

ORALITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND DIGITAL LITERACIES:
AN ANALYSIS IN THE 9TH GRADE TEXTBOOK

*A ORALIDADE NO ENSINO DE LÍNGUA INGLESA E OS LETRAMENTOS
DIGITAIS: UMA ANÁLISE EM UM LIVRO DIDÁTICO DO 9º ANO*

*LA ORALIDAD EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS Y LA ALFABETIZACIÓN
DIGITAL: UN ANÁLISIS EN UN LIBRO DIDÁCTICO DE 9.º CURSO*



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ABSTRACT: This article aims to evaluate how the 9th grade English textbook from the Joy Started collection, used in the public education system of Maranhão, guides multimedia literacy as a resource to develop skills and competencies in the oral language axis. It focuses on the oral language axis, mainly because teaching oral language in public or private schools is still a major challenge for learning a foreign language. The work is based on studies in Applied Linguistics in Foreign Language Teaching, studies in Digital Literacy in addition to reflections and guidelines from official teaching documents. The methodology of this research is bibliographic. The results show that the analyzed textbook points the way, but the implementation of the activities presents other relevant challenges that need to be considered for technology-mediated foreign language teaching that has an effective.

KEYWORDS: English Language Teaching. Orality. Digital Literacy.

RESUMO: Este artigo tem por objetivo avaliar como o livro didático de Língua Inglesa do 9º ano, da coleção Joy Started, utilizado na rede de ensino público do Maranhão, que orienta o letramento em multimídia como um recurso para desenvolver habilidades e competências do eixo da oralidade. Foca-se no eixo da oralidade, principalmente, porque o ensino de oralidade na escola pública ou particular ainda é um grande desafio para o aprendizado de língua estrangeira. O trabalho tem como base estudos na Linguística Aplicada no Ensino de Língua Estrangeira, estudos do Letramento Digital, além de reflexões e orientações dos documentos oficiais do ensino. A metodologia desta pesquisa é bibliográfica. Os resultados mostram que o livro didático analisado aponta caminho, mas a concretização das atividades apresenta outros desafios relevantes e que precisam ser pensados para um ensino de língua estrangeira mediado por tecnologia que tenha efeito.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino de Língua Inglesa. Oralidade. Letramento Digital.

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo evaluar cómo el libro de texto de Lengua Inglesa de 9º grado, de la colección Joy Started, utilizado en la red de educación pública de Maranhão que orienta la alfabetización multimedia como recurso para desarrollar habilidades y competencias en el eje de la oralidad. Se centra en el eje de la oralidad, principalmente porque enseñar la oralidad en escuelas públicas o privadas sigue siendo un gran desafío para el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. El trabajo se basa en estudios de Lingüística Aplicada en la Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras, estudios de Alfabetización Digital además de reflexiones y orientaciones provenientes de documentos oficiales de enseñanza. La metodología de esta investigación es bibliográfica. Los resultados muestran que el libro de texto analizado señala el camino, pero la implementación de las actividades presenta otros desafíos relevantes que deben ser considerados para una enseñanza eficaz de lenguas extranjeras mediada por tecnología.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Enseñanza del inglés. Oralidad. Alfabetización digital.

Introduction

The impacts that new technologies have been producing in society are undeniable. These technologies increasingly occupy spaces within education, requiring teachers and students to develop skills that enable them to better harness the potential these tools offer. In this regard, the Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (Base Nacional Comum Curricular – BNCC) (Brazil, 2017) highlights the importance of using technologies in the classroom, emphasizing the development of competencies that allow students to handle digital technologies responsibly, safely, and in ways that are relevant to social and civic practices. In this direction, it is necessary to reflect on Martins' (2022) argument that materials used in public schools are not aligned with the realities experienced outside the classroom. In school textbooks, in general, activities aimed at oral skills tend to be repetitive and artificial and fail to address oralization as one of the manifestations of human language. The author clarifies, however, that overcoming this barrier is only possible with the support of teachers who seek ways to contextualize their pedagogical practice (Martins, 2022, p. 2). Following the guidelines of the National Common Core Curriculum, the municipal education system of Santa Luzia, a municipality in the state of Maranhão⁴, adopted, through the National Textbook Program (Programa Nacional do Livro Didático – PNLD) 2024–2027, the *Joy Started* collection, published by FTD, for use by students and teachers in the final years of lower secondary education (Ensino Fundamental) in the English Language curriculum. In this study, attention is directed to the volume dedicated to the final year of this educational stage.

Considering the demands of contemporaneity, particularly technological (digital) advances and the need for language learning through digital literacy in the school context, this article aims to evaluate how the 9th-grade English textbook from the *Joy Started* collection operationalizes multimedia literacy as a resource for developing skills and competencies related to orality. This issue is especially relevant because it constitutes one of the central themes in foreign language teaching in Brazilian schools and because English language teaching has revealed a complex reality that requires reflection and the proposal of solutions to a problematic scenario identified in several diagnostic studies on English language teaching in Brazil (British

⁴Santa Luzia is located in the central-western region of the state of Maranhão, 295 km from the state capital, São Luís. According to the 2022 Census, the municipality has a population of more than 57,600 inhabitants. It has 63 years of political emancipation, which took place on March 26, 1961. For further information, see: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/ma/santa-luzia/panorama>. Accessed on October 8, 2024.

Council, 2015). Added to this is the fact that orality is a skill that is seldom addressed in schools, resulting in a significant gap in teaching practice.

Given that this study focuses on English language textbooks and is grounded in theoretical studies from Applied Linguistics and digital literacies, the research and data analysis are bibliographic in nature. In addition, a qualitative analysis of oral comprehension and production activities seeks to identify elements that contribute to understanding how digital literacy is addressed and how competencies related to orality are developed.

To this end, the following sections discuss English language teaching and the marginalization of orality, as well as conceptions of literacy—particularly multimedia literacy, which belongs to the broader field of digital literacies. Subsequently, the methodology adopted for textbook analysis is described, followed by an examination of the characteristics of the work and an analysis of how the collection addresses multimedia literacy when working with orality in specific sections. Finally, the study's concluding remarks and references are presented.

English language teaching and the marginalization of orality

In response to current societal demands, the educational field seeks alternatives to fulfill its social role. As normative documents, the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) (Brazil, 2017) and the Maranhão Territorial Curriculum Document (Maranhão, 2019) recommend the incorporation of methodologies and the use of technologies in the classroom to foster competencies that enable students to interact creatively and critically in a technological world. Based on these recommendations, it is relevant to understand the conceptions and impacts of English language⁵ teaching in public schools, particularly regarding the use of digital technologies for the development of language skills, especially those least addressed in classroom practice, such as orality.

For this study, it is important to consider the skills commonly mentioned and marginalized in English language classes in public schools. Reading, listening, writing, and speaking are the four main skills addressed in English language teaching, with speaking being the least emphasized, as students are often not encouraged to speak in the classroom. This situation may be related to the recommendations of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN)

⁵The term *English Language*, when written in capital letters, refers to the curricular component. When written with initial lowercase letters, it designates the language itself.

for Foreign Languages, which favored an instrumental approach to reading, justified by the claim that it

[...] meets, on the one hand, the needs of formal education and, on the other, is the skill that students can use in their immediate social context. Moreover, learning to read in a foreign language can contribute to the overall development of students' literacy (Brasil, 1998, p. 20, our translation).

The preference for reading instruction over orality may be explained by challenges such as limited instructional time—two hours per week—large class sizes, and insufficient teacher training, among other factors. However, even if these conditions remain unchanged, the BNCC advocates for the development of multiple skills rather than focusing on a single one (Cypriano, 2022, p. 24). Despite this, materials of different natures—both didactic and theoretical—continue to prioritize some skills while marginalizing others, such as orality.

Considering the different dimensions of linguistic ability, orality is often regarded as the most difficult, primarily because it reveals an individual's level of linguistic knowledge (Suzuki & Kormos, 2023). According to Suzuki and Kormos (2023, p. 38, our translation), “in the context of L2 speaking learning, teaching, and assessment, oral fluency is commonly considered one of the primary learning goals.” Thus, working with orality also involves engaging a cognitive capacity closely related to language learning, providing a more accurate diagnosis of students' relationship with L2 learning.

In contrast to approaches that prioritize foreign language teaching based solely on reading, the BNCC (2017) outlines five axes intended to enrich pedagogical processes and, consequently, learning. These axes are orality, reading, writing, linguistic knowledge, and the intercultural dimension. Each axis is structured to promote learning that treats linguistic elements as social and professional practices. Orality—as a key component of these five axes—encompasses listening and speaking skills; in other words, this model of foreign language teaching aims to develop both oral comprehension and oral production. When teaching is oriented toward literacy, an additional skill is incorporated: the socially meaningful and relevant use of orality in a foreign language. Based on the promotion of English language teaching centered on orality, Cypriano (2022) states that

students are expected to negotiate meaning with their interlocutors (by asking for clarification about something that was unclear during interaction or confirming information provided, for example) and simultaneously learn features of pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of the target language, as

well as conversational turn-taking techniques and ways of dealing with otherness, among others (Cypriano, 2022, p. 18, our translation).

Despite the BNCC guidelines and the arguments presented above, orality still occupies a marginal position compared to reading and writing in basic education. In many cases, orality is entirely excluded from classroom practice. It is important to note that “this situation runs counter to the desire of most students, whose primary goal is effectively to learn how to communicate through oral language” (Pinho, 2022, p. 7, our translation). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the challenges of teaching foreign language orality in Brazilian schools, particularly public schools, where English occupies a position of curricular neglect—that is, it is a subject relegated to the margins of the school curriculum. As a result, it receives limited instructional time, is offered on few days of the week, and faces additional constraints such as large class sizes and a lack of material and physical infrastructure to support more effective foreign language teaching. Nevertheless, identifying pathways out of this “Ariadne’s thread”—that is, the challenge of teaching English in Brazilian schools—remains a critical and demanding aspect of the foreign language teacher’s professional trajectory.

Investigating this topic is necessary because, despite its marginalization in contrast to what is recommended by guiding documents, this axis is as essential as the others. It must go beyond students merely listening to and pronouncing words or sentences; more than that, it integrates listening comprehension and oral production skills in the English language. That is, it provides opportunities that move beyond the mere writing and reading of words, aiming to educate a literate individual who makes social use of the language and acts within the contemporary world. Thus, orality as an object of teaching in the school environment should enable students to act and make social use of the language beyond the classroom, positioning them as literate subjects in contemporary society. For this reason, it is also relevant to reflect on what literacy is and on the place of literacy in English language classes, as discussed below.

Literacy and multiliteracies

To develop creative, critical students who are conscious users of new digital technologies, it is necessary to move beyond the limits of basic literacy and to educate literate individuals. In this regard, Soares (2009) defines literacy as a set of social practices related to the use of language, whether in oral or written modalities. When addressing this issue, the author draws attention to the distinction between a literate individual and one who merely knows how to read. From her perspective, a literate person is able to use language consciously, frequently, and competently in social practices (Soares, 2009, p. 36).

A literate individual is capable of interacting with contemporary texts composed of combinations of different modes of language. Regarding this linguistic phenomenon, Rojo (2012) argues that it is a modern human phenomenon referred to as multimodality or multisemiotics, characterized by the use of diverse communicative tools that expand possibilities for expression and interaction among individuals.

This new phenomenon, which in some way defines modern society, has required from students the development of skills that the author calls multiliteracies—that is, capacities and practices for understanding and producing texts that involve multiple semiotic modes (Rojo, 2012, p. 19). The author explains that multiliteracies are part of this new society marked by innovative and complex social behaviors and practices, as “[n]ew ways of being, behaving, discoursing, relating, informing oneself, and learning emerge. New times, new technologies, new texts, new languages” (Rojo, 2017, p. 189, our translation). From Soares’s (2009) perspective, it is incoherent to conceive of a literate individual who is not the protagonist of their own social practices, including the use of technological (digital) resources and new modes of language, as emphasized by Rojo (2012, 2017).

English language teaching, within this context, cannot be detached from these characteristics of modern society. Accordingly, strategies for the acquisition of digital literacies must be incorporated in order to break with practices that privilege reading and writing skills, as previously advocated in the PCN. Teaching practices focused on orality (listening and speaking)—an essential component of new technologies—enable students to act in society as literate individuals. Given the existence of new text formats and new ways of interacting with them, instruction oriented toward multiple literacies should also be part of foreign language teachers’ professional practice. Therefore, understanding literacies related to digital technologies (digital literacies) in order to work with orality in English, as well as investigating

one among the many literacies encompassed by digital literacy, is a key conceptual foundation for this study. As Zacharias (2016, p. 17, our translation) states, “schools also need to prepare students for digital literacy, with competencies and ways of thinking beyond those previously required for print.”

Digital literacies and multimedia literacy

In public education, the pursuit of students’ holistic development, through various approaches and resources, is supported by the textbook, which is acquired by schools through the National Textbook and Teaching Materials Program (Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático – PNLD). The textbook collection to be adopted by a school is selected by teachers, who are guided by the Textbook Guide. This guide contains reviews of the textbooks approved by the program. Through reading these reviews, teachers are given opportunities to reflect on important aspects of teaching (Santos Jorge; Tenuta, 2011, p. 129), particularly on the guidelines set out in normative documents, especially those related to (new) technologies.

Reflecting on the guidelines of policy documents regarding the use of technologies is one matter; identifying materials that are appropriate to students’ realities is another. In this regard, Martins (2022) highlights the existence of this challenge, particularly in relation to practices involving orality. However, the availability and use of textbooks acquired through the PNLD—supported by a broader and more comprehensive view of language—can mitigate the superficiality and automatization that often characterize the teaching of orality in contemporary classrooms. Nevertheless, even with the advancement and improvement of teaching materials, the author argues that teachers must also intervene to change this scenario of precariousness (Martins, 2022, p. 2).

Kenski (2007, p. 15, our translation) defines technologies as “equipment, instruments, resources, products, processes, and tools originating from the process of innovation through human knowledge.” Accordingly, digital technologies are those linked to the digital world and related to social interactions and issues. In this sense, digital information and communication technologies are increasingly present in society, and schools cannot disregard teaching practices grounded in digital literacies. Regarding this relationship, Moran (2000) warns that digital communication technologies can contribute to the learning process; however, to achieve such outcomes, they must be used appropriately for students’ educational development. The author

concludes that it is impossible to discuss digital technology and education—including formal schooling—without addressing the learning process itself. For Moran, technology is “a means, an instrument to support the development of the learning process” (Moran, 2000, p. 139, our translation). In other words, digital technologies are important, but they are merely instruments that facilitate learning and cannot replace the true protagonists of education: students and teachers. Above all, technology alone will not solve Brazil’s educational challenges, although it can contribute to addressing them.

Considering the impact of these ideas, Brazilian education, based on guiding and legal educational documents—such as the BNCC and the DCTMA—has promoted the use of technology and the adoption of methodologies grounded in multiliteracies. However, these same guidelines also recognize that technology is merely a means to support the learning process. From this perspective, it is necessary to clarify the concept of digital literacies in the era of digitality.

Dudeneý, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016) demonstrate that new digital tools are associated with changes in society, education, language, behaviors, and in the very notion of literacy. Accordingly, “digital literacies are the individual and social skills needed to effectively interpret, manage, share, and create meaning in the expanding range of digital communication channels” (Dudeneý; Hockly; Pegrum, 2016, p. 17, our translation). Similarly, Zacharias (2016) argues that this new mode of learning challenges traditional conceptions of reading grounded in a single direction. For the author,

digital literacy starts from this pluralism and requires both the appropriation of technologies—such as using a mouse, keyboard, scroll bar, turning devices on and off—and the development of skills to produce associations and meanings in multimedia spaces. Choosing content to be shared within a network of relationships, selecting relevant and reliable information on the web, navigating a research website, building a blog, or defining the most appropriate language to be used in personal and professional emails are examples of competencies that go beyond technical knowledge (Zacharias, 2016, p. 21, our translation).

Thus, the appropriation of technologies through digital literacy is essential for interaction in the contemporary world. In the digital environment, merely using tools is insufficient; it is crucial to use them competently and in a socially responsible manner. The alignment between the BNCC and the studies by Dudeneý, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016) highlights that digital literacies involve the combination of other literacies or language-related skills, not merely the mastery of technological abilities. In other words, these studies indicate

that society as a whole—including students—requires a set of digital literacies beyond print literacy, skills that guide individuals toward a more humanized, social, and comprehensive use of digital technologies. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the articulation of these literacies and digital culture with the curriculum, while also giving due attention to writing and orality (Brasil, 2017). With a text-centered approach, the BNCC (Brazil, 2017), for example, seeks to address digital culture across different languages and literacies, ranging from those that are essentially linear with low levels of hypertextuality to those involving hypermedia (Brasil, 2017).

From this perspective, Table 1 below—adapted from Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016)—broadly presents the key areas to be considered within the general field of multiple literacies related to digital literacy.

Table 1 – Digital Literacies Framework

		1st Focus: Language	2nd Focus: Information	3rd Focus: Connections	4th Focus: (Re)design	
Increasing complexity	*	Print literacy	***	***	***	
		SMS literacy				
	**	Hypertext literacy	Classificatory literacy			
	***	***	Research literacy	Personal literacy		
		Multimedia literacy	Information literacy	Network literacy		
		***	Filtering literacy	Participatory literacy		
	****	Gaming literacy	***			
		Mobile literacy		Intercultural literacy		
	*****	Coding literacy		***		Remix literacy

Source: Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016, p. 21).

Based on Table 1, four focal points (organized into columns) can be identified, within which literacies are grouped and arranged according to increasing levels of complexity (rows). Language, information, connections, and (re)design are the focal points that organize digital literacies and are proposed by the authors as central to understanding the field of digital literacies. According to the authors, these four elements are “necessary to use digital

technologies effectively, locate resources, communicate ideas, and build collaborations that transcend personal, social, and economic boundaries” (Dudeny; Hockly; Pegrum, 2016, p. 17, our translation).

Considering these elements, the present study focuses on multimedia literacy, which is associated with the language focus and is broadly connected to meaning-making through language, complemented and supplemented by channels beyond the purely linguistic. In addition to multimedia literacy, six other literacies are related to the language focus: print literacy, SMS literacy, hypertext literacy, multimedia literacy, gaming literacy, mobile literacy, and coding literacy.

This study does not aim to develop all the concepts listed in the framework; nevertheless, within the language focus, multimedia literacy is of particular interest because it is related to the “ability to effectively interpret and create texts across multiple media, especially using images, sounds, and videos” (Dudeny; Hockly; Pegrum, 2016, p. 27, our translation). As a literacy involving multimodality—images, videos, sounds, texts, among others—it is multifaceted and requires both practical knowledge and critical and communicative skills.

The approaches proposed by Dudeny, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016), Zacharias (2016), Paiva (2018), and Martins (2022) suggest that teaching should not be understood as unilateral. Rather, multiple dimensions must be considered when integrating digital literacy into curricula, with the aim of educating students not merely as writers or technology users, but as active and critical participants in this multifaceted, digital, and multisemiotic technological era. In a world saturated with new digital technologies, data, and information, the ability to distinguish between reliable and malicious content is essential for the development of critical and independent individuals. Therefore, the capacity to adapt to new demands for communicative competencies—including oral competencies—must permeate the reflections of a committed Brazilian public school system.

Methodology

This study is an investigative analysis of a 9th-grade English language textbook collection adopted by the municipal public school system of Santa Luzia, Maranhão, through the PNLD 2024, for use by teachers and students over the next four years. To achieve the research objectives, an inquiry was conducted via email with the Municipal Department of Education in order to understand the process by which the textbook was selected and to identify the adopted collection. Based on this inquiry, we analyzed the English language textbooks used in public schools across the municipality.

As bibliographic sources, we examined the guidelines of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) (Brazil, 1998) and the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) (Brazil, 2017) regarding skills and axes in English language teaching. Particular emphasis was placed on one skill—foreign language orality—given its limited presence in English classes in general. As a theoretical framework for English language teaching in schools, we drew on the contributions of Paiva (2018), Cypriano (2022), Martins (2022), and Pinho (2022). Discussions on technology were supported by Moran (2000) and Kenski (2007). Conceptions of literacy were based on Soares (2009) and on the studies of Rojo (2012, 2017), especially in their discussions of multiple and digital literacies. From Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016), Zacharias (2016), Paiva (2018), and Martins (2022), we sought to understand skills related to the broader field of digital literacies and their interconnections with orality.

We analyzed the structure of the collection based on its thematic units and sections, as well as the theoretical and methodological stance adopted by the authors regarding a teaching proposal oriented toward digital literacy. Subsequently, we examined activities in the sections dedicated to the orality axis (Listening and Speaking) to determine the extent to which the collection promotes the development and recognition of multimedia literacy, which, in this article, is understood as a literacy related to language use in the digital world.

Joy Started: Multimedia literacy practices

The Collection

Joy Started, published by FTD, is the collection adopted by the municipality of Santa Luzia, Maranhão, for use by students and teachers in the final years of lower secondary education (6th to 9th grades) within the municipal school system, for the period from 2024 to

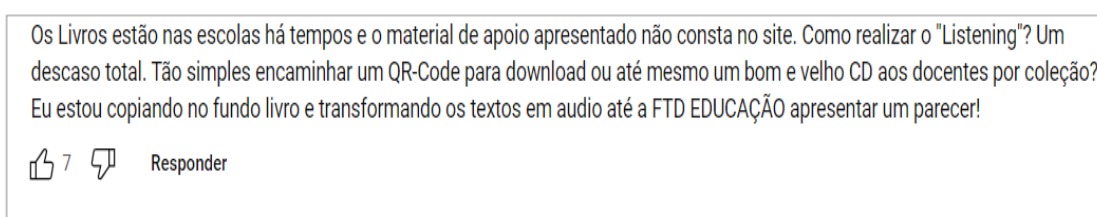
2027, following selection⁶ by the majority of municipal schools through the PNL D. However, this study focuses specifically on the 9th-grade textbook, as the materials from the earlier grades (6th and 7th), as well as the 8th grade, did not present sufficiently robust content for analysis in terms of digital literacy within sections dedicated to orality. Consequently, this circumstance directs the analytical effort toward the book used in the transition year between lower secondary education and upper secondary education, while the collection's overall project addresses digital literacy in orality only superficially in the other three school years.

From the book cover onward, references to language and digital technologies are evident. The image of a young person wearing a backpack and pointing a smartphone toward what appears to be Big Ben, along with images of an airplane, a passport, and other elements, suggests a possible interpretation of English as a lingua franca, envisioned by students belonging to this technological era as a means of contact with a global language.

Aiming to develop learning objectives across the axes of orality, reading, writing, and linguistic knowledge, the collection offers non-consumable printed textbooks for students, a dedicated teacher's volume, and a digital-interactive format of both versions, suggesting a complementary perspective to the printed material.

An examination of comments on a promotional video for the collection on FTD's YouTube channel reveals remarks indicating the absence of this support material, a finding corroborated by our own analysis of the textbook.

Figure 1 – Comment on the official promotional video of the *Joy Started* collection



Source: FTD Educação Channel (2023).

The comment confirms the absence of the digital-interactive version of the analyzed collection, causing methodological limitations for teachers who use it and requiring increased pedagogical effort. Moreover, the referenced material would serve as a source for digital technological engagement by both students and teachers. This gap slows down the digital

⁶At a meeting with school representatives on July 20, 2023, the municipality opted to choose a single material for the entire network, i.e., in a unified manner, justifying in the minutes that this was the most appropriate format due to the logistical peculiarities of the municipality.

literacy process envisioned in the collection's theoretical and methodological framework. Therefore, the present analysis focuses on the printed version of the collection, particularly the 9th-grade student's book.

As a result of this absence, activities that require “listening to audio recordings”—an essential component of work on the orality axis, especially for listening comprehension—become impossible to carry out. However, the *Transcript* section provides transcriptions of the oral texts included in the volume, functioning as a partial remedy for a problem in which the solution was denied twice: the digital-interactive version of the collection and the availability of audio materials through other technological resources.

The analyzed version (9th-grade textbook) consists of eight thematic units, which are subdivided into the following sections: *Opening*, *Time to read*, *Time to learn words*, *Time to study the language*, *Time to listen*, *Time to speak*, *Time to write*, *Time to check*, *Keep learning*, *English in the world*, *Keep an eye on...*, *List of verbs*, and *Transcription*. The clearly demarcated organization of these sections seeks to meet the requirement of addressing the four main axes established by the BNCC (Brasil, 2017) for lower secondary education; however, it also points to a rigid, segmented approach that addresses one axis at a time.

In the *Opening* section, beyond presenting the unit's learning objectives and a theme-related image, there are guiding questions whose responses are oriented toward orality. In *Time to listen*, activities are inspired by a variety of oral texts and are organized into the stages of *Pre-listening*, *While listening*, and *Post-listening*. Through varied, contextualized activities related to the unit theme, the *Time to speak* section offers students opportunities to develop and practice oral production in English.

The treatment of multimedia literacy in orality

The first reference to multimedia work within the orality strand in the 9th-grade textbook appears in the *Time to speak* section, on page 34, Unit 1. Initially, the activity instructs students to form pairs to plan an oral presentation on a health problem selected from those suggested. Two excerpts explicitly mark the treatment of multimedia by proposing:

- [...] b. Do some research about the health issue in encyclopedias, Science books, health magazines, **institutional websites** or other sources.
- [...] d. Define how you are going to present the information you collected. **You can use some visual resources, like infographics, leaflets or slides** (Oliveira, 2022, p. 34, emphasis added).

When analyzing Activity 1, the first aspect observed is the guidance—among other options—toward research on institutional websites, thus characterizing an approach that encourages the use of digital technologies. However, the collection adopts a suggestive stance, possibly considering that not all Brazilian schools have broad access to the internet. For this reason, the activity does not prioritize or condition the work on digital literacy; it is presented merely as a possibility. Another relevant point concerns the options provided for the presentation task, in which the primary focus is orality, supported by resources such as infographics, leaflets, or slides. In this case, orality is addressed with support from other modes of meaning-making, including printed text (infographics, leaflets). From this perspective, “text is complementary to, or complemented by, other ways of communicating meaning” (Dudeney; Hockly; Pegrum, 2016, p. 29, our translation). Therefore, print literacy is also considered a viable component.

In Unit 3, after instructions to listen to an audio track from the support material that does not exist (*Time to listen* – Activity 1, p. 79), students are informed that they will participate in a debate and are instructed to choose between two topics: *Respect at school* and *Respect in virtual spaces* (*Time to speak* – Activity 1, p. 80). This constitutes a timely opportunity to deepen discussions about respect in virtual environments—a highly relevant theme closely linked to the use of digital technologies. However, the topic *respect in virtual spaces* is contingent upon students’ choice.

Addressing the theme of communication, Unit 5 presents two objectives related to the orality strand. Based on audio excerpts from characters in *Emoji: The Movie*, these objectives aim for students to listen to and understand a segment of a movie trailer and to record an audio message. These objectives are developed through the activities on pages 121 (*Time to listen*) and 122 (*Time to speak*). The listening task proposes an interesting approach by using a film excerpt within the orality strand; however, it is flawed because the original audio is absent. As a result, the teacher must read the text aloud, or students may consult the transcript, which undermines the work on orality—particularly if students rely solely on the written dialogue—and shifts the focus to another skill related to digital literacy with an emphasis on language: print literacy.

In the *Time to speak* section on page 122, there is engagement that can be considered highly productive for oral production if effectively implemented in the classroom. Activities 1, 2, and 3 propose the following:

1. Talk to your teacher and classmates about the following questions.
 - a. How often do you send instant voice messages?
 - b. What are these messages usually about?
 - c. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of sending them?
2. You are going to record and send an instant voice message to a classmate. Follow these steps.
 - a. Choose the app you are going to use.
 - b. Add your classmate's contact information.
 - c. Define what your message will be. Check out some ideas.
Ask your classmate about a topic you studied in class.
Pass on a message from the teacher or another student to your classmate.
Invite your classmate to do something fun after class.
 - d. If necessary, take notes and rehearse.
 - e. Find a silent place to record your message without sound interference.
 - f. Record and send your message.
 - g. Make sure to articulate the words well and use a good tone of voice

Tip: Caso a turma tenha um grupo em um aplicativo, as mensagens de áudio podem ser enviadas para esse grupo.
3. Listen to the message your classmate sent you. What would your reply be? (Oliveira, 2022, p. 122, our translation).

Considering these activities—developed within the orality strand—students are encouraged to reflect on and verbalize their use of audio messages, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of this practice. Building on reflection and sharing with peers and the teacher, Activity 2 requires students to record an audio message following specific guidelines. In Activities 2 and 3, orality is clearly articulated with digital literacy, as they involve the use of messaging applications that enable the sharing of oral production with classmates. Moreover, the activities establish a connection with real-life practices, as they require not only audio recording but also a responsive attitude toward peers' productions (Activity 3). To further enhance multimedia literacy, the teacher could suggest audio-editing applications that allow students to add effects, emojis, or even combine audio with images—a recommendation not found in the teacher's manual of the collection.

The activities on pages 121 and 122 fulfill the objectives proposed at the opening of Unit 5. Nevertheless, another approach to multimedia literacy within the orality strand could be more engaging, such as producing a podcast—a contemporary genre that encourages students to interact with their productions in digital media through editing, cutting, adding music, and discussing topics relevant to the class.

Focusing on the theme of the internet, Unit 6 sets objectives related to digital literacy that include listening to and understanding a critical review and recording the same genre in

video format. The opening image of this unit displays elements associated with digital literacy (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Opening of Unit 6



Source: Oliveira (2022, p. 125).

Based on the activity related to Figure 2, students are prompted to identify icons of digital culture that they would use to like a post or content (thumbs-up icon), conduct research (magnifying glass icon), share content (interconnected networks icon), and listen to music (play icon). Additionally, by reporting their preferences, students may indicate that they enjoy social media, games, listening to music, or watching films and videos on the internet. These indications connect with the activities on page 144, in the *Time to speak* section, where students are instructed to record, in pairs, a video review of previously studied content (Activity 1, p. 144). Furthermore, Activity 2 provides script guidelines for the pair to follow, and Activity 3 invites the class, after the editing process, to watch all the videos and provide comments. The activities in this section exhibit clear characteristics of multimedia literacy by producing and recording a critical review in video format. These tasks are carried out with the support of digital equipment, which appropriately complements the guidelines through a tip encouraging full participation by all students.

You may agree to use a single device for recording and divide some responsibilities, such as deciding who will be in charge of recording and who will edit the videos. If it is not possible to record a video with the review, organize a presentation for the class (Oliveira, 2016, p. 144, our translation).

Based on the suggestion above, it is evident that the collection demonstrates concern for maintaining students' oral exposure, even when digital technology plays a secondary role. This

stance aligns with the perspective of Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2016), who argue that, although it may still seem distant, the day will come when digital technological tools are so embedded in school literacy practices that their presence will go unnoticed. In the orality strand, this is the final chapter in which multimedia literacy is addressed. Likewise, it proves to be highly productive in its treatment of digital technologies, as well as literacies from other strands.

These activities indicate a clear concern with orality in the teaching of the English language. Undoubtedly, this is a strand that still requires greater recognition and emphasis in the classroom. In this sense, work on orality demands from both teachers and students an effort that goes beyond speaking itself, involving the overcoming of long-standing challenges in foreign language teaching.

Conclusion

This article presented an analysis of how the 9th-grade English Language textbook from the *Joy Started* collection (Oliveira, 2022), published by Editora FTD, sought to relate its activities to multimedia literacy, with particular attention to skills and competencies associated with orality. In this direction, concepts related to technologies, literacies, and digital literacy were discussed. Regarding the latter, special emphasis was placed on multimedia literacy as part of a broader set of literacies that may support the teaching of English in Brazilian schools. Once these concepts and relationships were clarified, the selected corpus was analyzed, as it presented more evidence of multimedia literacy in the sections dedicated to the orality strand.

The analysis of a 9th-grade elementary school textbook revealed the absence of a digital version of interactive materials, such as audio files in listening activities, which limits the full development of multimedia literacy and the effectiveness of learning. Moreover, this absence requires greater effort from teachers and students in carrying out the listening comprehension activities proposed by the textbook itself. Nevertheless, beyond this limitation, the textbook shows efforts to integrate new technologies into English language teaching—especially within the orality strand—in line with the guidelines of the BNCC (Brasil, 2017). However, among the eight units in the textbook, not all present or display characteristics of multimedia literacy in the sections focused on orality. Therefore, after analyzing and investigating the textbook and classroom activities, this study proposes the creation of podcast activities or virtual debates as a way to enhance the multimodal approach, offering students a richer multimedia literacy experience aimed at the development of oral skills.

The analysis of the *Time to listen* and *Time to speak* sections indicates that the textbook represents progress in considering digital literacies and orality. Although it serves as a resource that partially mitigates the challenges posed by the scarcity of teaching materials aligned with students' realities, oral skills remain marginalized and strongly tied to reading and writing. In activities involving research and the use of digital technologies, print literacy becomes more prominent than multimedia literacy.

Thus, despite the lack of more robust multimedia literacy activities in teaching materials from earlier school years, the study indicates that the *Joy Started* collection presents evidence of the incorporation of digital literacies within the orality strand, particularly multimedia literacy.

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