



## TEACHING AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN TEACHING A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE - ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

The teaching of foreign languages in the global context, and also in the Brazilian context, is an ancient practice that was outlined as if the structure of societies. Throughout the history of language teaching have emerged many approaches, methods and teaching techniques in order to develop student mastery of a new language. Every historical moment, the teaching of a foreign language had a goal that led to the development of approaches that might meet the best that goal. So, we come up to the current scenario with various approaches still in use, although not always this approach meets the current educational assumptions. But for a better understanding of how has set the didactic and pedagogical practices of foreign language teaching, it is necessary to first understand what happens to be the language and the language, two concepts that have developed in parallel and are often mistakenly used interchangeably, since both are focused on communication and interaction among human beings, aiming to impart knowledge and ownership of greater cultural diversity. Throughout the study presented here, it was found that the first methods and approaches are also used, alone or together, stand out: the method of the traditional approach, the direct approach or direct method, the US Army Approach Method ALM and the Communicative Approach. Each of them received advocates and critics due to the fact they have different focuses when very refer the question of teaching (methods and techniques) and, mostly, for ignoring the student as an active subject in the teaching-learning process. The criticisms of a particular approach favored the emergence of new approaches. In Brazil, the teaching of foreign languages does not have the value it should have, because foreign languages are still seen as complementary disciplines and not as essential, even recognizing the LDB and PCNs that the student needs to take ownership of a second language to broaden their culture and their communication skills. One of the important points to consider when it comes to foreign language teaching is the issue of teacher education that, as verified, must be able to master the language that will teach, in addition to knowledge and mastery over the teaching and teaching and learning processes to be able to develop the skills and language skills of the student. It is considered therefore that in addition to laws, guidelines and parameters that define how it should be the teaching of foreign languages, it is necessary to continuously form the teacher so that it can act as a mediator in the process of teaching foreign language learning and contribute for positive student education in acquiring a language.

**Keywords:** Foreign Languages. Approach. Education. Learning. Teacher.

## INTRODUCTION

In education, quality is manifested in the availability of theoretical instruments and subjects that enable the production of a better quality of life. It therefore requires the implementation of a pedagogical proposal in which teachers, employees and the community become subjects of their development, builders of their history and who are capable of realizing utopias and proposing the realization of many others, including with regard to the mastery of the mother tongue and others that increase the knowledge and culture of human beings.

The different pedagogical trends remain present in the process of educational development. Education has always been part of the intellectual and practical considerations of many thinkers, cultivating a pedagogical utopia that is not in line with the good development of the school's function, making it elitist and not very accessible to everyone, and is therefore often a privilege of higher classes.

As time has developed, there has been a lot of talk and talk about transforming the school, so that it becomes effective. Many trends, approaches and methodologies have emerged, each with advantages and disadvantages, all seeking to contribute to the search for a school practice that would make the education system an efficient system.

In this sense, some questions must be asked in order to address the theme of this study, among which the following stand out: for an action-reflection-action of teaching practice, is it necessary to have knowledge of what to teach? Who to teach? And how to teach? To have a teaching practice that achieves good results, will it only be through reflection on practice?

Teaching is constantly changing, which is why it is necessary to reflect on some practices used in schools from ancient times to the present. The teacher has in his daily work some aspects that must be taken into consideration, such as the objectives to be achieved and how they will be achieved. Teaching practice is part of a broader

social reality and must be understood in order to be adequately situated within it and correspond to the training needs of people that this reality demands.

As a globalizing society is guided by the construction of knowledge and continuous change, the perspectives of educational needs change, especially when the knowledge to be learned concerns foreign languages.

Based on this observation, it is necessary to understand the scenarios and visualize the challenges that students will face when leaving school, in order to organize a meaningful teaching process, counting on participation at all levels, especially in teaching activities.

Given this need, the study presented here seeks to discuss the history of teaching foreign languages, its main methodological approaches and how the teaching and learning of these languages have been developed in the Brazilian educational context, focusing on theoretical and practical aspects of foreign languages in school curricula.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ITS METHODS

The teaching of foreign languages has a historical context that follows the history of humanity, since from the time when human beings began to associate themselves in groups, there has been a need for communication between the various tribes, using language as a communication resource. Since their beginnings, human societies already had languages specific to their tribes and encounters between tribes required knowledge of different languages for communication to take place.

With the conquest of a certain territory by a dominant tribe, coexistence had to be established through verbal communication, which required the teaching and learning of languages spoken by the dominant and their dominated.

The need to know new languages for communication purposes was manifested with

the evolution of society and, based on this need, ways of teaching them in a satisfactory way were developed. Consequently, several additional language teaching methods, in addition to those already conventionally adopted for teaching the mother tongue.

The teaching and learning of secondary languages as professional education has had several historical moments, as Pedreiro (2013, p. 2) describes:

Há milhares de anos – cerca de cinco mil anos – já existia o ensino profissional para a aprendizagem das línguas. Primeiramente, ensinava-se uma língua dentro de sua própria civilização, passava-se conhecimento de geração em geração. Logo esse ensino passou a ser, também, o de uma língua estrangeira, em virtude da conquista de povos falantes de outras línguas, da comercialização de mercadorias, entre outras razões.

This need to learn a language other than the mother tongue has always been present among human beings due to the need to communicate with others to guarantee the survival of the species and, later, as a way of gaining wealth and power over other societies. In this sense, Boas, Vieira and Costa (2015, p. 1) recall that:

Aprender outros idiomas e outras culturas foi e sempre será uma necessidade imperativa em todas as épocas para a maioria dos seres humanos, pois as civilizações se formam a partir do contato entre povos de línguas diferentes e dependem diretamente desta interação para continuar existindo e seguir avançando.

After the period of great territorial expansion, the need for knowledge of other languages continued to occur, this time motivated by the expansion of commercial relations between people and became even more relevant in contemporary society, reinforced by the process of globalization. and individuals' search for a lower occupation in the current competitive job market.

## THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BRAZIL

The teaching of foreign languages in Brazil began with the arrival of the Portuguese in the Brazilian lands that constituted the new colony of Portugal. The Portuguese language was taught informally by Jesuit priests, becoming the first foreign language to be taught in the Colony, as the Tupi language already predominated there, spoken by the indigenous natives who inhabited the new Colony. However, after the expulsion of the Jesuits, the Portuguese language was established as the official language of the Colony and the use of the Tupi language as a mother tongue was abolished.

Since then and during the first centuries of the history of Brazilian formal education, the teaching of foreign languages consisted of offering Latin and Greek grammar classes and, in military schools, the French language was also taught. The teaching of the English language only became part of formal Brazilian education with the arrival of the Royal Family to the Colony, when French also became part of formal education and not just within military schools.

However, with the proclamation of the Republic, the English language became optional in Brazilian school curricula, becoming mandatory again at the end of the 19th century, but only in some grades.

During the government of Getúlio Vargas (1882-1954), the teaching of foreign languages (Latin, French and English) was mandatory in the former junior high school and in high school the French and English languages were mandatory, but Latin was replaced by the Spanish language. Throughout this period, the only didactic reference for language teaching in Brazil was the Spanish Manual developed by the Argentine naturalized Brazilian Idel Becker (1910 – 1994).

To meet these objectives, secondary education was structured into two cycles: junior high (four years) and high school (three years), with the latter cycle enabling training marked

for science (scientific course) and intellectual training ( classic), developed in different courses. Within this new structure, the teaching of foreign languages began to be oriented towards promoting the teaching of classical and modern languages, highlighting that:

No ginásio incluíram-se como disciplinas obrigatórias, o latim, o francês e o inglês (as duas primeiras com quatro e a última com três anos de aprendizado) e no colegial o francês, o inglês e o espanhol (o primeiro com um ano e os outros com dois anos), bem como o latim e o grego, ambos com três anos no curso clássico (MACHADO, CAMPOS e SAUNDERS, 2007, p. 2).

This structuring of education in Brazil remained active until the mid-1960s when the Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB) was enacted, Law no. 4024 of December 20, 1961, and it determines that the teaching of foreign languages ceases to be an obligation, in high school, and it is up to the states to include or not foreign languages in the curricula of the last four grades of secondary school, as indicated in the text of the articles from the aforementioned LDB that deal with Secondary Education:

#### TÍTULO VII

Da Educação de Grau Médio

##### CAPÍTULO I

Do Ensino Médio

Art. 33. A educação de grau médio, em prosseguimento à ministrada na escola primária, destina-se à formação do adolescente.

Art. 34. O ensino médio será ministrado em dois ciclos, o ginasial e o colegial, e abrangerá, entre outros, os cursos secundários, técnicos e de formação de professores para o ensino primário e pré-primário.

Art. 35. Em cada ciclo haverá disciplinas e práticas educativas, obrigatórias e optativas.

§ 1º Ao Conselho Federal de Educação compete indicar, para todos os sistemas de ensino médio, até cinco disciplinas obrigatórias, cabendo aos conselhos estaduais de educação complementar o seu número e relacionar as de caráter optativo que podem ser adotados pelos estabelecimentos de ensino.

§ 2º O Conselho Federal e os conselhos estaduais, ao relacionarem as disciplinas obrigatórias, na forma do parágrafo anterior, definirão a amplitude e o desenvolvimento dos seus programas em cada ciclo.

(...)

Art. 40. Respeitadas as disposições desta lei, compete ao Conselho Federal de Educação, e aos conselhos estaduais de educação, respectivamente, dentro dos seus sistemas de ensino:

a) organizar a distribuição das disciplinas obrigatórias, fixadas para cada curso, dando especial relevo ao ensino do português;

b) permitir aos estabelecimentos de ensino escolher livremente até duas disciplinas optativas para integrarem o currículo de cada curso;

c) dar aos cursos que funcionarem à noite, a partir das 18 horas, estruturação própria, inclusive a fixação do número de dias de trabalho escolar efetivo, segundo as peculiaridades de cada curso.

(...)

#### CAPÍTULO II

Do Ensino Secundário

Art. 44. O ensino secundário admite variedade de currículos, segundo as matérias optativas que forem preferidas pelos estabelecimentos.

1º Ciclo ginasial terá duração de quatro séries anuais e o colegial, de três no mínimo.

2º Dentre as disciplinas e práticas educativas de caráter optativo no 1º e 2º ciclos, será incluída uma vocacional, dentro das necessidades e possibilidades locais.

Art. 45. No ciclo ginasial serão ministradas nove disciplinas.

Parágrafo único. Além das práticas educativas, não poderão ser ministradas menos de 5 nem mais de 7 disciplinas, das quais uma ou duas optativas, de livre escolha pelo estabelecimento, sendo no mínimo cinco e no máximo sete em cada série.

§ 1º A terceira série do ciclo colegial será organizada com currículo aspectos linguísticos, históricos e literários.

§ 2º A terceira série do ciclo colegial será organizada com currículo diversificado, que vise ao preparo dos alunos para os cursos superiores e compreenderá, no mínimo, quatro e, no máximo, seis disciplinas, podendo ser ministrado em colégios universitários.

It is observed that the aforementioned LDB does not focus on or value the teaching of foreign languages, which became optional, which represented a setback for students, even knowing the importance of knowing a second language for the socialization process and, mainly for students to enter the job market. After LDB 4024/61, LDB 5692/71 was promulgated, in which the teaching of foreign languages in the Brazilian educational system also remained in the same format as previous educational legislation.

Given these facts, Santos (2011, p. 1) argues that:

Desde o século XIX o sistema educacional brasileiro vem sendo submetido a sucessivas reformas nas quais o ensino da língua inglesa tem sido ora negligenciado, ora tratado indevidamente, chegando a ser, até mesmo excluído da grande curricular obrigatória pelas Leis de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDB) promulgadas em 1961 e 1971.

This situation was reversed in 1976, when Resolution 58/76 of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) decreed the mandatory teaching of foreign languages in high school. Brazil, in 1978, became a pioneer in the teaching of foreign languages with the holding of an event at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in opposition to the audiolingual method and which culminated in the dissemination of the communicative approach as the best didactic strategy for teaching foreign languages. Foreign languages to be used in Brazilian schools.

It should be noted, however, that the most significant milestone in the teaching of foreign languages in Brazil was LDB 9394/96, which made such teaching mandatory from the 5th grade of elementary school onwards, considering that the teaching of a foreign language is compulsory and constitutes is one of the components of basic education, understood as a right of all citizens and a duty to be guaranteed by the State.

## **PCNS and the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Brazil**

The elaboration and publication of the National Curricular Parameters for Elementary and Secondary Education represent a considerable advance in Brazilian educational policies in general and, in particular, with regard to the teaching of foreign languages as a way of promoting and valuing multiculturalism and diversity. PCNs approach language teaching and learning based on language policies against illiteracy and in favor of critical and conscious citizenship. Instead of constituting major objectives and pre-fixed curricular contents, these parameters, as the

name already indicates, constitute guidelines that will guide their minimum contents, in order to ensure a common basic training.

Given the regional, cultural and political diversity that exists in the country, the PCNS seek to parameterize national references for educational practices, seeking to encourage reflection on state and municipal curricula, already underway in several states and municipalities. The construction of specific curricula for Elementary and Secondary Education must be carried out by the educational bodies of states and municipalities and by the schools themselves, based on the reflection encouraged by these references, essentially based on the process of building citizenship.

The introductory text to the PCNs itself mentions four levels of implementation of these principles, which can be understood in four levels of didactic transposition of the parameters. The first level of implementation is precisely that of the dialogued construction of the parameters as references for other educational policy actions. The second is the dialogue that the PCNs will be able to establish with the proposals, documents and experiences already existing at this level. The third and fourth levels of implementation concern the development of each school's educational project and the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom.

In the case of Portuguese Language PCNs and other languages, organizing principles for language teaching content and criteria for sequencing this content are mentioned, as well as special didactic organizations, such as teaching projects and modules. The organization of content is distributed along two axes of language practices: practices of language use and practices of reflection on language and language.

The contents indicated for practices in the language use axis are eminently enunciative and involve aspects such as: the historicity of language and language; aspects of the context of production of utterances in reading/scrutinizing and production of oral and written texts; the implications of the production context in the organization of discourses and the implications of

the production context in the process of meaning.

With regard to the criteria for organizing curricular progressions, it is clear that: this last procedure is also necessary to determine the degree of complexity of the teaching-learning object; To determine the demands of the tasks involved in language use and analysis practices, we need a theoretical review of cognitive theories of language processing in production.

In this context, teacher training for the selection of teaching objectives is a challenge, a practice that has been replaced, in recent decades in Brazil, by the simple adoption of a textbook, which starts to dictate the teaching objectives and to configure the teaching-learning project. This implies training the teacher in a teaching-learning theory with a Vygotskian socio-historical basis, capable of leading him, on the one hand: to determine what the learning possibilities will be for each teaching object; and a reflection on learning needs, from a historical-cultural point of view.

These assumptions are in line with the concepts of teaching and learning defended by sociointeractionism, which has mediation as one of its most relevant approaches and which is directly associated with the symbolic relationship that is established between man and the world. Thus, Vygotsky distinguished two types of mediating elements: instruments and signs. Although there is an analogy between these two types of mediators, they have very different characteristics (COUTINHO, 1992). The relationship between learning and development remains, from a methodological point of view, obscure, exotic premises and solutions, theoretically vague, not critically valid and, sometimes, internally contradictory: this has obviously resulted in a series of errors.

A child's actual level of development defines functions that have already matured, that is, the final products of development. If a child can do such and such a thing independently, it means that the functions for such and such a thing have already matured in him. The zone of proximal development defines functions that have not

yet matured, but are in the process of maturing, functions that will mature, but are currently in an embryonic state.

Vygotsky's ideas, in the conception of Coutinho (1992), are very important for education as he says that the individual's development must be seen from the current moment with reference to what is happening in their trajectory, this constitutes the concept of proximal zone. Vygotsky also shows us the idea that the learning process drives the development process. The school, as a social agent, is responsible for the learning of children and young people, which is why it is essential in the psychological development of individuals.

Finally, he highlights the role of other members of the social group between culture and the individual. The intervention of mature people in children's learning and the role of the teacher in the lives of children who go to school play main roles in the individual's psychological development as they are linked to the learning process.

However, even with the PCNs for Elementary and Secondary Education focusing on the teaching of Foreign Languages as a fundamental resource for the teaching-learning process and social interaction of students, what is noticeable is that, nowadays,

A grande maioria dos alunos ainda não teve a oportunidade de participar de cursos de leitura nos quais eles pudessem ter acesso a, por exemplo: treinamento estratégico, ensino planejado de vocabulário, instruções sobre como explorar um dicionário bilingue, textos que contribuam para seu conhecimento enciclopédico cultural, nem a um ensino que favorecesse o desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa (SANTOS, 2011, p. 2).

Thus, when considering the appropriate approach to teaching a language, it cannot be ignored that speaking, reading, writing and dialogue are fundamental to the full use of the language being acquired. In this sense, Saussure (1998) highlights the importance of realizing that reading is a linguistic act different from the spontaneous production of speech; it is also conditioned by writing, even if it is only

semantics. A drawing can easily transform into a type of writing, as we have seen previously, traffic signs are based on drawings, men's and women's bathrooms, etc. Reading must, through deciphering, reach the motivation of what is written, its semantic and pragmatic content.

In turn, it must be considered that writing developed from drawings, it began to exist at the moment when the objective of the act of representing pictorially had, as an address to speech and as a motivation, to make the reader through speech information about something. The written language of a secondary nature has above all the objective of overcoming the limits inherent to the spoken language in terms of time and space. Having above all the objective of permanence and not necessarily presenting time pressure for its production, written language tends to be more careful, that is, more tense and formal than spoken language, as well as more conservative (SAUSURRE, 1998). Added to this is the growing importance of written language as a link for scientific and technological information.

In the Brazilian educational scenario, both the LDB and the PCNs defend the need for greater integration between linguistic skills so that mastery of the language can be promoted, including in this proposal the adoption of a teaching methodology that favors language learning foreigners. Therefore, what is perceived is a significant distortion between what Brazilian educational policies propose and what is experienced in schools, especially in the public context, where there is still a predominance of fragmented teaching and often focused on approaches that they do little to help the student acquire the basic skills necessary to learn a second language.

This reality demonstrates that education policies with utopian discourses on language teaching are not enough. A true reform of education is necessary so that students can be offered schools with pedagogical and didactic resources suited to the experience of foreign languages, curricula that promote interdisciplinarity between these languages and other subjects and not just as an isolated subject

that applies little. It is part of the daily lives of most students and, especially, teachers with basic and continuing training who have developed the skills and competencies necessary to understand and deal with students' needs and expectations when it comes to learning a new language.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The teaching of foreign languages in the global context, as well as in the Brazilian scenario, was marked by changes resulting from changes in the dynamics of society's functioning, developing different concepts about language teaching so that it occurs in a more meaningful and efficient way.

Approaches to teaching foreign languages were taking shape in parallel to the so-called pedagogical trends and, like these, they received defenders and critics, as with each new conception that emerged with the purpose of meeting a need in society, new needs emerge and new studies and criticism are carried out with the intention of seeking the development of educational methods that provide both more effective teaching and learning.

Many theories, laws, guidelines and parameters have been developed as a result of research into methods and strategies for teaching and learning foreign languages, aiming to meet the constant changes in society, especially with the occurrence of landmark events such as the Industrial Revolution and globalization.

What was observed is that, in relation to the teaching of foreign languages, there were moments of advances and setbacks in the history of this teaching within Brazilian territory. These oscillations did not only occur in the theoretical context, but also in the practical application of teaching methods that are outlined based on the educational policies of each historical period.

In order for the teacher to be able to guide the student in the development of linguistic skills in a language, it is necessary for the teacher to have mastery of these skills himself and, at a later stage, to acquire didactic-pedagogical knowledge

that enables him to recognize the limitations and potential of your students, identify the different teaching-learning methods that can be applied and know how to use them according to your students' needs.

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