

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEACHER'S ACTION BY ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR CHILDREN: A VIEW TO TEACHING AS LABOR

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- **ABSTRACT:** This article aims at recognizing the activity of teaching English as a Foreign Language to children and the dimensions of the teacher action based on the theoretical and methodological principles of the Sociodiscursive Interactionism (BRONCKART, 1999-2003, 2007, 2008). The data were resumed from two case studies from 2013/2014 and 2015/2016. The theoretical input examines the existing gap in the Humanities curriculum education regarding teaching English to children in Brazil (ROCHA, TONELLI; SILVA, 2010; TONELLI; FERREIRO; BELO-CORDEIRO, 2017; SANTOS; BENEDETTI, 2009), on behalf of children's particularities (VYGOTSKY, 1998), and education for a critical citizenship (ROCHA; BASSO, 2007; PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011). Teaching as labor and how the teacher's action is shaped (FAÍTA, 2004; AMIGUES, 2004; MACHADO, 2004) anchor the analyses of the teachers' reflections. Data were generated through interviews and a reflexive session based upon a drawing. Data analyses reinforced the relevance of teacher education targeted at the specific traces of the English to children teaching education activity, composed of every dimension of the human being. It also revealed teachers' beliefs about teaching EFLC in public schools as well as traces of linguistic imperialism influence.
- **KEYWORDS:** teaching activity; ergonomics; critical teacher education; English for children; sociodiscursive interactionism.

Introduction

The activity of teaching English as a foreign language to children¹ (hereinafter EFLC) has been the focus of studies in different contexts, both abroad and in Brazil,

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¹ This study is linked to the FELICE research group (Capes / CNPq), led by the second author and was developed in the midst of reflections among its members. The article is also linked to the Teachers of English in Action (TEIA) extension project, registered with the UEL Dean of Extension under number 02372, and the English for Kids: English,

in attempts to understand and systematize teaching and learning, as well as the teacher's education of EFLC, considering the absence of prescriptions and guidelines for this context. According to Enever (2011), there was, in the first decade of the new century, an increasing demand by parents in providing opportunities for children to learn a foreign language in the European context. In the Brazilian scenario, to get an idea, the investigation by Tanaca (2017) revealed that among 4,739 Brazilian municipalities, 2,812 offer EFLC for the first years of elementary school (hereinafter ES). Studies also show that, in Brazil, in recent years, the teaching of EFLC has been implemented in contexts of private education (TONELLI, 2005; LEMES, 2017; SELBACH; SARMENTO, 2017) and public education (COLOMBO; CONSOLO, 2017; DIAS; BROSSI, 2015; MELLO, 2017; ANDRADE; CONCEIÇÃO, 2017; BUOSE; SANTOS, 2017; DIAS, 2014; MONTEIRO, 2016; SANTOS, 2005, 2009), the focus of this investigation.

Despite not being mandatory in the first years of ES, in Brazil, EFLC in public schools is a reality, in the form of projects and/or as a subject in the curriculum. Regardless of the context and its organization, the fact is that teachers who take these paths face challenges, such as unpreparedness to deal with this specific audience, the lack of public policies and guidelines for teaching, the scarcity of teacher training courses, and the scantiness of didactic material, among others.

Studies in the field of applied linguistics and teachers' education (CELANI, 2016; MOITA LOPES, 2006; TONELLI; CRISTOVÃO, 2010; SANTOS, 2009, among others) defend the guarantee of conditions so that all individuals, including children, can learn foreign languages. Despite the absence of policies that ensure the teaching of foreign language to children in the early years (CHAGURI; TONELLI, 2012) and also the appropriate training for professionals in this sphere in the Letters courses, several studies present initiatives for teaching foreign language in the first years of ES in Brazil (COLOMBO; CONSOLO, 2017; DIAS; BROSSI, 2015; MELLO, 2017; ANDRADE; CONCEIÇÃO, 2017; TONELLI; FERREIRO; BELO-CORDEIRO, 2017).

In the investigated context, the teaching of EFLC was regularized in 2006, without any training for the professionals, who already worked in the teaching of English as a foreign language (hereinafter EFL) in the final years of ES. That is, the profile of the children, the objectives to be achieved and the social practice made possible through the use of English in the lives of these apprentices from six to 12 years old, were not factors specifically addressed in moments of initial or continuing teacher education. In this regard, Pessoa and Borelli (2011), when problematizing about FL teaching, reinforce that it is essential that we, teachers of foreign languages, recognize our role as transforming agents, despite so many interventions coming from institutions, from language policy society (or their absence). The authors reiterate that:

community and social empowerment extension project registered with UEG Inhumas Dean of Extension under number 9820.

Within this context are our actions, it is up to us, then, to question the interests that have guided our practice, the relevance of what we teach our students and the way we have played our social role. (PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011, p.25, our translation).²

We emphasize the fact that our actions as English teachers for children can promote social practices that empower children to express themselves with creativity and agency in the society where they live. Based on this idea, for this study, we appropriated the ideas of researchers who are concerned with and defend the training of English teachers and we recontextualized them to the context of EFLC. On the critical teacher training, Pessoa and Borelli (2011, p.12, our translation) state that:

[...] [it] seeks to face social conflict over the purpose of teaching and the learning consequences in the classroom. In short, it aims to develop a critical reflective and creative practice, not simply a reproductive one. Such practice inspires studies [...], which conceive teachers in university and continuing education as actors whose teacher training is fundamental because of the knowledge they mobilize and the meanings that they themselves produce. This knowledge that guides this action needs to be developed and valued so that it can promote more significant changes in the educational process, generating positive results in the learning of all students [...]³

In line with the authors, we start from the premise that EFLC teachers need to develop a “critical and creative reflective practice, not simply reproductive”⁴ (PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011, p.12) and, we defend an initial training curriculum for teaching English that contemplates the insertion of subjects, internship, scientific initiation and extension actions/curricular activities that favor the development of skills and competences to deal with the specificities of the teaching activity of EFLC.

In this regard, Rocha and Basso (2007, p.16, our translation) assert that:

[...] this means thinking about who the ES student is, how he possibly is discursively constituted, why and for what he needs to learn English,

² Original: “*Dentro desse contexto estão nossas ações, cabendo a nós, então, questionar os interesses que têm orientado nossa prática, a relevância do que ensinamos aos[às] nossos[as] alunos[as] e a maneira como temos desempenhado nosso papel social.*” (PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011, p.25).

³ Original: “[...] *busca enfrentar o conflito social sobre a finalidade do ensino e as consequências da aprendizagem em sala de aula. Objetiva, em suma, desenvolver uma prática reflexiva crítica e criativa, não simplesmente reprodutora. Tal prática inspira os estudos [...], que concebem professores em formação universitária e continuada como atores cuja formação docente é fundamental por saberes que eles mobilizam e por significados que eles mesmos produzem. Esses saberes que orientam essa ação precisam ser desenvolvidos e valorizados para que possam promover mudanças mais significativas no processo educacional, gerando resultados positivos na aprendizagem de todos os alunos [...]*” (PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011, p.12).

⁴ Original: “*prática reflexiva crítica e criativa, não simplesmente reprodutora*” (PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011, p.12).

among other languages. It is also important to consider which is the most effective way to do this, ensuring, within the classroom, the work with linguistic and cultural plurality, reflection on oppressive practices and materialization of principles that allow the student to learn that language for his/her strengthening as a citizen of the world.⁵

In this sense, analyzing the work of EFLC teachers, in the words of those who operate in said context, is aligned with an understanding broader than the knowledge about pedagogical tools used by them, or the approach that guides their praxis⁶. Thus, we have the opportunity to understand the process of training and developing the acting of teachers of English for children.

The general objective of this article is to know the activity of the teacher and the dimensions of her teachers' acting based on the theoretical and methodological foundations of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI), assuming that the EFLC teachers participating in this research received initial training for operate as English teachers for the final years of elementary school and for high school, following the documents that guide the training of English teachers in our country⁷.

Thus, interested in the analysis of teachers' acting, we propose a reflection on the construction of the praxis of teachers, semiotized in their speeches. The reflection we propose seeks to answer the following questions: a) What do the investigated teachers say regarding their initial training? and b) How can the analysis of the semiotizations of the two teachers contribute to the training of EFLC teachers?

The organization of this article was made subversively in relation to the scientific article genre, for two reasons. First, we chose to start reflections starting from what Stephany⁸, an English teacher in the early years of ES, says about teaching work, before the theoretical foundation. In this way, we purposely emphasize the relevance of this ignored, or at best, disregarded discourse over to the theoretical 'specialists', who often do not know the context in question; in addition to theories and studies within the university boundaries. Second, we see as pressing to highlight the reflection on the action present in Stephany's sayings, since she made herself heard regarding her own work and professional EFLC acting, which is an activity consisting of complex gestures, unrated, and which begins to be discussed in the academy. We believe that

⁵ Original: "[...] isso significa pensar quem é o aluno do Fundamental I, como ele possivelmente está discursivamente constituído, por que e para que ele precisa aprender o inglês, entre outras línguas. É igualmente importante ponderar qual a maneira mais efetiva de fazê-lo, garantindo-se, em sala de aula, o trabalho com a pluralidade linguística e cultural, a reflexão sobre as práticas opressoras e a materialização de princípios que permitam ao aluno aprender essa língua para seu fortalecimento como cidadão do mundo." (ROCHA; BASSO, 2007, p.16).

⁶ We understand praxis in the sense of Johnson (2006, p.240) who rejects the debate between theory and practice, opting for the use of the term praxis that "captures how theory and practice are extended to each other and how this transforming process extends to the teacher's work".

⁷ Curricular Guidelines for Letters Courses (BRASIL, 2001).

⁸ All the participant's names are fictitious and were chosen by the participating teachers to preserve their identities, for ethical reasons.

this study can contribute to the continuous education of EFLC teachers, since they are constituted in their action, in a relationship between the knowledge and the English teachers' acting, and the experience they live in this already existing scenario of EFLC, in public schools (TONELLI, 2017). The contributions are extended to undergraduate students of the Letters course, teachers who already work in classrooms and would like to carry out their activity with children. In addition, the reflections and questions investigated in this study corroborate the theoretical framework of the EFLC teacher education area.

This article is organized in five parts. In the first, we problematize the teaching of EFLC as work based on the theorizations present in the words of one of the participants. In the second part, we discuss about the (lack of) EFLC teachers education in the investigated context, in addition to relating to studies concerning the teachers' acting and its constitution. For this, we recovered researches that contemplate this theme, supported by the theoretical and methodological foundations of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI) (BRONCKART, 1999-2003), in the work sciences of activity ergonomics (AMIGUES, 2004; MACHADO, 2004; SAUJAT, 2004) and work psychology (FAÏTA, 2004; CLOT, 2007). Then, we contextualize the study methodologically. Subsequently, in the analysis of the data, we establish dialogues between the teachers and the authors that support the study, and at the end we will make our final remarks.

Listening to the voices of English teachers to children

We start, as announced, our reflections with the words of Stephany, EFLC teacher at school A, in 2014, which were known in the interview⁹ that compose the corpus of data analyzed by Dias (2014)¹⁰.

Excerpt 1:

Stephany – [...] Hours that could be better spent with other subjects, including working on critical themes. Better utilized you know? [...]

P¹¹ - You touched on the subject of critical teaching. With the early years, do you think you are in a position to problematize some theme, something...

Stephany – Wow, one has to be very careful. Wow! Very careful. Because they are children, right? They are children, and they bring a lot of visions and prejudices into the school. So if you're not careful, wow, and you teach a lesson just as if you were talking to those who are mature, the next day the mothers are all there. It has never happened

⁹ In Appendix A we provide the script for the interview with teacher Stephany, in 2013.

¹⁰ Reported and published in Dias and Brossi (2015).

¹¹ Researcher.

to me, but it would happen if I didn't know what I'm doing. Then, for example, I work with family, 'mother, father, brother, sister' in the first year, right? The nuclear family. Only after I show that nuclear family, I tell them that there are other types of families too. There are only mothers, only fathers, single mothers, single fathers ... So there are families of all kinds, man with man, woman with woman. And when I start talking about it, I start to see their reaction. They get scared, they refuse to hear that. Children. So that's why you have to be careful. So I don't touch that key too much, but I say that these families exist. [...] It was last year. The [professions] that had more prestige. Yes, I think that was it. The most valued ones in society. Then I said: "Why is the nurse's here in the underprivileged, the discredited?". "Well, I don't know teacher". [...]. So, you know, I'm giving you some little injections. Only they do not admit: "Of course not a teacher". "Aren't you being prejudiced?" [laughing]. You know, but it has to be little by little.

P - But I think it already makes all the difference, right?

Stephany – Another thing, on that day too, I realized that there were many women in the discredited and men in the best professions, in their conceptions, right? I said: "Why is there a majority of women here, on this side the majority is women and black people; and on this side the majority is men?". Only they can't, they don't admit that they have prejudice. [...] Yes, but... In the end, I concluded: that: it is not the profession they were judging, you know? It is the appearance of people in the photos, you know? It's very difficult. I've said it many times and they didn't understand, but I think it's really a matter of maturity, but I took the first step.

(STEPHANY – Interview granted in June/2014)

We share Stephany's opinion that she took the first step. How many of us, teachers, teachers' educators, researchers and EFLC teachers would have the ability to take advantage of this gap (DUBOC, 2012) in a critical teaching action during the class, in the way that the investigated teacher demonstrated? At the time of planning this activity, the teacher certainly created hypotheses, or at least foreseen that gender and race issues would appear biased in the discussions among the fifth-year children. This anticipation, however, probably occurs if the teacher has been contemplated with a critical and transdisciplinary formation, which favors the de(re)constructions of concepts and values naturalized in social discourse. Thus, at the moment when the results of the children's activities became evident, the teacher felt able to problematize, even if briefly, the naturalized (pre)concepts that resulted from the analyzed images.

Egido (2018) presents results of his study that show that aspects such as gender and ethnicity form the perceptions and experiences of students in foreign/additional language classrooms, corroborating Stephany's understanding, when reporting the impressions on children in EFLC classes. Through the analysis of personal deixis (me) it can be said that Stephany is involved in her speech, recognizing that she is an

experienced teacher in the section “if I didn’t know what I’m doing”, and demonstrates that she considers teaching English for children beyond language education quite simply. The excerpt begins with Stephany’s suggestion to make better use of time at school to problematize naturalized hegemonic concepts, valuing the social character (JORGE, 2009) of EFLC teaching.

Although this problematization is not the object of discussion in this article, it is with this critical-reflective positioning of the teacher that we intend to discuss the importance of critical education for EFLC teachers. Our analyzes are not intended to provide answers or recipes for success, however we are guided by constant questioning, and we encourage readers to at least think about the issues we propose. Do we, teacher educators, mediate and encourage reflection on the action of our EFLC teachers? Is the teacher graduated in Letters prepared for the job of teaching English to children? How is the work of the EFLC teacher configured? Are there gestures and characteristic traits of EFLC teachers?

Who are the English teachers¹² for children?

We started this article by bringing Stephany’s speech so then, from her and from the existing educational scenario, we investigate how it is already configured, and not only formulate an ideal profile of EFLC teachers. We also intend to know what the teachers of EFLC report about the work of teaching, with the intention of understanding the constitution of these teachers’ acting and, starting from that, build theorizations, without the intention of prescribing a ‘profile of a successful teacher’, but with the objective of pointing out traits and gestures of EFLC teaching acting.

In this sense, we highlight that the professionals who work with the teaching of EFLC build their teachers’ acting as they enter the field. These educators who work at ES within the municipality in question, in Goiás, are undergraduates of the Letters course and, therefore, trained to work in the context of the final years of ES and HS. In the supervised internship experience in English, the first contact with the collective of teachers of basic education, occurs in English classrooms since the sixth grade. The official documents studied at graduation, such as, for example, the National Educational Bases and Guidelines Law (LDB), the National Curricular Guidelines (PCN), the National Base for Curriculum in Brazil (BNCC) starting in 2020 – guide the choices, the planning and teachers’ acting – are specifically aimed at the final years of ES students. Thus, the end of the Portuguese/English Letters course marks the beginning of continuing education – carried out in teaching practice and without specific guidelines – for English teachers who choose to teach in the early years of ES (TUTIDA, 2016; DIAS; BROSSI, 2015).

¹² In the Portuguese version of this article, we adopted the “*professor/as*” inflection to refer to the group of professionals working in the sector. We chose the female (*professoras*) to refer to the two teachers participating in the study.

In her dissertation, Tutida problematizes the (non-) education of EFLC teachers from their own experience in teaching English in the early years, and their search for understanding and building the necessary knowledge for the professional who works in teaching English to children of the ES, right after the end of their initial training. In this regard, Santos (2009, p.176, our translation) lists desirable characteristics for EFLC teachers.

Being graduated in English to be taught; enjoying the English teaching area; knowing the content of this area and adapting it to the age group; Using attractive and dynamic methodologies; Knowing theories about child development; Improving yourself constantly through courses and other events; Being open to learning; Knowing theories of teaching and learning languages; Having an adequate level of proficiency in the target language to work with children.¹³

We agree with the author and emphasize the relevance of providing English teachers in initial training with moments of teacher observation and teaching, including in EFLC, to provide the experience and reflections regarding the specificities of the teaching work with children of the early years. The complexity involved in the process of EFL teacher education is notorious, and the limitations imposed by the curriculum of the Portuguese/English Letters and Literature course, and the non-integral nature of the course, make it difficult to insert new curricular components or subjects in the list of options for student of Letters. We believe, as well as Santos and Benedetti (2009), that continuing education actions can provide EFLC teachers with opportunities for reflections and resignifications¹⁴ on teaching praxis and on the work of the English teacher for children, with the development of gestures and mediating tools specific to the activity of EFLC teachers. For this reason, we defend that:

The desirable professional to work in this context is being built – taking into account the perspective of *inconclusion* defended by Porto (2004), as already mentioned – through some training actions, from a rethinking of the current curriculum and the implementation of subjects in Letters Courses that contemplate the specificities required of the teacher to work with children and continued educations, intentional and planned, aimed at the socialization of experiences. In this sense, through individual and collective studies and actions, the teacher must be conceived as

¹³ Original: “*Ser graduado na LE a ser ensinada; gostar da área de ensino de LE; conhecer o conteúdo dessa área e adequá-lo à faixa etária; Usar metodologias atrativas e dinâmicas; Conhecer teorias sobre o desenvolvimento da criança; Aperfeiçoar-se constantemente por meio de cursos e outro eventos; Mostrar-se aberto à aprendizagem; Conhecer teorias de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas; Ter nível adequado de proficiência na língua-alvo para atuar com crianças.*” (SANTOS, 2009, p.176).

¹⁴ In the sense of reframing, finding or giving new meanings to praxis.

agent of change who knows how to use the language and teach it for communicative purposes. (SANTOS; BENEDETTI, 2009, p.348, emphasis added, our translation).¹⁵

In this sense, we consider it necessary to understand teaching as the work and the acting of EFLC teachers. With this, we look for signs of the emergence of specific traits and gestures for the work of teaching English to children in the early years of ES in public schools in a city located in the metropolitan region of Goiânia, in groups of approximately 25-30 children.

Tonelli (2016, p.34, our translation), in turn, reinforces the need and importance of the period of observation of internship contexts during the initial training of the EFLC teacher. The author states that “prior observation of contexts was essential for more conscious decision-making by student-masters”¹⁶. Furthermore, in line with Lousada and Machado (2010), we argue that teachers build and use instruments to achieve their goals. These instruments modify the physical or social environment, as interactions with teachers occur, but they also undergo profound psychic transformations, increasing their knowledge, as well as developing capacities to act on the world and on the other. In this way, we also point out that the artifacts need to combine with other mediators, to be internalized and become appropriated instruments by the teachers “made available by the social environment”¹⁷ (LOUSADA; MACHADO, 2010, p.629, our translation).

Rosolem (2015, p.23, our translation) states that “artifacts are objects, material or symbolic, which were built by humanity to mediate the actions of man on the environment and on the other to achieve his goal”¹⁸. We agree with the author who, anchored in Rabardel (1995), points out that the artifact is appropriate according to the needs of teachers when it becomes a psychological instrument. In the Vygotskian conception, capacity development is allowed. In other words, for higher psychological functions to occur, learning is an essential aspect (FACCI, 2004). We share the opinion of Rosolem (2015, p.26, our translation) in the sense that “when interacting socially, individuals influence and are influenced, they start to behave under the social influence of a collective; individual action is driven by collective activity”¹⁹. Rosolem (2015)

¹⁵ Original: “O profissional desejável para atuar nesse contexto vai sendo construído – levando-se em consideração a perspectiva de inconclusão defendida por Porto (2004), conforme já citada – mediante algumas ações de formação, a partir de um repensar do currículo vigente e da implementação de disciplinas nos Cursos de Letras que contemplem as especificidades requeridas ao docente para atuação com crianças e formação continuada, intencional e planejada, que vise à socialização de experiências. Neste sentido, mediante estudos e ações individuais e coletivas, o professor deve ser concebido como agente de mudanças que sabe fazer uso da língua e ensiná-la com fins comunicativos.” (SANTOS; BENEDETTI, 2009, p.348).

¹⁶ Original: “a observação prévia dos contextos foi essencial para a tomada de decisões mais conscientes por parte dos alunos-mestres”. (TONELLI, 2016, p.34).

¹⁷ Original: “disponibilizados pelo meio social”. (LOUSADA; MACHADO, 2010, p.629).

¹⁸ Original: “os artefatos são objetos, materiais ou simbólicos, que foram construídos pela humanidade para mediar as ações do homem sobre o ambiente e sobre o outro para atingir sua meta”. (ROSOLEM, 2015, p.23).

¹⁹ Original: “ao interagir socialmente, os indivíduos influenciam e são influenciados, passam a comportar-se sob a influência social de um coletivo; a ação individual é impulsionada pela atividade coletiva”. (ROSOLEM, 2015, p.26).

also states that Vygotsky's conceptions serve as foundation for investigating acting through language, leading us to identify the English teachers for children investigated in this study, "as socio-historical and culturally situated beings, whose intervention of symbolic instruments can promote their development".²⁰

According to Faïta (2004, p.73, our translation), "systematic coercions of work situations"²¹, that we bring to this context in which we are inserted, of the investigated teachers, establish attitudes that characterize the specific teaching work of EFLC teachers. The author also states that there are practices that are forged through the "constitutive elements" (ESPINASSY, 2003), or by "economic, technical, regimental determinations [that] oblige the subject to redefine themselves based on their own values"²² (CANGUILHEM, 1975 *apud* FAÏTA, 2004, p.73, our translation).

Theorizations about the choices that "give meaning to their activity"²³, refer us to Faïta (2004, p.77, our translation), since "to obligatorily shape their way of teaching"²⁴ teachers reflect and choose whether to resort to that established norm of action within a given situation, or if they decide to "make it evolve according to the necessities"²⁵. In other words, faced with a situation in class similar to that described in excerpt 1, the English teacher, in the third or fifth year of ES, for example, might choose between recognizing the need to problematize naturalized concepts by a hegemonic discourse to which we are exposed every day, or to continue reinforcing exclusionary stereotypes, feeling unable to problematize them, even if superficially. What does the discourse of the teachers reveal to us? Whatever the choice of the teacher in question, language is the work tool that he/she uses to act. In this sense, we seek theoretical and methodological support at SDI to analyze the work of EFLC teachers, anchored in the studies of Labor Sciences of Ergonomics of the Activity (AMIGUES, 2004; SAUJAT, 2004) and Psychology of Work (FAÏTA, 2004; CLOT, 2007) in order to better understand the constitution of the activity of this teacher.

For Bakhtin/Volochinov, "every system of social norms [...] exists only in relation to the subjective consciousness of individuals who belong to the collectivity governed by these norms"²⁶ (BAKHTIN-VOLOCHINOV, 1997, p.97, our translation).

According to Faïta (2004, p.66, our translation),

²⁰ Original: "*como seres sócio históricos e culturalmente situados, cuja intervenção de instrumentos simbólicos pode propiciar o seu desenvolvimento*". (ROSOLEM, 2015, p.26).

²¹ Original: "*coerções sistemáticas das situações de trabalho*". (FAÏTA, 2004, p.73).

²² Original: "*determinações econômicas, técnicas, regimentais obrigam o sujeito a se redefinir a partir de seus próprios valores*". (FAÏTA, 2004, p.73.).

²³ Original: "*dão sentido à sua atividade*". (FAÏTA, 2004, p.77).

²⁴ Original: "*para dar obrigatoriamente forma a seu modo de ensinar*". (FAÏTA, 2004, p.77).

²⁵ Original: "*fazê-lo evoluir em função das necessidades*". (FAÏTA, 2004, p.77).

²⁶ Original: "*todo sistema de normas sociais [...] só existe em relação à consciência subjetiva dos indivíduos que pertencem à coletividade regida por essas normas*". (BAKHTIN-VOLOCHINOV, 1997, p.97).

The fact of giving to these shared ways of making a specific aspect, corresponding to particular concerns in the frame of an activity common to the set of a socio-professional category, undoubtedly allows talking about genre, in a way similar to what Bakhtin defines as genres of discourse or language genres.²⁷

We appeal to the considerations of Bakhtin-Voloshinov (1997) and Faïta (2004) in order to show that the absence of guidelines on the education of foreign language teachers for children in Brazil makes it extremely difficult to establish goals that guide the practice of the EFLC teacher. Although they do not formally exist, they belong to the collectivity governed by norms, not materialized in the official documents of MEC, State Councils of Education, Political-Pedagogical Projects of Letters courses, or of linguistic policies and EFLC teacher training.

However, how is this EFLC teacher constituted? We borrow Machado's (2007) description about the teaching work in order to start the reflections on training of EFLC teachers and on the work of teaching English to children,

The teaching work, in short, consists of a mobilization, by the teacher, of his integral being, in different situations – of planning, of class, of evaluation –, with the objective of creating a way that allows students to learn a set of contents of your subject and the development of specific skills related to these contents, oriented by a teaching project that is prescribed by different higher levels and with the use of instruments obtained from the social environment and in the interaction with different others that, directly or indirectly, are involved in the situation.²⁸ (MACHADO, 2007, p.93, our translation).

By the description of the teachers' acting, we highlight the fact that the prescription for his/her work comes from levels higher than that of his/her actions, since we, teachers, base our work on guidelines or laws that organize the different spheres of language education. However, with regard to the work of teaching EFLC, as it is not formally recognized in the Basic Education Guidelines, in the National Curriculum Guidelines (PCN) for initial teacher education (BRASIL, 2014), and in the current

²⁷ Original: “O fato de se dar a essas formas de fazer compartilhado um aspecto específico, correspondente a preocupações particulares no quadro de uma atividade comum ao conjunto de uma categoria sócio profissional, permite, sem dúvida alguma, falar de gênero, de um modo homólogo ao que Bakhtin define como gêneros de discurso ou gêneros de linguagem.” (FAÏTA, 2004, p.66).

²⁸ Original: “O trabalho docente, resumidamente, consiste em uma mobilização, pelo professor, de seu ser integral, em diferentes situações – de planejamento, de aula, de avaliação -, com o objetivo de criar um meio que possibilite aos alunos a aprendizagem de um conjunto de conteúdos de sua disciplina e o desenvolvimento de capacidades específicas relacionadas a esses conteúdos, orientando-se por um projeto de ensino que lhe é prescrito por diferentes instâncias superiores e com a utilização de instrumentos obtidos do meio social e na interação com diferentes outros que, de forma direta ou indireta, estão envolvidos na situação.” (MACHADO, 2007, p.93).

and recently approved (BNCC²⁹), teachers begin their activity “in face of restrictions from institutions, which give an initial configuration to their action, often explained in instructional or procedural texts”³⁰ (MACHADO, 2009, p.80) based on occupation suggested without specific prescriptive configuration.

Regarding the labor of the teachers, we seek support in Bronckart (1999-2003), for whom the prescribed work is designed as it is pre-defined in documents produced by companies, which instruct, provide templates, programs, etc. Therefore, the “prescribed work” is a representation of what the work should be, which is prior to its actual performance. This definition prior to the duties – the prescription – is one of the dimensions that seem to need reformulation in the educational field. As previously mentioned, there is no document in Brazil that is exclusively intended to “prescribe” the activity of teaching EFLC teachers.

Amigues (2004, p.41) states that the activity of the teacher is directed “to students, to the institution that employs them, to parents, to other professionals”, besides being “socially situated and constantly mediated by objects that constitute a system”³¹ (AMIGUES, 2004, p.42, our translation). We agree with the author who lists some objects that constitute the activity of the teachers, who establish and coordinate the relationships that materialize in the teachers’ acting: the prescriptions, the collectives, the rules of the profession and the tools. The work of EFLC teachers is characterized by vague prescriptions, little or no methodological guidance during the under graduation in Letters, which lead EFLC teachers to “redefine for themselves the tasks prescribed, in order to define the tasks that they will, in turn, prescribe to the students”³² (AMIGUES, 2004, p.42, our translation). Based on the initial prescriptions, teachers collectively self-prescribe tasks that are characteristic of the collective dimensions of teaching activity. With regard to the rules of the profession, they are those that connect EFLC teachers with each other, with a memory of acting common to all and a “toolbox” that are designed by teachers or others, and that can be transformed to become more effective (AMIGUES, 2004).

In the following, we describe the methodological apparatus used in this investigation, with special attention to the context of the investigated teachers, as well as their socio-historical constitution.

²⁹ Although the analysis of the referred document is not part of the objectives of this publication, we register our knowledge and awareness of the gap that remains regarding the teaching of EFLC. The National Base for Curriculum in Brazil (BNCC) 2018 was approved and is currently the official document that guides Education in Brazil, from early childhood education to high school. However, the teaching of English in the early years of elementary school is not provided for in the document, which unfortunately maintains the work of the teacher who works in this sphere in the informality, without guidance and guidelines for the teacher.

³⁰ Original: “*diante de restrições provenientes das instituições/empresas, que dão uma configuração inicial à sua ação, frequentemente explicitadas em textos instrucionais ou procedimentais*”. (MACHADO, 2009, p.80).

³¹ Original: “*aos alunos, à instituição que o emprega, aos pais, a outros profissionais*”, além de ser “*socialmente situada e constantemente mediada por objetos que constituem um sistema*”. (AMIGUES, 2004, p.42).

³² Original: “*redefinir para si mesmos as tarefas que lhes são prescritas, de modo a definir as tarefas que eles vão, por sua vez, prescrever aos alunos*”. (AMIGUES, 2004, p.42).

Contextualizing the study

This investigation is configured as a case study (YIN, 2001), inserted in the interpretive paradigm. The analyzed data *corpus* comes from two researches developed *a priori* and presented as a monographic essay for the conclusion of the Letters course. Dias (2014) and Monteiro (2016) investigated two teachers in two EFLC teaching contexts (6-13 years) in a small town in the interior of Goiás, where EL has been taught, as part of the ESI curriculum since 2006.

The data analyzed in this article were generated through questionnaires, interviews and reflective sessions which used drawings produced by the participants as a starting point³³. The interview was developed by Dias and Brossi (2015) and was one of the instruments for generating the data for the Dias course conclusion monographic essay in 2014. The questionnaires and reflective sessions mediated by drawing were carried out in the extension course that Iza participated in 2014 and 2015 at UEG, UnU Inhumas. Reflective sessions mediated by drawing were one of the socialization activities after reading texts related to teaching and training foreign language teachers for children. Brossi, Tonelli and Furio (2018) analyze the participants' discourses in the extension course when talking about the drawing that represented the following question: "how do you imagine, see yourself as an English teacher for children, in a classroom?" The authors consider that the representations about the work of the English teacher for children reveal great challenges in relation to teaching as work, that is, teachers' acting. The excerpts from the reflective sessions analyzed in this article are clippings from one of the participants in the extension course, who is an EFLC teacher in the municipal network of Inhumas/GO.

The criterion for data analysis adopted in this study is the reflection based on the assumptions about teachers' acting and on the critical education of EFLC teachers. Below, we present Chart 1, which contains information on the profiles of the two investigated teachers and on the generation of data in the respective studies Dias and Brossi (2015) and Monteiro (2016).

³³ The reflexive session mediated by drawing was an activity developed in the extension course in which Iza participated at UEG. For more details on this generation instrument see Tonelli, Brossi e Furio (2018).

Chart 1 – Investigated teachers’ profiles

Teacher	School where she Works	Education	Data generation
Stephany 26 years old	School A	Graduated in Letters Portuguese/English - (UEG), Master’s degree in Letters and Linguistics (UFG) and PhD candidate (UFG)	Research developed in 2013. Data generated through observation and field notes from 14 lessons of 50-minutes each, questionnaires, narratives and interview. Monographic essay presented in 2014.
Iza 32 years old	Schools A and B	Graduated in Letters Portuguese/English - (UEG), Specialist in Higher Education Teaching (Fabec)	Research developed in 2016. Data generated through observation and field notes of 16 lessons observed, 12 at school A and 4 at school B, questionnaire and reflective session mediated by drawing.

Source: Authors’ elaboration.

Dias’ research (2014) was carried out at municipal school A, where Stephany was an English teacher for the first to fifth grades of ESI classes. In 2016, Monteiro (2016) investigated Iza, an English teacher at school A, as well as at school B. The contexts are characterized by Monteiro (2016) as “different” due to the privileged location of school A. However, both schools have small classrooms, with little mobility space for playful and body expression activities. Even to change the arrangement of desks would be a difficult task in the daily routine, according to Dias (2014) and Monteiro (2016).

In relation to the physical parameters of this study, we present in Chart 2 information to help compose the socio-historical cultural context of the teachers. It can also be observed that, as mentioned earlier, there are differences in the moment of data generation. However, the researcher and professor³⁴ of the Letters course directly participated in the generation of data in both cases: in 2014, when conducting the interview with Stephany (DIAS; BROSSI, 2015) and, in 2015, with Iza, when producing and applying the questionnaires and conducting the reflective session mediated by drawing, that took place as an activity carried out in the extension course, with Iza’s participation, in which the first author/researcher worked.

³⁴ The first author of this article.

Chart 2 – Physical context of production

PHYSICAL PARAMETERS	
Physical location of production	UEG Inhumas campus
Moment of production	Stephany – 2014 Iza – 2015
Producer	2 English teachers working in the early years of public school
The receiver	Researcher and professor in the course of Letters at UEG Inhumas
Purpose of the interaction established between the interlocutor and the recipient	Stephany – collaboration with the research; Iza – participation in the extension course: teacher education: teaching English to children ³⁵

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Next, we highlight the socio-international parameters in order to analyze the contextual differences, among which we emphasize the social place of Stephany and Iza: while the former was observed, and interviewed as the EFLC teacher, the latter occupied the place of a student in that course extension. We also address the difference between the purpose of interaction established by the physical parameters and the socio-international or subjective ones. While Stephany participated in the study in an attitude of collaboration with Dias' research (2014), Iza's participation occurred in an interaction established through involvement and participation in the extension course. However, in Chart 3, we note that the interaction occurred in order to promote the debate regarding the (non-) formation of EFLC teachers in the Letters course.

³⁵ The extension course "Teacher education: teaching English to children" was the first extension action at UEG Inhumas aimed specifically at discussing EFLC teaching and teacher training to work in this context. The course took place in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Chart 3 – Survey of the socio-subjective context

SOCIO-INTERACTIONAL OR SOCIO-SUBJECTIVE PARAMETERS	
Social place	Stephany – Research project: “Course planning, beliefs and actions of English teachers in the early years: education or suffering?” 2012.. Iza – Extension Project – Teacher Education: teaching English to children. 2015
Enunciator’s social role	Stephany – teacher; Iza – teacher and student in the extension course.
Receptor’s social role	Researcher and teacher education professor.
Purpose of the interaction established between the interlocutor and the receptor	Promoting the debate on the importance of adapting teacher education in the Letters course, and other scenarios with English teaching in the early years.

Source: Authors’ elaboration.

The data were generated and processed according to the research objectives of each student. In the study by Dias (2014), the objective of the monographic essay for conclusion in the under graduated course was to show how the teaching of EL was configured in the early years at a municipal public school in a city in the interior of Goiás. In turn, Monteiro’s (2016) monographic essay aimed to analyze and verify how the extension course contributed to the learning and reflection about the teaching of an under graduated in Letters (Portuguese/English) in the first years of ES, and how it can prepare them for the real scenario. For the present study, we retrieved the transcriptions and categorized them in order to create a dialogue between the voices of the EFLC teachers in the two studies, concerning teaching as work and about the initial training itself, which we bring next.

Dialogues and developments on the teachers’ work

“I feel sad, sometimes, for not knowing what to do, how to help. I feel lost and I often question the usefulness of EL for some children. But hope is what keeps me going and keeps me from giving up. So I cling to her and, within my means, I try to do the best, what I think is the best.” Stephany

We start our discussion seeking to dialogue with the speeches of the teachers, and in the light of the authors that support us, presenting the excerpt transcribed from

Stephany's interview shortly after the introduction. The teacher is characterized by being involved in all her lines, in an interactive discourse, using the personal deixis (I) and clearly taking responsibility for her actions. We chose to start our discussions with the first research question, namely: what do the participants say in reference to their initial teacher training? Both corroborate Tutida (2016), by showing that they were not prepared to work in teaching EFLC in the initial years of ESI. Iza, when answering the question about her preparation during under graduation to work in the teaching of EFLC, answers us:

Excerpt 1:

Iza - No. At the end of the Letters course, I was (and felt) qualified only for the final years of Elementary School and High School. I had no idea what it was like to work with students from the 1st to the 5th grades, especially EL. (IQ³⁶).

In the same way, Stephany, when asked if facing her reality, she considers that for the English teacher in the early years, it is more necessary to know the English language or it is more necessary to be a pedagogue, ponders:

Excerpt 2:

Stephany - But I also think that it is not a lack of being a pedagogue, because I think that the English teacher does not have to be a pedagogue, as a pedagogue is. I think we have to know how to deal with various types of public, and unfortunately in the Letters [course], we are not prepared to deal with children. In fact, I think there must be a change here³⁷ in the Letters [course], in the Letters course [...] bringing a little bit of pedagogy here too [...] unfortunately at least when I was studying here that was what I have noticed, they were teaching me to teach at a college... because when I went to elementary school and high school, I was scared when I saw that there. Nobody has told me that I had to face it that there. So what I see the teachers doing... what I saw was them... maybe trying to teach me how to teach the university. (I³⁸)

Stephany reflects on the lack of preparation for the teaching work of EFLC and points out other issues concerning the training she received during her under graduation at the institution where we met. It is possible to infer that the participant – even located in that space (here, there) –: showing the distance between theory and practice, in addition to possibly the lack of capacity to relate the knowledge taught in the Letters course to the knowledge necessary to exercise their activity of teaching EL to children in classrooms characteristic of public schools. By suggesting the approximation between

³⁶ IQ – initial questionnaire.

³⁷ We intentionally highlighted the spatial deixis for prominence in the teachers' semiotizations.

³⁸ I – Interview.

the pedagogy course and the Letters course, Stephany seems to show that there is a deficit of fundamentals and principles that help the teacher to develop his teachers' acting, in the spheres of performance for which he was being prepared. Corroborating Pessoa and Borelli (2011), in the efforts to train teachers oriented by a "critical and creative reflective practice, not simply reproductive", Stephany adds in response to the same question:

Excerpt 3:

Stephany - I think there must be more of this university/school communication, uh... university professor/public school teacher. There has to be more dialogue. (I)

Excerpt 4:

Stephany - I think there has to be this sharing, really, of knowledge, of experience, you know? (I)

We consider that, when using deontic modalizations (BRONCKART, 1999-2003) (there has to be/must be), Stephany reinforces a collective and social discourse, coming from the academy, from teacher training courses and, possibly, from other co-workers about the need for communication between the school and university. The teacher shows approval through the initiative of researching the context of the teaching of EFLC with the use of 'this', referring to the communication and sharing that we sought through research. We recognize that, based on this excerpt (and all the research carried out with Stephany), the teacher training extension course for the teaching of EFLC was conceived, which had its inaugural edition in 2015, shortly after the presentation of the results of the original study (DIAS, 2014).

In this sense, when we ask: when having closer contact, through the internship, or when completing the course, were your expectations regarding academic education met? Iza tells us:

Excerpt 5:

Iza - I still haven't imagined myself as a teacher. My interest was to deepen my studies on the English language. I came to realize that teaching requires a dual role: knowledge on the subject and on didactic mobility. I could see that just knowing the language was not enough to deal with an increasingly connected audience in the globalized world. Because of this and the little apparatus in practice, I was insecure in dealing with the classroom. Believing that I would be incapable to teach English classes successfully or that any other student could become involved in learning. Mainly because of all this culture, we are ingrained that English is not learned at school. (Q³⁹).

³⁹ Q – Questionnaire

Iza evinces the incompleteness of teacher training when she realizes that knowing the language to be taught is not enough, thus reinforcing the importance and urgency for EFLC teachers to have specific training, relating theory and practice, and strengthening the confidence of the EFLC teacher. We postulate, based on Iza's semiotizations, and anchored in Santos and Benedetti (2009), that the EFLC teacher is being built, based on her experiences, in a continuous teacher education. Iza makes it clear that she considers it necessary to know the target audience and question the belief that English is not learned in public schools. The teacher also emphasizes that she considers the search for continuing education to be relevant during the exercise of teaching.

Excerpt 6:

Iza - Training and adaptation. Knowing the language and the didactic-pedagogical theories must be combined with a professional individuality. Each situation requires some practice and there is no manual with the best instructions, but, rather, a continuous critical assessment for the best performance in the most diverse situations. (Q2).

Excerpt 7:

Iza - I am not in the draw, because I believe that our place before going to the classroom is here, right, looking for training, doing research, looking for culture. [...] (RS⁴⁰)

In addition to emphasizing the importance of continuing education for the EFLC teacher, Iza also mentions that there is no "manual", but there are continuous criticisms, pointing out the difficulty in not having guidance about the teachers' acting, of her teaching work. However, it can be noted that Iza reveals the belief that the interaction in the target language can be developed in contact with the native English speaker, evidencing the social, collective discourse of valuing the native speaker at the expense of local knowledge.

Excerpt 8:

Iza - Because we have a serious problem, right, we go to the classroom to work on English without knowing the minimum of English culture, the minimum of American culture, the minimum of even sitting down and having the opportunity that we will have next Saturday, working with Professor Lennon who is from the USA. (RS)

The collective discourse emphasized by the use of the deictic 'we' shows that there is apparently a discourse (implied) of socially constructed and naturalized power, which attributes greater prestige to American culture, to the detriment of other EL speakers, and especially disregarding the entire trajectory of formation of the undergraduate

⁴⁰ RS - Reflective session mediated by drawing.

course, in addition to the knowledge (co)built in interactions with teacher education professors who speak English as a foreign language. It can also be inferred that during her initial training, the teacher did not have experiences and reflections that questioned the linguistic and professional competence between native English teachers and English speakers as a foreign language. Furthermore, from our point of view, this speech denotes the perspective that language and culture are dissociated.

Some other recurring topics in the teachers' semiotizations, which we analyze below, are the physical and contextual conditions considered essential for the teaching of EFLC.

Excerpt 9:

Iza - So it is... for me an English classroom for children has to be at least colorful, the ideal for me would be a thematic classroom. What would a thematic classroom be? A language room, as so many PPPs talks about here and there, and today no school, at least in the first phase, has a language room, it has a laboratory; unfortunately right? Because if you are going to work on language, we have a whole load behind it, right, so the least you need to have is a computer, a projector, right, since you are going to study the language, we need images, we need sound, you need color, right, especially when it comes to children. Then I translated a little how my ideal room would be, it would be an English Classroom, exclusively for English. Eh... then I put a projector, color, music, dictionary, technology that it is what I suffer the most nowadays, because what good is it for children to play with tablets, computers and cell phones at home if there at school you have black and white cut in half copy, you know. Eh... textbook that I put there is a textbook which I still haven't found to fulfill my thirst for teaching, eh ... colored pencils, color markers, music, posters [...] (RS)

Iza mentions the thematic classroom, the resources that mediate the teachers' action, specifically for the teaching work with children, also pointing out the characteristic of the deficit of technological tools that could promote greater interest and motivation among children.

On the other hand, it is observed that the view put by Stephany is in line with what was exposed by Bronckart (1999-2003) in the sense that in order to talk about the work done, the EFLC teacher assumes a social voice (us) when mentioning that personal issues interfere not only in the teaching work, but also in the child's learning, at the same time that she reveals herself as a teacher based on a critical perspective, since it understands the influence of problems experienced at home, in the child's learning.

Excerpt 10:

Stephany - Yes... And at home, when your work is not [going] well, it is reflected at home and vice versa. So we have to consider all of this, we cannot isolate it. The student is sometimes a good student, but there are days when he is not well. So sometimes

something is going on at his house. I cannot make him give me the answer I want, you know. This is complicated. (I)

Stephany reveals her social voice by using ‘we’ and getting involved in this group that ‘have to consider all this’, showing the profile of a comprehensive and patient teacher through the ‘troubled’ situations experienced by children in public schools, which can jeopardize their own development.

Excerpt 11:

Stephany - [...] Many don’t have family support to study, and I don’t know how that works. But the life of the child, of any child today is very troubled. They are living as adults, right? Unfortunately. (I)

Excerpt 12:

Stephany - [...] Many children, today, live problems that adults do. For example, I have a student who has to take care of her younger sister and herself because the mother has to work. Another, has no father and his mother is a user [...] (I)

Stephany’s excerpts demonstrate, in our view, the traits of a teacher who intends to understand the reality of families and children, in addition to recognizing the need for contextualized and meaningful classes to maintain children’s interest and motivation. We believe that these characteristics are part of the profile of EFLC teachers, in addition to the one already mentioned by Santos (2009).

Excerpt 13:

Stephany - [...] they are interested in learning what... stimulates them, what matters, which piques their interest. I think they want to learn what is part of the reality of their world. I think that’s it... When it is a very distant thing they say: Ish... Sometimes I even think it’s cool, but I notice the disinterest. Now if it’s something that they live through, that they see, that they hear, that they know they can come to use or that they realize that they can use it at least there with me, they are interested. But what I also realize is that... in order for me to maintain this interest, I always have to be... [laughs]. You know? Always happy, always stimulating. And it is very tiring. (I)

Excerpt 14:

Stephany - So I have to show interest too so that they have the answer I want, right? I have to be well too [...]. (I)

Stephany highlights the pressure suffered by teachers in general and the physical and emotional stress peculiar to the teaching work with children, which naturally

require more teacher involvement due to the socio-psycho-affective development needs of the age group (VYGOTSKY, 1998; MELLO, 2007), and the teacher's intention to maintain children's interest. Stephany expresses herself using the deontic modalities (I have to) including being involved in the discourse through personal deixis (I), who demonstrate the profile of a teacher aware of her role. It is also possible to affirm that, for Stephany, emotional balance and the ability to keep the child interested and motivated are essential characteristics to exercising teaching work, constituting the EFLC teachers' acting. Regarding the *metier* of this professional, we can infer that the participant defends that knowing the development of several significant aspects of the child, knowing how to adapt the contents to their peculiarities and enjoying performing tasks that involve playfulness are characteristics of the teachers' acting for the EFLC teaching.

We corroborate Stephany – excerpts 15 and 16 – when stating that for the objectives of such teaching to be achieved, it is essential that the EFLC teacher has an education that includes the study of the characteristics and capabilities of children (6 – 12 years old), through an interdisciplinary curriculum, involving Psychology, Pedagogy, Sociology, in addition to the studies of Applied Linguistics and Letters – assuming a transdisciplinary nature, in the construction of a science of the human (BRONCKART, 1999-2003).

Excerpt 15:

Stephany - Yeah... I think that at the beginning, especially at the beginning, it has to be more playful, right? I think the important thing is to make them like it, because in fact I still haven't been able to make those from the very beginning to communicate... you know [...] (I)

Excerpt 16:

Stephany - [what should be taught to children] In my opinion, games, stories, music, simple activity... I find the content relative. Any content can be taught, depending on the way it is taught. (IQ)

The analysis of this participant's discourse gives us clues that understanding the relevance of playfulness constitutes a rule of the profession (AMIGUES, 2004) of teaching EFLC, as well as having the ability to adapt "any content" to the child's essential needs. It can also be inferred that when instrumentalizing through the appropriation of mediating artifacts (ROSOLEM, 2015) characteristic of EFLC teaching – games, stories, music – Stephany demonstrates the internalization that promotes the transformation of the physical and/or social environment, developing capacities to act on the world and on the other (LOUSADA; MACHADO, 2010), making artifacts psychological instruments (VYGOTSKY, 1998) for teachers' acting.

Final remarks

This article aimed to know the activity of the teacher of English as a foreign language for children (EFLC) and the dimensions of the teachers' acting based on the statements of the investigated teachers. To achieve this goal, we tried to answer two questions. With regard to the first one, "what do the teachers say regarding their initial training?", we can say that Stephany and Iza confirm the results of Tutida (2016), that the teachers graduated in Letters do not feel prepared to work at ESI, with the teaching of EFLC.

The analysis of the teachers' semiotizations shows that both reinforce the lack of training provided by fundamentals and principles to develop their acting. The teachers indicate that there should be a closer interaction between theory and practice, data that it is directly related to the next result, which is the need for pedagogical and didactic training, in addition to critical education and towards social justice, empathy for the child, being able to put oneself in the other's place for teaching EFLC. They also reinforce the lack of tools for teaching.

Stephany, in turn, demonstrates greater identification with the activity of teaching EFLC, involving herself in her speech, in addition to evidencing the presence of the constituent objects of teachers' acting (AMIGUES, 2004) and the internalization of the mediating artifacts of this complex work of teaching English at ESI.

Regarding the second question "How can the analysis of the semiotizations of the two teachers contribute to the training of EFLC teachers?" the reflections made in this study lead us to believe that it is necessary to adapt the curriculum of the Letters course, with a focus on teacher education, based on dimensions, objects, necessary knowledge and analysis of teachers' acting in a real environment of EFLC teaching in the early years of ES. The specificities of children's development (from 6 to 12 years old), as well as the use of mediating artifacts and methodology, are not addressed during the training of teachers, thus causing them frustration from the moment they are qualified for the start of the teaching activity.

Our reflections on the work of the EFLC teacher and the constitution of the acting of these teaching professionals allowed us to make some reflections and propose forwarding guidelines in order to establish directions for the specific training of EFLC teachers. We agree with the participating teachers, that there are essential aspects of the EFLC teachers' acting, which involve the entire human dimension of a teacher, both in terms of personal characteristics, as well as in attitudes, capacities and skills to be developed:

- 1 - knowing the child's global development;
- 2 - knowing how to adapt the contents to children's characteristics;
- 3 - enjoying to develop playful activities;
- 4 - appropriating games, children's stories, music and other instruments to act on and with the child.

We encourage the problematization of teachers' acting both in initial and continuing education, in undergraduate courses, in extension actions and in post-graduate courses, in order to meet a real demand in this expanding context.

We conclude that the investigated teachers emphasize some characteristics necessary to the profile of EFLC teachers, including the ability to put themselves in the child's place, to adapt the content to the age group and local context, in addition to internalizing the mediating instruments and being emotionally balanced to promote learning, and maintain children's interest.

Some beliefs were also mentioned, such as the EFLC teacher must always be motivated and must try to get closer to American and/or English culture, which shows the overvaluation of American culture, and the complexities of linguistic imperialism still latent and little problematized in undergraduate education. We consider it relevant to point out that, the appropriate knowledge in the course of a continuing education process, combined with the development of skills, capacities, gestures characteristic of the EFLC teachers' acting, in a formation that is reflective and critical, questioning, and focused on the transformation of the reality where they are inserted, can contribute to the resignification of the beliefs and conceptions revealed in the participants' discourse.

We believe that the discussions and dialogues held here, from the semiotizations of EFLC teachers, can contribute to the strengthening of the professional identities of EFLC teachers working in all spheres, from early childhood education to the final years of ES, since the two participants seem to build this identity and their acting in their own practice.

Despite the finding that the gap in the training of EFLC teachers greatly interferes in the constitution of the teachers' acting of these teachers who work in this sphere, we defend the initiatives that are already taking place, in a diffuse but striking way. Many actions have been created, developed and implemented starting from individual and collective efforts and interests, from groups of trainers in the Higher Education Institutions represented here (UEG and UEL). Actions ranging from the insertion of optional subjects, EFLC teaching extension projects, offering supervised internship, teacher training courses, events, lectures, and even a *lato sensu* postgraduate course in EFLC teaching, to fill at least partially, this gap in the initial training in undergraduate Letters.

We hope that the discussions proposed in this study collaborate with future research which also deals with the teaching of EFLC, materializing characteristics of the acting of these teachers, and that with this knowledge the teaching education professors can build a curriculum for the course of Letters that include reflections and training actions that help the future EFLC teacher to better understand the teaching activity and the constitutive dimensions of this acting.

BROSSI, G.; TONELLI, J. A construção do agir docente por professoras de língua inglesa para crianças: um olhar para o ensino como trabalho. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.65, 2021.

- *RESUMO: Este artigo objetiva conhecer a atividade do/a professor/a de língua inglesa para crianças (LIC) e as dimensões desse agir com base nos fundamentos teórico-metodológicos do Interacionismo Sociodiscursivo (ISD) (BRONCKART, 1999-2003, 2007, 2008). Os dados foram retomados de dois estudos de caso desenvolvidos em 2014 e 2016. O aporte teórico adotado discute a lacuna existente na formação de professores/as de LIC (ROCHA; TONELLI; SILVA, 2010; TONELLI; FERREIRO; BELO-CORDEIRO, 2017; SANTOS; BENEDETTI, 2009) no que diz respeito às particularidades da criança (VYGOTSKY, 1998) e à formação de cidadãos críticos (ROCHA; BASSO, 2007; PESSOA; BORELLI, 2011). O ensino como trabalho e a constituição do agir docente (FAÏTA, 2004; AMIGUES, 2004; MACHADO, 2004) ancoram as análises dos discursos das professoras investigadas, e para a geração de dados foram utilizados questionários, entrevistas e uma sessão reflexiva mediada por desenho. A análise dos dados reforçou a relevância da formação de professores/as com foco nas especificidades da atividade do/a professor/a de LIC que é constituída de todas as dimensões do humano. A análise também desvelou crenças das professoras a respeito do ensino de LIC na escola pública, e a influência do imperialismo linguístico.*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Atividade docente. Ergonomia. Formação crítica de professores. Inglês para crianças. Interacionismo sociodiscursivo.*

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APPENDIX A

Interview script (DIAS; BROSSI, 2015)

1. Do you know if the need that the municipality saw for English in the early years came from the teachers who asked for it? Or was it the education department itself that had this initiative?
2. Would you say you can achieve your goals in 01 hour per week of teaching English in the early years?
3. What is the methodology that works best for teaching EL in the early years in your opinion? And specifically in the 1st and 2nd years?
4. What skill should be exercised the most in the early years for you? And specifically in the 1st and 2nd years?
5. How is the selection of content done for the initial years? Does the planning come from the secretariat of education? It is the same? Is this annual planning made collaboratively by all of you?
6. And then, faced with this reality, do you understand that for the English teacher in the early years, it is more necessary to know the English or is it more necessary to be a pedagogue?
7. Do you think you achieved your goals in 2013 in the early years? And in the 1st year?
8. What is the role of music in the learning of EL in the 1st year?
9. What kind of content should be prioritized in the early years?
10. Are you free to teach? What hinders your freedom to teach as you wish?
11. Did you work the way you wanted? Justify.
12. Do you (teachers) from Inhumas work collaboratively?
13. Comment:
 - a. The students are interested in learning easy things.
 - b. The motivated student learns better.
 - c. The school's context makes learning EL difficult.
 - d. It is up to the teacher to awaken the student's taste for the language and reduce the barriers?

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