

Curriculum and teaching materials in foreign language teaching: reflections and presentation of a proposal

Currículo e material didático no ensino de línguas estrangeiras: reflexões e apresentação de uma proposta

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Abstract:

Curriculum: starting point for a foreign language teaching program. Coursebooks and other teaching materials: elements that articulate the curriculum into pedagogical practices. Teaching materials, especially the coursebook, often end up playing the role of curriculum. However, teaching materials are only part of the curriculum, and need to be designed based on it. In other words, teaching materials should be implemented according to the curriculum, not the other way around. In order to propose a curriculum model for foreign language teaching, we start from the definition of curriculum presented by Jobrack (2011), from basic principles for curriculum design (TYLER, 1949), and from the discussion of curriculum theories (TADEU DA SILVA, 2000). Considering that curriculum implies a theoretical-methodological line, a critical socio-interactive literacy pedagogy (TILIO, 2015, 2016a, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b) for foreign language teaching is presented, followed by macro-criteria for the development of curricula and/or teaching materials (TILIO, 2016b).

Keywords: Curriculum; Teaching Materials; Critical Sociointeractive Literacy; Macrocriteria.

Resumo

Currículo: ponto de partida para um programa de ensino de línguas estrangeiras. Livros e outros materiais didáticos: elementos articuladores do currículo nas práticas pedagógicas. Muitas vezes o material didático, especialmente o livro didático, acaba exercendo o papel de currículo. Contudo, o material didático é apenas parte do currículo, e precisa ser concebido com base nele. Em outras palavras, o material didático deve estar a serviço do currículo, e não o contrário. Com o intuito de se chegar a uma proposta curricular de ensino de língua estrangeira, parte-se da definição

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de currículo apresentada por Jobrack (2011), de princípios básicos para a elaboração de um currículo (TYLER, 1949) e da discussão de teorias do currículo (TADEU DA SILVA, 2000). Considerando-se que o currículo implica uma linha teórico-metodológica, é apresentada uma pedagogia de letramento sociointeracional crítico (TILIO, 2015, 2016a, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b) para o ensino de língua estrangeira e, em seguida, uma proposta de macrocritérios para a elaboração de currículos e/ou materiais didáticos (TILIO, 2016b).

Palavras-chave: Currículo; Material Didático; Letramento Sociointeracional Crítico; Macrocritérios.

1. Introduction

An issue that has always caught my attention, initially as a foreign language teacher, and later as a teacher educator, is the role assigned to coursebooks in teaching. What should be just one more resource available to the teacher ends up becoming, in many contexts, a regulator of pedagogical work - either through an institutional obligation or through an uncritical use of the material. Instead of helping the teacher to fulfill a pedagogical program, the coursebook can often end up taking the place of the curriculum itself and becoming a dominant voice during the teaching and learning process.

As a language teacher, I could experience that several institutions are not concerned with developing a curriculum, but rather with adopting a coursebook. At the beginning of each school term, I did not receive a curriculum to be implemented, but a coursebook to be followed. The programmatic content was determined by the adopted coursebook. When the institution changed the coursebook, the "curriculum" of the level changed as well. I refer to such behavior as "the coursebook dictatorship" (TILIO, 2006). Although this is my past experience, my students report that this scenario still endures.

Assuming that the curriculum is the starting point for a teaching program, coursebooks and other teaching materials are articulatory elements of the curriculum into pedagogical practices. However, teaching materials, especially coursebooks, often end up playing the role of curriculum. However, the teaching material is only part of the curriculum, which needs to be designed based on it. In other words, teaching materials should be implemented according to the curriculum, and not the other way around. In order to present a proposal for curriculum development for foreign language teaching, this text is based on the definition of curriculum presented by Jobrack (2011), on basic principles for curriculum development (TYLER, 1949), and on the discussion of curriculum theories (TADEU DA SILVA, 2000). Considering that curriculum implies a theoretical-

methodological line, a critical sociointeractional literacy pedagogy (TILIO, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b) for foreign language teaching is presented, followed by macro-criteria for curriculum design, which also serve the development of teaching materials (TILIO, 2016).

2. Curriculum and teaching materials

There are many definitions of curriculum. Traditionally, it can be conceptualized as "a list of subjects to be studied under the guidance of the teacher, learning experiences to develop skills that prepare for life; seriation of studies conducted at school" (SOARES, 1993, p.68). From the 1930s on, under the influence of John Dewey's work, it began to be associated with students' experiences, recognizing the need to consider their various dimensions. In this sense, Tyler (1949), considered a classic in curriculum studies, proposes four steps for curriculum planning:

1. Objectives: what educational goals are to be achieved
2. Selection of contents and experiences: what educational contents and experiences can be offered to enable the achievement of the planned objectives?
3. Organization of content and experiences: how can educational content and experiences be organized efficiently?
4. Evaluation: how to measure if the objectives are being achieved?

Such conception allies the technical side to the students' experiences, but still conceives the curriculum as "a neutral practice, an instrument of rationalization of educational activity and planning control" (CAMPOS; SILVA. 2017, p.32). This is because it is linked to a traditional theory of curriculum. Different theories of curriculum prioritize the presence of different elements in the development of the curriculum.

Traditional curriculum theories tend to focus only on the technical elements of the teaching and learning process, understood as supposedly neutral: teaching, learning, assessment, methodology, didactics, organization, planning, efficiency and goals. Not disregarding such elements, because some of them are directly linked to the principles of curriculum development mentioned above, critical theories of curriculum incorporate concerns that go beyond the exclusively pedagogical level and start incorporating the sociocultural environment: ideology,

cultural and social reproduction, power, social class, capitalism, social relations of production, awareness-raising, emancipation and liberation, hidden curriculum, and resistance. Furthermore, the post-critical theories of curriculum, not dismissing the concerns of critical theories, open space for critical awareness through the engagement with differences and problematization: identity, otherness and difference, subjectivity, meaning and discourse, knowledge-power relationship, representation, culture, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, and multiculturalismo / transculturalism (TADEU DA SILVA, 2000).

The foreign language curriculum, however, does not seem to have incorporated critical and post-critical curriculum theories yet. This can perhaps be explained by the apparently purely instrumental character attributed to foreign language teaching: learning the language in order to use it in interactions with native speakers. In this context, a definition of curriculum such as the one proposed by Jobrack (2011) is not surprising: teaching, learning, and assessment activities and materials organized and made available for the teaching of a given subject. Curriculum is understood as the substance of what is taught; it involves educational and instructional materials, whether they are printed or digital: coursebooks, activity books, experiments, and hands-on activities - materials that teachers use to provide content in their daily lessons, for any subjects and at any level (JOBRAK, 2011).

This last definition deserves attention for incorporating teaching materials into the curriculum, but also for overestimating it. Coursebooks occupy a prominent place in the educational scenario, especially in language teaching: they are supposed to be followed (CORACINI, 1999) and they dictate much of the teacher's behavior in class (DIAS; CRISTÓVÃO, 2009). They are frequently considered the main source of information in the pedagogical context (JOHNS, 1997), the main weapon in the teacher's arsenal (GRANT, 1987), the most used source in teaching and a source of institutionalized knowledge (CARMAGNANI, 1999), the depository of stable knowledge to be deciphered, discovered, and transmitted to the student (SOUZA, 1995a). They are traditionally the main mediator in teaching, the main source used by teachers (SOUZA, 1999b)]. In the context of language teaching, it is a recurrent practice to take a coursebook as the curriculum. However, it should be noted that the coursebook is not the curriculum - despite the fundamental role that the former may play in the latter.

The coursebook can be defined as a set of resources to be used pedagogically in order to mediate learning. To conceptualize the coursebook as a set of resources means to consider it

simultaneously a discourse genre and a hypergenre (TILIO, 2016). It is a genre because it has its own characteristics of thematic content, compositional construction and style (BAKHTIN, 1952-1953), with a specific purpose, and circulates in a certain social sphere; at the same time, it is a hypergenre because one of its characteristics is precisely to bring together several other genres, written and oral, from different spheres of circulation, with a specific purpose in the pedagogical sphere. Despite being a hypergenre and forming a coherent whole, its use is not necessarily fixed. This set of resources that forms the hypergenre functions as a bank of materials, from which the teacher can select items that meet the needs of his or her curriculum and planning. In this way, the coursebook is understood as a tool, never as the curriculum; instead of adopting a coursebook, the teacher is expected to adapt it, modifying, removing, and including whatever is necessary according to his or her pedagogical needs and curriculum.

It should be noted that two dimensions can be given to the curriculum: an institutional dimension, or even a governmental one, and a local dimension, more situated. In the first case, the curriculum comes from above, it is imposed, prepared by educational institutions and/or government agencies; in the second case, it is prepared by the teacher. However, it is worth mentioning that the first does not cancel the second; in other words, even with an imposed curriculum, the teacher is expected to operationalize this curriculum in his or her own curriculum, often called a program. This is because, one can say, the curriculum designed by institutions is more impersonal, thought for a rather generalized and heterogeneous group, while the curriculum designed by teachers for their students is more targeted and localized. In this sense, the teacher's curriculum reflects his/her reading of the institutional curriculum, by transposing it to the local dimension.

Before effectively discussing a curriculum design proposal, it is necessary to discuss the premises for foreign language teaching that underlie and permeate such a proposal.

3. Foreign language teaching

In today's globalized society, densely semioticized and marked by profound inequalities, a foreign language can be seen as cultural capital (BOURDIEU, 1977), a valued symbolic asset

(MOITA LOPES, 2005) that allows its users more access to the globalized contemporary world, given its character of lingua franca (SEIDLHOFER, 2011). In other words, it can contribute to building social capital (WARSCHAUER, 2003), understood here as the ability of individuals to generate benefits for themselves and their communities through social interactions. Thus, it can assume a fundamental role in social transformation and, for that, it is essential that its teaching is oriented by a critical perspective (MUSPRATT; LUKE; FREEBODY, 1997), aiming at the construction of multiliteracies (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996) and the active participation of citizens in contemporaneity (ROJO; MOITA LOPES, 2004). Such pedagogical proposal is here called critical sociointeractional literacy pedagogy (TILIO, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b).

The commitment to the construction of citizenship, in an ethical and protagonist way (ROJO; MOITA LOPES, 2004), through the learning of a foreign language, brings the challenge of transcending structuralist and communicative visions that have prevailed in the curriculum and in the production of teaching materials, aiming to imprint in this context, socio-historically oriented, characteristics that allow dealing, in a situated way, with ideological, cultural and identity issues that permeate every linguistic practice. Learning a language means more than being able to communicate in it; it means learning knowledge related to it and knowing how to use it actively for social change.

Language and learning, therefore, are understood within a sociointeractional perspective (BAKHTIN, 1952-1953; VOLÓCHINOV, 1929; VYGOTSKY, 1978, 1939), that is, socially situated and built in interactions, making learners able to act in the globalized world, integrating and transforming it. This theory, also referred to as sociocultural or sociointeractionist theory, aims to characterize the typically human aspects of behavior by hypothesizing how these characteristics have formed in the course of human history and how they develop during an individual's lifetime. It also suggests that human development is the result of the dialectical interaction of the human being with the external environment - social and cultural - since he or she is an agent and producer of culture, constantly transformed and transformed by the environment in which he or she lives.

In a sociointeractional approach, therefore, learning a foreign language means to guide and sensitize students in relation to the multilingual and multicultural world in which they live, making them aware of cultural differences and leading them to be more respectful to others and to know themselves better (MOITA LOPES, 2003). One learns to know oneself better when

he or she learns to see others. Moreover, knowledge of foreign language discourses can allow access to many different types of knowledge in the contemporary globalized world. The access to the foreign language, therefore, can allow greater social inclusion in the globalized world.

Language learning, according to sociointeractional theory, involves the construction of three types of knowledge: knowledge of the linguistic system (systemic knowledge), knowledge of the organization of discourses in language (knowledge of textual organization) and world knowledge. It is in the projection and intersection of these three types of knowledge that meanings are negotiated and the knowledge of/about the language is built (BRASIL, 1998)¹.

More than making the individual able to communicate in a language, the access to discourses in an additional language can also serve to empower him/her, once he/she starts to have access to something he/she didn't know before. With this knowledge, the individual has the choice to become part of these new discourses, building and exercising his citizenship in the globalized world and being able to act both globally and locally.

On the other hand, these same globalized discourses, which are not unique, but often claim to be absolute, can spread a hegemonic ideology that quickly reaches and influences much of the population on a global scale, benefiting those to whom such discourse interests (MOITA LOPES, 2003). Knowledge of these discourses can enable those who know them to resist, thus building another globalization (SANTOS, 2000), which, instead of globalizing hegemony, embraces plurality and diversity, problematizing differences.

In this sense, three aspects of foreign language teaching that reinforce the use of English in contemporary life to construct new anti-hegemonic discourses deserve to be highlighted (MOITA LOPES, 2003):

- the development of a discursive base in which students are involved in the construction of meaning, so that learning a language is understood as learning to critically engage with the meanings produced in it, recognizing discursive positions and knowing that it is possible to construct new meanings to change these positions, which can sometimes be exclusionary;

¹ Despite the National Curriculum Parameters – PCN (BRASIL, 1998) and the Curriculum Guidelines for Secondary Education – OCEM (BRASIL, 2006) are not current documents anymore, the article makes reference to them in recognition of their contributions to Brazilian education.

- the development of critical consciousness in relation to language, since its use involves choices of possibilities of meanings through which one acts in the world and collaborates to constitute it;
- the focus on transversality, i.e., on issues that permeate contemporary social life (health, gender and sexuality, family and social life, children and adolescents' rights, environmental preservation, education for consumption, fiscal education, work, science and technology, cultural diversity, condition and rights of the elderly, traffic education, information and communication technologies - cf. BRASIL, 2013²), since, by using language, people construct meanings about these transversal topics, constructing themselves and the social world around them.

Foreign language teaching must show how transversal themes are addressed in the discourses of that language, allowing critical reflections and problematizing transpositions to the students' social space. It is important to emphasize that it is not a matter of judging, or even comparing, but of critically thinking about the differences, proposing a reflection based on different contexts. Language teaching, in general, is a privileged space for the discussion of such issues, since it deals with language teaching through its own use.

Thus, foreign language assumes an educational and pragmatic role in the construction of citizenship, serving as an instrument of liberation and social inclusion (BRASIL, 1998). Its teaching, therefore, involves a series of issues that go beyond its systemic organization (lexical and grammatical), and should also encompass thematic choices responsible for the social, historical and cultural situationality of teaching and of textual organization choices. The choice of discourse genres must articulate, on the one hand, the thematic content and, on the other, the compositional structure and style of language (BAKHTIN, 1952-1953), taking into account not only the textual structure and mechanisms of cohesion and coherence, but also issues such as linguistic variation and cultural plurality.

In this sense, the sociointeractional theory of teaching and learning not only corroborates the idea of the informed approach (BROWN, 2007), in which the teacher needs to make informed, conscious decisions that best suit his/her context and the students, but also goes

² The last reference to transversal themes in official documents is in the National Curriculum Guidelines – DCN. The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), the most recent document, does not directly address transversal themes, as PCN, OCEM and DCN did.

beyond it by proposing a consciousness-raising approach, which emphasizes the educational function of foreign language teaching, preparing learners to belong and act in the globalized world. It is this critical consciousness-raising function that distinguishes the sociointeractional approach from the communicative approach (TILIO, 2014).

Language and learning are constructed in social interactions. Thus, language forms, whether standard or non-standard, are categorized in this way according to social conventions established for particular interactions. Language serves social interactions, because there is no interaction without language. Just as there is no interaction without language and no language without interaction, there is no learning without the need for learners to interact socially.

Language is understood as plural (encompassing the various semioses considered in the multiliteracies theory [COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000; KALANTZIS; COPE, 2012; THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996], being language one of these semioses), dynamic and socially (re)constructed, in dialogue with its contexts of circulation and its users, and open (always subject to change). Within the perspective of multiliteracies, language is multimodal - expressed by multiple and diverse modes of meaning (written, oral, visual, kinesthetic, etc.) - and multicultural - varying according to different cultural contexts. Knowledge of a language goes beyond the often mechanistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Language knowledge involves literacies, understood as cultural ways of constructing meaning: seeing, describing, explaining, understanding, and thinking (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996). Among these literacies we can highlight the linguistic, visual, sound, non-verbal, digital, multimodal, multicultural, and critical ones. These literacies are not isolated and do not have clear boundaries, permeating each other in discourse. A sociointeractional approach to foreign language teaching should not only seek to account for multiliteracies, but also ensure the omnipresence of critical literacy throughout the teaching and learning process.

Compatible with a sociosemiotic theory of language and sociointeractional theory of learning, as it deals with teaching as a sociocultural practice, with the provision of opportunities for situated interactions with others and with the environment (VYGOTSKY, 1998 [1978]), critical literacy enables the questioning and re-signification of naturalized ideological and power relations. In a work "that aims at a critical literacy, the representations and analysis of

differences, such as racial, sexual, gender and questions about who wins or loses in certain social relationships are emphasized" (BRASIL, 2006, p. 116).

The focus on critical literacy does not dismiss work with linguistic and lexical-grammatical skills, for example, but extends it to interpretation and social transposition, making the learning experience truly a social practice. Working within a critical literacy perspective "represents an extension and a definition of this reading work with regard to the expectation of students' critical development." (BRASIL, 2006, p. 116).

A critical literacy theory seeks to make students aware of the need to assume a critical attitude towards learning, understanding that knowledge is ideological, never natural or neutral, and that reality and meaning are not given in a definitive and unique way: they are multiple, (re)constructed and (re)negotiated based on discursive rules and social practices immersed in power relations (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001).

This critical literacy work can be made possible through the use of discourse genres, which, according to Bakhtin (1952-1953), are relatively stable types of concrete and unique statements that circulate in different spheres of language use. They reflect the specific conditions of each sphere, with its thematic needs, its participants and the speaker's intention. The choice of genre follows certain parameters, such as purpose, addressees and content, that is, "there is the elaboration of a guiding basis for discursive action" (SCHNEUWLY, 1994 [2010, p.23]). Genres are characterized by three constitutive elements (BAKHTIN, 1952-1953): thematic content (already discussed above), compositional construction (set of organizational elements of the text that mark the possibilities of understanding a given genre in specific sociocultural contexts) and language style (selection of lexical, phraseological and grammatical resources of the language).

Discourse genres are, therefore, social manifestations of language, materialized in verbal and/or non-verbal elements, and intentionally selected and organized with a socio-interactive purpose, within a social sphere, in order to allow interlocutors to construct meanings and their action in this sphere, as a result of the activation of previous knowledge of sociocultural practices of use. The genres of discourse are configured as a tool of critical literacy to the extent that they consider not only the linguistic product, but also its procedural conditions of production, circulation and distribution (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992) - when, where, how, why, for whom, by whom -, enabling questioning and re-signification in social life. As discursive (or textual, cf. MARCUSCHI, 2008) genres are relatively stable occurrences of language forms in social life, by working with

authentic material, this collection inevitably - and purposefully - retrieves different discourse genres.

Considering sociointeractional assumptions, teaching only makes sense with the use of authentic texts and activities, as pointed out above, capable of awakening in learners the authenticity of social interactions with and through the use of the language being taught. It is important to differentiate between authenticity and genuineness (WIDDOWSON, 1978). While genuine material is something taken *ipsis litteris* from some real context of language use, authentic material is that one which is able to provoke in the interlocutor an authentic reaction, that is, a reaction expected for that kind of material. If the responsiveness to the material that served as input for learning is authentic, that is, similar to an expected reaction for a given social interaction, it does not matter if this material is not genuine - even because genuineness by itself is not able to guarantee an authentic responsiveness, since, when transposed into a coursebook and brought into the classroom, the text leaves its original context of circulation and assumes pedagogical purposes.

It is thus important to understand the organization of the curriculum and/or the teaching material based on a thematic contextualization, from which the contents are worked in a conscious, systematic and analytical way, always focusing on the produced and potential meanings. A critical attitude is adopted towards knowledge, which is appropriated and re-signified in new contexts - real and relevant - of use.

4. Macrocriterias for curriculum and teaching materials development

When building a curriculum and/or teaching materials to operationalize it, some minimum criteria need to be considered. Several lists with detailed criteria for the analysis of language coursebooks (and that could also subsidize the production of teaching materials and curricula) have already been proposed (BYRD, 2001; CUNNINGSWORTH, 1995; DIAS, 2009). Many of these lists have dozens of items (there may even be more than a hundred) – what makes the work practically unfeasible, since the high number of items pulverize attention in several directions, not considering the relevance of each item (which is certainly not the same in all contexts). By

proposing macrocriteria (TILIO, 2016b), not considering a deeper level of detail, the goal is to make materials production more flexible and customize it according to the specificities of each context. Working with very specific criteria which do not necessarily meet all contexts may end up falsifying the needs of certain contexts.

When working with macrocriteria, each context proposes its own reading of these macrocriteria, customizing (and expanding, if necessary) them. Very specific criteria shall be raised for each context. Very obvious criteria are already inherent to some macrocriteria (age group and proficiency level, for example, can easily be contemplated within the "theme" macrocriterion). This simplification of criteria into macrocriteria aims, therefore, not only to objectify the work of those who will develop the curriculum and/or materials, but also to allow local customization, by focusing only on more macro criteria that should not be ignored but that often go unnoticed amid a profusion of very specific and maybe not so relevant criteria. Thus, the curriculum and/or the teaching material should meet minimum macrocriteria, and, according to each context, the teacher searches for other criteria (even his or her own criteria, result of their teaching practice in a given context) to deepen the analysis of certain points that are particularly important to his or her reality.

Chart 1 systematizes and defines these macrocriteria. It is important to note that, ideally, the criteria intersect and permeate the learning itinerary, and should not be proposed as isolated moments. This also means that there is no linearity to approach them, although the THEME is perhaps the first to be considered, as it accounts for the creation of the whole context in which learning will develop. Even if, by institutional or governmental demand, for example, there are mandatory aspects to be considered, as is often the case with systemic contents, it is necessary to define the thematic contextualization that will serve as a starting point for these aspects.

Chart 1: Macrocriteria for curriculum and teaching materials development and/or analysis

Macroriterion	Definition
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themes as the starting point for learning • relevance and familiarity (present or projected)
Transculturality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crosscultural understanding and cultural transposition • dealing with differences • deterritorialization and reterritorialization • cultural phenomena: cultures with big "C" and with small "c"
Discourse genres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • theme + formal organization + linguistic materiality • diversity of socially relevant genres

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • authentic texts
(Critical) Multiliteracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiliteracies: multiplicity of modes of meaning (multimodality) and cultural multiplicity (modes of meaning are cultural) • variety of multiliteracies: linguistic literacy, visual literacy, audio literacy, gestural literacy, spacial literacy, digital literacy etc. • critical multiliteracies: awareness of processes of (re)production and circulation of discourses; reflection about and understanding of the process of meaning construction
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual autonomy: self-learning • sociocultural autonomy: ability to act in the social world with the learned knowledge
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversity of activities • tasks rather than exercises • prevalence of activities involving more complex cognitive operations • authentic tasks
Systemic Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • necessary to structure language (in use) • discursively decontextualized linguistic units are meaningless • not an end in itself; rather, serves as a means for structuring genres and their purposes • analytical perspective: make the learner aware of the possibilities of sociocultural meanings arising from lexicogrammatical choices
Critical literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross curricular • engagement with differences; problematizing practice • opportunities for learners to take a critical stance

It is then necessary to define the topics to be addressed considering their relevance and/or familiarity to the target audience. It is worth noting that it is not only about considering what the learners consider relevant or familiar, but also what can be projected as relevant to their learning. In case the relevance is projected but unfamiliar, care must be taken not to approach unfamiliar topics in a way which seems too distant from the learner's world. That could contribute to the rejection of what is being taught; on the contrary, the ideal is to try to bring what is unfamiliar closer to familiar contexts, so that the supposed relevance can be actually perceived.

Directly linked to the theme to be chosen is the criterion of TRANSCULTURALITY. The idea of transculturality is linked to crosscultural understanding and cultural transposition, and is particularly relevant in the context of language teaching. More than teaching about foreign cultures and problematizing differences, the idea of transculturality translates the ideas of deterritorialization of cultures and their reterritorialization: "the loss of the 'natural' relationship of culture with geographical and social territories, and, at the same time, certain relative, partial territorial relocations of old and new symbolic productions" (CANCLINI, 2012, p. 281). It is

important to emphasize that the concept of culture exposed here is inherently plural and contemplates both the concept of cultures with big/capital "C" and the concept of small "c" (BROOKS, 1964). While the former refers to arts, customs, etc., the latter can be associated with everyday practices of life in society. As such, any Cultural/cultural phenomenon "involves tangible forms or structures (products) that individual members of the culture (people) use in various interactions (practices) in specific social circumstances and groups (communities) in ways that reflect their values, attitudes, and beliefs (perspectives)" (MORAN, 2001, p. 25-26).

In language teaching, working with transculturality means discussing themes that make it possible to problematize cultural phenomena, thinking about their crossing and their deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Also linked to the choice of theme is the selection of the DISCOURSE GENRES that will serve as linguistic input for the contextualization of learning and its development. Since language always circulates through some genre, any teaching or analysis of language in use only makes sense when it is part of a genre. Language units do not circulate socially in isolation; language that circulates socially, with specific purposes and interlocutors, has theme, formal organization and linguistic materiality - the elements of discourse genres, according to Bakhtin (1952-1953). Linguistic units are only the linguistic materiality of language; even though they are essential, they are only one of the three elements that make language to be real in use.

When selecting genres for the curriculum and/or teaching materials, it is important to pay attention to the diversity of discourse genres that are socially relevant for the intended audience of students. It is also important that these genres are contextualized in authentic texts, consistent with the contexts of these students and considering, once again, relevance and familiarity. Authenticity is fundamental for familiarity and relevance to be noticed.

Here a brief digression in order to insist on the concept of authenticity and its distinction from that of genuineness (WIDDOWSON, 1978). As discussed before, genuineness is an absolute property of language. It refers to linguistic materiality produced to circulate in contexts other than the educational one and transposed, with no modification of any kind, to the educational context. Authenticity, on the other hand, refers to authenticity of use, to language that provokes responsive attitudes consistent with the social practices it emulates. Genuineness, therefore, does not necessarily guarantee authenticity of use if discourse, although genuine, does not belong to the students' social practices, since it may not arouse relevant responsive

attitudes. On the other hand, authenticity need not necessarily be genuine, since what matters is discourse responsiveness, not the origin of the discourse. In an ideal situation, genuineness and authenticity of use go together, but the latter is preponderant, with the former serving primarily to corroborate the latter.

The next macrocriterion to be considered when designing curricula and/or teaching materials is the presence of MULTILITERACIES. Based on the set themes, it is necessary to think about the variety of critical multiliteracies to be incorporated into the curriculum and/or teaching materials. As already mentioned, language is not reduced to its verbal mode, expressed through the four language skills - listening and writing comprehension, oral and written production. Contemporary hypersemiotized societies perceive language through the lens of multiliteracies. Even the so-called four language skills are not mere skills; they are literacies: reading literacy, writing literacy, oral literacy, and audio literacy. More than skills, they are cultural ways of thinking and of constructing and expressing meanings. Because they are directly related to verbal language, they are forms of linguistic literacy. They are associated with other literacies: visual literacy, sound literacy, gesture literacy, spatial literacy, digital literacy etc. From this derive the two meanings of the prefix multi- of the term multiliteracies: multiplicity of modes of meaning (multimodality) and cultural multiplicity (the modes of meaning are cultural).

All these literacies, however, are not merely instrumental, with the only purpose of instrumentalizing students to act in certain contexts. All these literacies incorporate a critical aspect, which goes beyond the instrumental function of the ability to adapt to contexts, assuming the character of teaching students to understand processes of (re)production and circulation of discourses, and to reflect and create understandings about the construction of meanings.

Another macrocriterion is the concern with the development of learner AUTONOMY. More than stimulating self-learning (individual autonomy), autonomy here is understood as sociocultural (OXFORD, 2003). The curriculum and/or teaching materials should fulfill the role of empowering the learner to use the content taught in a way that allows him/her to go beyond the pedagogical context, in which language use tends to be more controlled, and effectively act in the social world using the knowledge learned.

One more macrocriterion to be considered is the plurality of types of ACTIVITIES. In order to address the heterogeneity of students' learning styles, it is important that the activities be

diverse in nature. Even with diversity, it is crucial to pay attention if the activities are tasks, which involve doing things with the learning content, rather than merely exercises, which require no more than reproducing knowledge (ELLIS, 2010). In addition, tasks should privilege more complex cognitive operations – such as analyze, interpret, and infer – to simpler cognitive operations – such as take away, identify, and complete (TILIO, 2012). Equally significant is that the tasks, despite pedagogical, be authentic, that is, that they emulate situations of social uses for the knowledge being learned.

One macrocriterion that cannot be overlooked is SYSTEMIC CONTENT (lexicogrammar – grammar and lexicon), even because there are often institutional and governmental demands regarding such content. However, one should be aware that discursively decontextualized language units are meaningless. Systemic content is important to structure language (in use), but it is not an end in itself; rather, it serves as a means for structuring genres and their purposes. Even if there is an imposed systemic curriculum, the implementation of that curriculum cannot start from these systemic contents per se, but from themes designed to encompass such contents. Moreover, it is essential that they are approached in an analytical perspective, in order to make the learner aware of the sociocultural meanings arising from lexicogrammatical choices.

The last macrocriterion is the presence of CRITICAL LITERACY. Although none of the macrocriteria should be conceived of in isolation, critical literacy is the one that should least be treated separately. In other words, it does not make sense to have a separate moment to do critical literacy; it must go through the whole curriculum, in the choices of themes and discourse genres, in the approach to transculturality, multiliteracies and systemic content, and in the activities. Critical literacy, from the perspective of engagement with differences and problematizing practices, is the opportunity for the learner to assume a critical stance throughout the pedagogical process.

5. Final remarks

This article has proposed macrocriteria to be used in the construction of curricula and/or teaching materials (for curriculum operationalization). The option for macrocriteria, with no deeper level of detail, aims to allow its flexibility and customization, meeting the specificities of

each contexto. It does not, however, overlook basic criteria that should be considered when considering foreign language teaching from a literacy, sociointeractional, and critical perspective (age, language level, institutional and geographical context etc.).

In this scenario, a curriculum, whether at the institutional level or at the course syllabus level, and the teaching materials produced and/or used to execute it, must be structured based on themes and consider transculturality, discourse genres, multiliteracies, autonomy, activities, systemic content, and critical literacy.

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