of the Teaching Degree in Letters Portuguese/English at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Pantanal Campus.

In view of the guidelines and regulations of the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBEN), Law 9,394 of 20 December 1996 (Brasil, 1996) and Resolution CNE/CP No. 2, of 22 December 2017 (Brasil, 2017b), which institutes and guides the implementation of the National Common Curricular Base within the scope of all Basic Education, we take the Curriculum of Mato Grosso do Sul (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2019) as a reference, as it is the guiding document for schools in our region, in compliance with current legislation.

We selected, as a starting point for the development of the contents of the English language, one of the works of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), a Dutch painter recognized throughout the world. Art is characterized by reflection and understanding of reality: as a product of human work, it assumes different forms of expression and communication. In addition, we consider the school's fundamental role to favor access to works of art that promote the enrichment of students' relationships and experiences at all stages and modalities.

We consider it essential, during classes and teacher interventions, that communication be carried out in English, whenever possible. The teacher can communicate in both languages to encourage students and make use of repetition. Repetition, in this case, is essential for the process of memorization and appropriation of elements that constitute the daily life of classes and the students' vocabulary. Repetition and memory are not expendable aspects, but relevant resources for students' learning and development.

The proposal is based on suggestions of objectives, procedures and assessment for the teaching of the English language, taking as a reference 1) the axes: speaking, reading, writing, linguistic knowledge and intercultural dimension; 2) thematic units: discursive interaction, visual reading, writing strategies, grammar and the English language in the child's daily life; 3) the objects of knowledge: everyday vocabularies, language use, adjectives and the presence of the English language in everyday life. For the exposition of the proposal, we formulated Table 1, Proposal for the Teaching of English Language (2nd year of elementary school) and then we discuss some possible guidelines for methodological planning.

Frame 1 - Proposal for Teaching English (2nd year of elementary school)

Goals	Procedures	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop reflection and communication in English, through the aesthetic enjoyment of works of art; ● Mobilize and expand knowledge for communication and expression in English: daily routines (in my house, in my bedroom, in the morning, in the evening, when I wake up, when I go to bed), descriptions and adjectives (big, small, new, old), colors, objects (in my bedroom), feelings, greetings; ● Knowing artistic manifestations and their importance for the human being from one of Van Gogh's works: Room in Arles; ● Meet Van Gogh and one of his works; ● Mobilize already learned vocabularies; ● Express feelings and ideas from the appreciation of works of art; ● Describing Van Gogh's The Bedroom (1888); ● Identify everyday objects and actions from works of art; ● Communicate in English, expanding the use of expressions and phrases to describe everyday actions and scenes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appreciation and analysis of artwork; ● Presentation of the artist's biography; ● Research and visits to interactive websites; ● Appreciation and discussion of videos; ● Letter reading; ● Audio Appreciation and Interpretation; ● Adaptation of the artwork; ● Games and play; ● Body expression activities; ● Text production; ● Artistic production ● Exhibition organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize and use words and expressions already worked on; ● Express senses and meanings from the works; ● Relate the works to the elements of their daily lives; ● Understand and execute oral commands; ● Understand and use everyday school expressions and concepts in their interactions with the teacher and peers (Examples: Teacher. Yes. No. Good morning/afternoon. Bye, bye. Thank you. Please. May I come in?); ● Mobilize new vocabularies in carrying out activities; ● Express senses and meanings from the works of colleagues, with greater depth and autonomy; ● Relate the works to the developed contents; ● Introduce yourself to the class, using the vocabulary learned.

Source: Devised by the authors

SUGGESTIONS FOR METHODOLOGICAL REFERRALS

In view of the English language teaching proposal, we elaborated some suggestions for methodological referrals. Such suggestions can be explored and adapted according to the teaching and learning needs, considering the school reality and the students' development.

1. Initially, the teacher has copies of one of the paintings from Van Gogh's The Bedroom (1888) series in the room, so that the children can freely appreciate them. It is a moment of individual observation and expression about what they can see, perceive and feel. To lead the reflection, the teacher asks questions that challenge and stimulate the students, such as:

- a. What do you see?
 - b. What do the paintings represent?
 - c. Which one do you like the most? Why?
 - d. How do you say this (to point something) in English?
 - e. Do you think that the paintings are famous or not? Why?
 - f. Who do you think the painter is, a woman, a man, a child, a young or an old person?
2. Presentation of the artist: After the students' observation and expression of their first impressions, the teacher introduces the artist, telling some details of his life and the selected work (title and meaning) (Camargo, 2020; Beltrão, 2014). One of the objectives is to arouse curiosity in students about the artists' intentions, people's perceptions of works of art and the actuality of the works. In other words, getting to know the artist in addition to biographical data, to understand his current relevance as a classic.
3. 3. Knowing Van Gogh: The teacher exposes some works and curiosities about the history of Van Gogh through videos, research and visits to interactive websites.
- a. The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam offers a series of five videos for children: StoryZoo at the Van Gogh Museum – Episodes in English⁴. The videos explore the main works and characteristics of the artist's work. For this work we indicate, in particular, episodes 1 and 4. The presentation of the videos takes place in phases: visualization and debate on the theme in general; exhibition with pauses to explain the contents to be explored by the teacher and clear up doubts; new visualization for students' synthesis and enjoyment.
 - b. There is other information and works on the Van Gogh Museum website (Van Gogh Museum, 2021), taking a virtual tour and accessing the available links and activities⁵.
 - c. Suggestions for other site searches and activities:
 - i. Quarto em Arles em 3D: GALLIANO, Giuseppe. **Van Gogh 3d** - Camera Van Gogh Arles 3d - Van Gogh 3d - bedroom 3d. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVXGzCtDHXQ>. Access: 16 Nov. 2021.
 - ii. 3D exhibition: ONG, Jeff. **Van Gogh Alive Wellington Exhibition**. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-ij1d8Lvbo>. Access: 16 Nov. 2021.
 - iii. ALVAREZ, Silvio. **Arte para Crianças: Quarto em Arles de Van Gogh**. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p6-4-Edo3I>. Access: 16 Nov. 2021.
4. Dialogue and artistic appreciation: After the first appreciation and conversation about the artist and his works, the teacher and the children observe in detail the painting Room in Arles (The Bedroom), identifying some specific characteristics, relating them to the videos and research. This includes encouraging the use of familiar vocabularies and the introduction of new ones:
- a. What is being portrayed in the work? *Is it a bedroom? There are some objects/furniture that are used in a bedroom: bed, chair, table, towel, mirror, window, paintings/photographs, doors, clothes.*
 - b. How is the room? Tidy? Big? Beautiful? (*tidy/messy; big/small; beautiful/ugly*).
 - c. Which colors did the artist use? (*yellow, green, grey, brown, red, dark blue etc.*)
 - d. Are the colors light or dark? (*light/dark*)
 - e. What do the colors in the painting make us feel? (*I feel happy, sad, nervous, anxious*).
 - f. If you slept in this room, what would you change? Why?
 - g. What in this room is the same as yours? Free answers.

⁴ Videos available at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp9bGKxyieV0nWOC29Y7g5y1o-r2O9h5p> Access: 16 Nov. 2021.

⁵ Various activities on the Van Gogh Museum website available at: <https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/visit/enjoy-the-museum-from-home>. Access: 16 Nov. 2021.

h. What in this room is different from yours? Free answers.

Note: The dialogues are led by the teacher in order to encourage the use of vocabulary already learned by the class and give everyone the opportunity to participate.

5. Reading: In a letter sent to his brother, Van Gogh talks about painting his room, expressing intentions, feelings and characteristics of space (Van Gogh, 2021). The teacher reads the letter with the students, highlighting feelings and characteristics of the room portrayed. The reading takes place in three moments: initial reading for general identification of the theme; collective reading to highlight and debate the content to be explored; new reading, for the relationship between the elements of the letter and the work studied.
6. Audio and Painting: After reading the letter, the teacher highlights the passage that describes the room and makes the audio⁶ available in English. After listening to and talking to the teacher about the references of the colors and objects mentioned in the excerpt, the students create and paint a drawing, portraying their own version of Van Gogh's work, following the artist's descriptions and observations of the work. To understand the text, students identify already known words and the teacher points out (or translates) any new words on the board.

The walls are of a pale violet. The floor — is of red tiles. The bedstead and the chairs are fresh butter yellow. The sheet and the pillows very bright lemon green. The bedspread scarlet red. The window green. The dressing table orange, the basin blue. The doors lilac (Van Gogh, 2021, s/p).

7. Individual statues: The class is spread across the space: the room itself or the schoolyard. The teacher shows an image of a Van Gogh artwork and points to one of the objects, repeating its name in English. Students portray the image in the form of a statue, using the whole body. Examples: *a chair, a bedroom, a towel, a hat, pants, a mirror, an open window, a closed window, a woman's photograph, a pillow.*
8. Statues in trios or pairs: From the previous activity, students are challenged to physically represent the objects in small groups, in a collaborative way. For example: each duo/trio portrays: *one shirt, one chair, a window, two pillows etc.*
9. Statue challenge in groups: The teacher proposes a challenge by dividing the class into three or four groups. At a given time, each group recreates the scene of the work, using their own bodies. All members need to compose the scene of the painting, for the other groups to appreciate, as a great living work of art. The teacher can help, indicating some elements to be represented by the students in small groups (2 or 3 people form a chair, one person stands as the hanging towel, three people form the bed, for example). At the end of each group's activity, the teacher asks the others to present the work, pointing out the constant elements and those that were missing. In this way, students have the opportunity to express the vocabulary learned.
10. The teacher asks the class to list all the objects whose meaning they have learned by writing them on the board.
 - a. From the words learned, the teacher develops games such as: memory game, word bingo, word search, hangman, etc.
11. Resuming the work: The class is invited to take a look at the work again.
 - a. To what purpose people use the objects we identify in Van Gogh's work? Examples: *The bed to sleep; the chair to seat; the mirror to look at oneself; the table to study, to put something on, to eat; the towel to get dry; the window to look at the garden.*

⁶ Audio available at: <https://unravel.vangogh.com/en/story/37/the-colour-has-to-do-the-job-here>. Access: 16 Nov. 2021.

- b. How is our day to day when we wake up? What do we do and what expressions do we use? Shall we imagine and describe one of our days?
 - i. *We wake up and open our eyes. We get up from the bed and open the window.*
 - ii. *We brush our teeth, change our clothes and make the bed.*
 - iii. *We say "good morning" to our family and ask if they slept well.*
 - iv. *We have breakfast and go to school/watch TV/do the homework.*
 - v. *We have lunch and go to school/watch TV/do the homework/play with friends/study.*
 - vi. *We take a shower and have dinner.*
 - vii. *We brush our teeth, put on our pajamas and say "good night".*
 - viii. *We go to bed, read a book and fall asleep.*
12. When verbalizing everyday actions, the teacher asks the class to repeat the expressions and make gestures that help them to understand their meaning, working on the memory associated with body language. For example: *Take a shower*: fazer o gesto de lavar o corpo.
13. Mimicry game: The teacher divides the class into two groups and has pieces of paper or cards with images and the writing of everyday expressions and actions worked on in a box. Alternately, one member of each group draws a card and mimes the corresponding expression/action. Your group must guess, saying in English, at the given time, what is being demonstrated.
14. Resumption of the work with new perspectives and reflections. Based on the new learnings, students are challenged to think of new elements about the work, characteristics that are not necessarily explicit. Students can imagine different answers.
 - a. Who will sleep in this room? *A child, a boy, a girl, a woman, a man, an old person, a young person.*
 - b. What is this person like? *Happy, sad, lonely. He/she studies/works. He/she misses his/her family.*
 - c. Who does she/he live with? *Family, alone, mother, father, sister, grandmother.*
 - d. Does this person have a home? Or is her room all she has?
 - e. Where will the room be? *In a house, castle, hotel, apartment?*
15. The teacher presents the three versions of the work *The Bedroom* painted by Van Gogh⁷ and analyzes, with the students, the differences perceived/felt in the works: textures, colors, feelings they provoke and characteristics of objects/space.
 - a. Are the paintings the same?
 - b. Is it the same room in each of them?
 - c. What are the differences?
 - d. What are the similarities?
 - e. Which one did you like best? Why?
 - f. Why did the painter paint the same room three times?
 - g. Do you have a special place that you really like? Which one?

Note: Even if students do not answer completely in English, the teacher can ask and encourage the use and repetition of vocabulary learned throughout the lessons.

16. Little artists: The teacher provides each student with a sheet and materials for painting (crayons, colored pencils, paint), so that they can create a painting of their own place, a place that has a special meaning (a room with your house, someone's house, school, a park, a favorite corner, etc.).
 - a. During the activity, the teacher develops dialogues for the resumption of content already studied and deepens, inserting new relationships. Examples: Primary and

⁷ For information and images of the paintings, see Beltrão (2014).

secondary colors; the choice of colors and their relationship with sensations and feelings; different objects in that place; people who frequent the space and its characteristics; activities of interest that take place in that space; feelings and emotions.

17. School art exhibition:

- a. Students organize an art gallery in the classroom with their paintings.
- b. Children are invited to appreciate the work of each of their peers.
- c. During the exhibition and appreciation of the paintings, the class interacts, expressing what they feel. For this, the teacher encourages students with questions, calling attention to the details of the paintings:
 - i. What is being portrayed in the work? (Examples: *It's a room, a bedroom, a park, etc.*)
 - ii. Where is this place?
 - iii. What can be done there? (Examples: *We can eat, read, play, sleep, ride a bike etc.*).
 - iv. What objects or elements do we see in the paintings? (Examples: *There is a ball, there are some flowers, there is a person, I can see a dog.*)
 - v. What colors did the colleague use? (Examples: *Red, blue, purple, orange, black etc.*).
 - vi. What do colors make us feel? (Examples: *I feel happy, sad, nervous etc.*).

18. Presentation:

- a. Children/artists will be invited to present their painting to the class, mobilizing knowledge already learned in English. Example: *My painting is about my bedroom, there is a bed, a doll etc. I sleep alone/with my sister.*
- b. The teacher helps the students, asking questions and remembering the contents worked in the classes about painting and the child's routine in that place (what do you like to do/play in this space, what are these objects, what are they used for), in addition to help identify new vocabularies and expressions. Key words, phrases and opening phrases can be on the board to help the class.

19. After the presentations, the teacher guides the students to write a short paragraph telling about their painting, to be displayed next to it at school or in the classroom. The painting summary is prepared in class and corrected by the teacher. Afterwards, the students make a card with their text, indicating the inspiration of the work, and organize an exhibition.

20. From the work carried out, the teacher proposes a dialogue about the different spaces in the life of each one and their importance. Some reflections on individual preferences and social rights to housing and well-being, for example, may be linked to the debate and give new directions for future interventions. The teacher can even indicate new artistic and/or literary manifestations as a way of articulating knowledge and promoting transtextuality.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this work was to analyze the contributions of English language teaching to omnilateral human formation, from the perspective of historical-critical pedagogy. Therefore, we question some of the guidelines for teaching English in school education. We take as a reference the principles of an emancipatory education, which promotes the overcoming of the alienation present in the daily life of society and in reductionist pedagogical practices, based on the pedagogy of competences. Finally, we elaborated some didactic propositions for the teaching of English in a class of the second year of elementary school, considering knowledge of art, science and philosophy as a starting point.

The evaluation must consider the objectives and contents developed in the classes. In addition, the teacher must identify the prior knowledge of the class, to understand and reflect on their advances and potential in the teaching and learning process. We understand that evaluation is part of every pedagogical conception of the teacher and must be articulated with the intended formation perspective (Marques & Santos, 2020). In other words, in our proposal, the evaluation assumes a formative character, and not a selective or classifying one.

By listing issues related to English language teaching policies and proposals in school education, we hope to contribute to the organization of a much broader and more significant movement, which goes beyond the lines of this article. May the elaboration of this work lead us to rethink the teaching of English, but also to dialogue collectively in different educational spaces and contexts.

Our considerations and proposals had, as a background, the defense of an education that prioritizes the human in school formation. An education that, attentive to intentions (explicit or not), becomes critical and aware of its objectives and principles. We do not assume the task of articulating pedagogical steps or models or recipes. We are available to articulate ideas that contribute to the consolidation of a coherent, emancipatory and undoubtedly feasible pedagogical proposal.

Thinking about teaching English in the early years of Elementary School provokes us to analyze numerous positions, choices, objectives, which involve “what”, “why”, “for whom”, “for what” and “how” we teach. At the same time, learning is also part of this reflection, as teaching takes place in the other who learns and who needs this learning. May our efforts bring new elements to the inseparable relationship between theory and practice, in a continuous, growing and spiral cycle, of a constant and necessary coming and going.

Although many objective conditions, such as educational policies, which involve curricula, guidelines, assessments, etc., seem immutable, finished, inflexible, we can (and need) to strengthen the counter-hegemonic struggle for a more humane and just society. From Child Education, whether in English, Portuguese, Arts or Mathematics classes, for example, our priority should be education. But not just any education. An education that does not accept anything less than the best and richest knowledge possible for our students. An education that transforms subjectivities and reality itself.

Authors' Contributions: Marques, H. J.: conception and design, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting the article, critical review of important intellectual content; Baruki-Fonseca, R.: conception and design, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting the article, critical review of important intellectual content. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Ethics Approval: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: Not applicable.

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Received: 11 may 2022 | **Accepted:** 13 July 2022 | **Published:** 10 August 2022



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