ABSTRACT: The topic of this article is reading activities in English language teaching. The general objective is to analyze the reading activities proposed in the reading section of the 6th year textbook, “Beyond Words”. Specifically, the objective is to analyze the reading strategies proposed by the National Common Curricular Base for the 6th year and the strategies proposed in the textbook. Methodologically, it is documentary research, of a qualitative and interpretative nature. Theoretically, this article is based on the socio-cognitive conception of reading, on studies of reading in the English language, besides that, it uses, as a parameter, some BNCC prescriptions (BRASIL, 2017). The results indicate that the reading strategies proposed in this document are reduced when compared to the proposed in the textbook. It is concluded that the textbook is more updated than the BNCC and it incorporates more theoretical assumptions of contemporary linguistic studies.

KEYWORDS: English language teaching. Reading. Textbook. BNCC.
RESUMEN: El tema de este artículo son las actividades de lectura en la enseñanza del idioma inglés. El objetivo general es verificar las propuestas de lectura en la sección “Reading” del libro de texto “Beyond Words” para el 6º año de la Escuela Primaria II. El objetivo específico es analizar las prescripciones para el eje de lectura en el VI Base Común Curricular Nacional y verificar las actividades de comprensión lectora del libro de texto. Metodológicamente, se trata de una investigación documental, de carácter cualitativo e interpretativo. Teóricamente, este artículo se basa en la concepción sociocognitiva de la lectura, en los estudios de lectura en lengua inglesa, Además de tomar como parámetro algunas prescripciones de BNCC (BRASIL, 2018). Los resultados indican que las estrategias de lectura propuestas en este documento son muy reducidas en relación al libro de texto analizado. Se concluye que el libro de texto analizado está actualizado en relación al BNCC e incorpora muchos supuestos teóricos de los estudios lingüísticos contemporáneos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés. Leyendo. Libro de texto. BNCC.

Introduction

This article presents an excerpt from the dissertation presented in the postgraduate program in Applied Linguistics at the University of Taubaté on “Reading activities in the teaching of English: an analysis of the textbook Beyond Words of the 6th year of Elementary School II”. In this work, we focus on reading activities in English language teaching, more specifically the activities proposed in the Reading section of the Beyond Words textbook of the 6th year of Elementary School II.

The problem that motivated this research is the need for teachers to be able to recognize the possible difficulties in reading activities in a textbook so that they can supply them in the preparation of their classes, as indicated by other research on the teaching of reading.

Therefore, it was established as an objective to analyze the reading activities proposed in the Reading section of the textbook “Beyond Words” of the 6th year of Elementary School II.

The research will help to minimize the problem that motivated the research. In this way, teachers who come into contact with this article will be able to make the activities proposed in the textbook more appropriate for the development of reading skills.

Theoretically, this article is based on the socio-cognitive conception of reading and on studies of reading in the English language. In addition to taking as a parameter some prescriptions of the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC (BRASIL, 2018).

This article is a documentary research, of a qualitative and interpretative nature. The following methodological procedures were carried out: 1) selection of reading activities in the
Reading section of Unit 1 of the 6th year “Beyond Words” textbook; 2) analysis of activities in a qualitative and interpretative way; 3) selection of the reading skills proposed in the National Common Curricular Base of English for the 6th year (BRASIL, 2018).

In the following sections, this article presents the theoretical background, the methodological procedures, the results, the final considerations and the references.

Theoretical foundation

The socio-cognitive conception of reading

Until the second half of the 70s, reading was considered a decoding process, that is, reading was understood only as the ability to decipher the written code to understand its meaning (KLEIMAN, 2004). According to Solé (1996), reading was considered a bottom-up process, in which decoding was essential to decipher letters, words and phrases. The reading process happened passively between the reader and the text, which occurred from the bottom up and always from the text to the reader.

For Solé (1996), this process was not enough because it did not consider previous knowledge, the formulation of hypotheses nor the objectives that the reader had about a given text. Decoding is important; however, it is not the only skill for understanding.

For Marcuschi (2008), considering comprehension as a synonym for decoding is related to the concept of static, homogeneous language and not to the concept of heterogeneous language and as a social practice. Decryption is not enough, because you cannot understand a text or form a more critical citizen just by deciphering it. For this author, considering understanding as deciphering is not recognizing a text as a “creative, active and constructive process that goes beyond strictly textual information” (MARCUSCHI, 2008, p. 61, our translation).

For many years, this was the vision of reading that existed in our society because language was seen as an abstract, homogeneous system and not considered under social and historical aspects. This conception of language arose from the structuralist current, which Ferdinand Saussure was part of. For Marcuschi (2008, p. 59), this perspective was only concerned with structural levels (phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic), without dealing with the use of language, working the units in isolation and away from any context.

From the 1980s, it was found that language involves a cognitive activity. Thus, according to Koch (2005), it was awakened the awareness that to perform any action, it was
necessary a set of cognitive operations. Therefore, it was noticed that reading is an activity that encompasses some psychological processes and not just decoding. Then, the focus changed: they started to consider reading, according to Solé (1996), as an interactive process - ascending (Bottom up) and descending (Top down) at the same time, in which the reader does not just decipher (decode) the words, but also makes use of previous knowledge and cognitive resources.

The advances in studies in the cognitive process of reading have brought the perception of the importance of the interaction that occurs between the text and the reader during reading. Thus, the concept of reading as an interactive process proved to be more appropriate. This new conception “assumes that the reader is an active processor of the text, and that reading is a constant process of issuing and verifying hypotheses that lead to the construction of text comprehension and the control of comprehension” (SOLÉ, 1996, p. 24, our translation). Still in the words of the same author, to read it is necessary not only to know how to decode a text, but also to know the strategies that can lead to understanding a text, such as: inference, prior knowledge and reading objective.

From the end of the twentieth century, with the advances in studies in Applied Linguistics, neurobiology, anthropology and several areas of science, there was a major turnaround in cognitive studies, as they found, according to Kock (2005), that many of our cognitive processes are mediated by language, but they occur in society and not just in individuals. With this, a socio-cognitive conception of reading was developed and the concepts of language, prior knowledge and its acquisition, text and reader were expanded.

For Marcuschi (2008, p. 240, our translation), it was noticed that:

[... ] the language is much more than a system of phonological, syntactic and lexical structures. The language is not even a structure; it is structured simultaneously on several planes, such as phonological, syntactic, semantic and cognitive, which are organized in the enunciation process. The language is a cultural, historical, social and cognitive phenomenon that varies over time and according to the speakers: it manifests itself in its functioning and is sensitive to the context. It is not a monolithic and transparent system, for “photographing” reality, but it is heterogeneous and always works situationally in the dialogical relationship, as Bakhtin (1979) teaches.

This new concept of language showed that for the acquisition of prior knowledge, it is necessary to consider the historical-social context in which the reader is inserted. Thus, in addition to linguistic, textual and encyclopedic knowledge, it is necessary, according to the same author, to accept social, anthropological, historical, factual, scientific knowledge and many others.
The new conception of language, as mentioned by Marcuschi (2008), is used to express feelings and, through each enunciation, we build a different type of text, not loose and disconnected phrases, as the structuralists thought. Linked to this change in conception is the new conception of text.

The text is much more than a set of phrases or a finished product, they identified that the text is open to various types of understandings. With this we see that the text is not something ready, since it is always under construction over time and in the understandings of readers (MARCUSCHI, 2008, p. 240).

The reader will build understanding from a relationship between text-reader and author. Therefore, it can be said that understanding is “the result of joint work between producers and recipients in real situations of language use” (MARCUSCHI, 2008, p. 240, our translation). Therefore, the meaning is not in the author, in the reader, nor in the text, but in the relationship that exists between them and in their activities.

The socio-cognitive conception of reading considers the cognitive factors that occur within readers and those that occur outside in society. According to Marcuschi, one must also consider a “heterogeneous, social, historical, cognitive, indeterminate, variable, interactive and situated” (MARCUSCHI, 2008, p. 65, our translation) view of language. Within this new perspective, meaning is constructed by the text, but understood by the reader, since it is an activity that occurs dialogically between both.

**Reading strategies and English language teaching**

According to Santorum and Scherer (2008), when it comes to the acquisition of reading in a second language, it is healthy to distinguish the terms skill and reading strategy, since they are used in an unruly way. Ability refers to the procedure that is used in an unconscious way and strategy refers to the procedure that is used consciously, with a defined objective and that has a domain on the part of the reader. For these authors, the distinction between skill and strategy is important for teachers, as it gives a direction on what readers do in the reading process and the reasons why they do it.

According to Santorum and Scherer (2008), strategies can be divided into metacognitive and cognitive. Cognitive strategies make it possible to read the meaning of words in the context or even skim them to look for the main subject of the text. On the other hand, metacognitive strategies are those that involve an individual's reflection on their
processes, it is “knowing about one's own knowledge” (SANTORUM; SCHERES, 2008, p. 3, our translation).

For Santorum and Scheres (2008), school practices should develop in students the explicit teaching of strategies so that they can become proficient readers, since in understanding reading in a foreign language it is not enough just to decipher the words, since the deciphering does not involve communicative competence. In this perspective, the teaching of strategy allows the reader to become aware of the processes that involve comprehension and when this occurs, he starts to be seen as an active reader within the comprehension process, relating the meaning of the text to his previous knowledge and identifying the actual use of the language. Thus, as mentioned by Santorum and Scheres (2008), teachers must act as “scaffolding” in the initial process of learning the reading ability, mediating the text and the reader.

Santorum and Scherer (2008) propose the use of three stages to develop reading strategies so that they become automatic, that is, meta-cognitive. The following terms are used: pre-reading activities; activity during reading; and post-reading activities. The pre-reading activity is when the readers, through the forecast, decide if they will read the text or not. Readers are encouraged from the title, edition and date of publication to read quickly. At this stage, there is also prediction. “In it the student learns to anticipate the content, to formulate a hypothesis about the macro propositions that the text must contain and to think about the subject of the text” (SANTORUM; SCHERES, 2008, p. 9, our translation).

For activities during reading, the authors suggest encouraging readers to use the strategy of self-questioning and self-monitoring. Self-questioning can be done by using inferences, monitoring what you understand and the structure of the text. Self-monitoring, on the other hand, can occur by “monitoring one's understanding, verifying whether understanding is actually happening and adopting repair strategies if it is not” (SANTORUM; SCHERES, 2008, p. 9, our translation).

In the last stage proposed by the authors, post-reading activities are when the reader “is encouraged to relate the content read to its existing scheme and to evaluate it in the light of his own experiences and knowledge, promoting greater integration with the text” (SANTORUM; SCHERES, 2008, p. 10, our translation). For these authors, during the application of the three stages, it is necessary to awaken the reader's awareness of the reading process, in addition to showing the importance of the stages for the reading comprehension.

Tomich (2009) also argues that the reading class should be divided into three moments: pre-reading, reading and post-reading. This division is justified because each phase
Reading strategies in English language teaching: a comparison between the educational book and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC)

has a specific objective, which contributes to the reading comprehension of the students. The pre-reading phase is the one that is done before the student reads the text properly and the objective is to verify what the students already know about the text subject, motivate them to read the text that will follow and help them in building the meaning of the text. This phase is a preparation for the next one and can be formed by activities such as: previous discussion of the subject, exploration of images, presentation of a piece of music or a film that can establish a relationship with the subject that will be presented in the text, among others.

For Tomitch (2009), the reading stage is the moment when the student will receive the text and start reading. For this, it needs to be well prepared and with activities that have specific objectives for students. This way, the reading will not be decoding or trying to translate the text literally. In this phase, exercises of true or false, multiple choices and short answers (yes/no) are important. However, there are other activities that can make the reading class more dynamic and attractive, such as “completing or building diagrams or tables, relating figures to the text read, rearranging paragraphs to form a text, among others” (TOMITCH, 2009, p. 196, our translation).

The post-reading phase is one that will lead the student to establish a relationship between what he has read in the text and his reality. The objective of this phase is to solidify what has been learned, making it possible for the student to use what he has read in real situations, such as, for example, new discussions, research, among others.

In the selection of reading strategies, the author suggests the use of cognate words, the use of fast reading to seek the general idea of the text (skimming) and the use of reading to seek specific information (scanning) and, because they are more basic, they can be taught at early levels. Activities such as summaries and reviews, since they require greater cognitive effort, should be taught at advanced levels.

Donini, Platero and Weigel (2013) also report that reading strategies can be divided into pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities. In the pre-reading phase, the authors suggest the use of anticipation. With this strategy, previous knowledge will be activated, which will lead to an expectation in relation to the theme, the type of text, the language and the textual support. In the reading phase, the authors cite the three categories that are the most used: skimming allows a quick reading to learn the general subject; scanning allows reading in search of more specific information, and detailed reading makes it possible to read several times or listen several times to make a detailed study.
In the post-reading phase, the authors address the use of activities that lead to the activation of critical thinking. In this phase, they suggest working with personal development strategies that lead the student to… elaborate interpretations based on information not always explicit in the text; to critically position himself on the topic and review his opinions; treat text information appropriately to translate it to other types of texts (DONNINI; PLATERO; WEIGEL, 2013, p. 63, our translation).

In general, the proposals for the teaching of reading in the English language suggested by the authors Santorum and Scherer (2008), Tomich (2009), and Donnini, Platero and Weigel (2013) are similar. All authors approach the use of reading strategies and the division of reading activities in three moments as being an effective strategy. Basically, all the authors defend the need to activate previous knowledge, establish objectives and make inferences. They also address the importance of relating information in the text to the knowledge already acquired; the importance of using cognate words and the need to search for the general idea (skimming) and the specific idea (scanning) in the text.

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) and the teaching of English language reading in the 6th year of secondary education II

According to the BNCC, reading is seen as a language practice that arises from the interaction of the reader with the text, through the interpretation and understanding of the English language genres that circulate in society. Thus, it can favor the development of strategies for textual identification and critical reflection based on the themes dealt with in the texts (BRASIL, 2018).

Thus, the teaching of reading through the diversity of textual genres can favor different modes of reading (to have a general idea about the subject, reading to seek more specific information or to understand in detail) and different objectives. The student's contact with diverse written and multimodal genres, which are relevant not only for school life (but beyond, including social and cultural life) and the understanding that is made about the themes, can be essential to develop a critical reading, as well as the possibility of learning the English language in a creative and autonomous way (BRASIL, 2018).

Reading activities, according to the BNCC, supported by reading practices already internalized in their mother tongue, must be carried out in a contextualized and meaningful way for students and must be organized in: pre-reading, reading and post-reading (BRASIL,
2018). This document argues that reading practices should be linked to students' prior knowledge and prescribes some reading skills, as shown in Chart 1 below.

**Chart 1 – BNCC proposal for the 6th year reading axis in English**

| AXIS READING - Reading practices of different texts in English (verbal, verbal-visual, multimodal) present in different supports and spheres of circulation. Such practices involve articulation with the students' previous knowledge in mother tongue and/or other languages. | Assumptions about the purpose of a text (EF06LI07). Formulate hypotheses about the purpose of a text. |
| Reading strategies | General and specific understanding: quick reading (skimming, scanning) (EF06LI08). Identify the subject of a text, recognizing its textual organization and cognate words. |
| Reading practices and construction of lexical repertoire. | Construction of lexical repertoire and reading autonomy (EF06LI10). Know the organization of a bilingual dictionary (printed and/or online) to build lexical repertoire. (EF06LI11). Explore virtual environments and/or applications to build lexical repertoire in the English language. |
| Favorable attitudes and dispositions of the reader | Reading sharing with teacher mediation (EF06LI12). Take an interest in the text read, sharing one's ideas about what the text informs/communicates. |

Source: Brasil (2018, p. 248-249)

In the chart on the BNCC proposal for the reading axis in English in the 6th year, the importance of using strategies in teaching reading in the English language is explicit, such as: formulating hypotheses about the purpose of a text; recognize the subject, recognize the organization of a text and identify cognate words; find specific information in a text.

**Methodological procedures**

The reading activities of unit 1 of the Reading section of the 6th year textbook, “Beyond Words”, were selected as the corpus of the research. This material was approved by the National Textbook Program (PNLD) of 2020. This collection features eight thematic units and two projects. The units are divided into sections: *Time to Think; Reading; Listening and*...
speaking/Listening and writing/Reading and writing; Style of the genre; Pit stop; Think it over and Integrate.

For analysis, the texts and activities of the Reading section were considered, as it is the section that has the main objective of stimulating the development of reading comprehension and, therefore, it is expected to be the section in which the use of reading strategies appear.

Reading is the section that presents the reading comprehension activities and, for each unit, it presents from two to three Tasks and this is subdivided in Before Reading (subsection that corresponds to the pre-reading phase, whose purpose is to activate the previous knowledge and stimulate the reading hypotheses about the text to be read), Read to learn more (corresponds to the reading phase, which focuses on presenting the text to students always proposing that they do the reading with some goals in mind) and Constructing meanings (it is the subsection that corresponds to the phase of reading comprehension and knowledge of the discursive genre to be addressed). Thus, the reading activities of unit 1 of the Reading section of the book were selected, which includes three Tasks.

Results

In Unit 1, it is observed that in Task 1 and Task 2 there is the strategy of dividing reading into stages, which are: pre-reading, reading and detailed understanding. In Task 3, in addition to these steps, there is the post-reading step, which establishes a relationship with all the texts read.

In the pre-reading stage (Before Reading) of Task 1, at the end of page 19 and at the beginning of page 20, the strategy of activating prior knowledge about personal documents is observed. In the reading step (Read to learn more), in Task 1, page 20, it is observed that the reading strategy used was to establish a reading objective: to identify the types of documents and to verify the information present in them. In the Constructing meanings stage in Task 1 (page 21), the strategies used were: to identify specific information, to infer the meaning of words in the text, to comprehend the text globally, to make inferences and to formulate hypotheses.

Then, Task 2 starts. The text on page 22 is a birth certificate. In the reading stage (Reading), page 23, it is observed that the strategy used was to establish reading objectives: to read to verify data informed on birth certificates and to compare this birth certificate with the Brazilian one. In the Reading Comprehension stage (Constructing meanings), in Task 2 (page
the use of reading strategies is observed: identifying specific information in the text and reflecting on the compositional characteristics of the birth certificate genre.

Following these activities, Task 3 will address the topic of personal data in another discursive genre, personal presentation on a blog. In the pre-reading stage of Task 3, page 24, the reading strategy used was the activation of prior knowledge about the discursive genre, personal presentation and formulation of hypotheses about the genre, as seen in question 1 reproduced in figure 11. A question 2 provokes the hypothesis about the source of the text and the theme.

The end of page 24 brings the beginning of the Read to learn more section, in which the strategy of establishing reading objectives for the text on the next page is observed, which is a personal presentation on a blog. In the task of Reading Comprehension (Constructing meanings) of Task 3 (page 25), the strategies used were: to comprehend the text globally, make inferences and identify specific information in the text. As you can see in figure 12.

In the post-reading stage (Think more about it), on pages 25 and 26, the strategies used were to identify and compare the compositional characteristics of the genres in question.

**Final considerations**

In the table on the BNCC's proposal for the reading axis in English in the 6th year, the importance of using strategies in the teaching of reading in the English language is explicit, such as: formulating hypotheses about the purpose of a text; recognize the subject, recognize the organization of a text and identify cognate words; find specific information in a text. These are some of the reading strategies proposed by authors that were mentioned in the theoretical basis of this research and in Unit 1 of the textbook analyzed, but it is clear that this document presents a very small number of strategies that could be present in the guidelines for the 6th year. In the description of the Reading Axis, it is mentioned “articulate with the students' previous knowledge” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 244, our translation), but there is no proposal for a pre-reading strategy for this to occur. In addition, the chart also does not divide reading into three stages as a strategy to be used.

The strategies found in the textbook, in the reading activities proposed in unit 1 of the Reading section, are: divide the reading into three moments; activate prior knowledge on the subject; establish reading objectives, relate the previous reading; use cognate words; use reading to get the general idea (skimming); use reading to search for specific information (scanning), synthesize and infer. In this aspect, therefore, the textbook just lacks a theoretical
foundation on the importance of using reading strategies so that teachers can better understand the intention of each activity proposed in this section. Despite this, we can conclude that the authors of the analyzed textbook went beyond the strategies proposed by BNCC (BRASIL, 2018).

REFERENCES


How to reference this article


Submitted: 23/09/2020
Required revisions: 03/11/2020
Approved: 14/03/2021
Published: 01/06/2021