



Article

Storytelling associated to ludic in teaching and learning English

Contaço de história associada ao lúdico no ensino e aprendizagem de Inglês

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the contributions that a teaching practice based on a playful approach based on storytelling can provide for the learning of English language in the first year of Elementary School. Based on the story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by the author Eric Carle (1996), the study including playful activities in two first grade elementary school classes, one which has English Language as a curricular component in a private school in Caxias do Sul, and the other in a public school in Porto Alegre within the framework of the *Project: LIVE LIBRARY: support space for the teaching and learning process*. It also aimed to identify students' learning outcomes in both realities, comparing the possibilities of public and private contexts. Within the implementation of the teaching practice, we observed that, regardless of the available resources or the space in the curriculum, teaching a Foreign Language, in this case, English Language, can be performed effectively in the school context, whether public or private since, even without previous knowledge, the students achieved the previously determined objectives based on working with the proposed contents connected to storytelling in a playful way.

Resumo

O presente artigo visa analisar quais as contribuições que uma prática de ensino fundamentada em uma abordagem lúdica a partir da contaço de histórias pode proporcionar para a aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa no 1º Ano do Ensino Fundamental. Tomando-se por base a história *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, do autor Eric Carle (1996),

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o estudo contempla atividades lúdicas em duas turmas de 1^o Ano do Ensino Fundamental, sendo uma delas que tem a Língua Inglesa como componente curricular na rede privada de Caxias do Sul, e a outra em uma escola pública de Porto Alegre no âmbito do *Projeto BIBLIOTECA VIVA: espaço de apoio aos processos de ensino e aprendizagem*. Buscou-se, ainda, identificar os resultados da aprendizagem dos alunos nas duas realidades, comparando as possibilidades das escolas pública e privada. Com a execução da prática de ensino, evidenciou-se que, independentemente dos recursos disponíveis ou do espaço na grade curricular, o ensino de Língua Estrangeira, no caso a Língua Inglesa, pode acontecer sim no contexto escolar, seja ele público ou privado, uma vez que os alunos, mesmo não dispoendo de conhecimento prévio, atingiram os objetivos previamente estipulados a partir do trabalho com os conteúdos propostos em sintonia com a contação de uma história de forma lúdica.

Keywords: Storytelling, Ludic, English language

Palavras-chave: Contação de histórias, Lúdico, Língua Inglesa.

1. Introduction

By revisiting the past, we can observe that, since the earliest societies, stories have left their mark by narrating significant achievements and facts in order to preserve traditions, consolidating the cultural movements that are on record. Since they preceded writing, the stories were told orally, in any context. Society has transformed, man has evolved, but stories have continued over the course of time. As research shows, the analysis of narratives has been in of the most important areas of study among cultures around the world. Schiffrin, De Fina, and NyLund (2010) underline that everything that we do entails the use of narratives. That is, we dream, we plan, we complain, and we remember through the stories associated with those actions (BAMBERG, 1997; GUERRERO, 2011; LABOV, 1972, 2010; JIMÉNEZ, 2006; MCCABE, 1997; SCHIFFRIN, DE FINA, NYLUND, 2010; SPICER-ESCALANTE, 2015).

While human beings, in their most primitive essence, felt the need to make themselves understood, they started to create strategies and, through drawings and paintings in caves, they expressed their feelings and desires. Based on language, knowledge gained through experiences started to be transmitted orally, with interactions between subjects, who started to represent their emotions. This is how myths, legends and folk tales emerged and have been present over the course of generations, passed on to descendants through storytelling.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to associate storytelling with ludicity in the school environment as an educational tool to favor the English teaching and learning process. In this context, this article presents playful activities applied to the children's story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle (1996), justifying the contribution of storytelling as a way to entice children to work on the proposed curricular content, as well as favor the communicative skills that the English Language aims to develop: speaking, writing, reading and listening.

2. Interaction in building knowledge and the art of storytelling in educational activities

When considering teaching Foreign Languages, theories present some methods that have guided the teaching practice over the years and continue to exist in today's classrooms. Initially, the methods included essential grammar, with the centralizing professor and a student that was not invited to interact. Some examples are the Grammar and Translation Method and the Direct Method (LEFFA, 1988). As a critique of these movements, Leffa (1988) presented the Audio-lingual Method, proposed by Brooks (1964), as a communicative proposal, highlighting the role of teaching adapted to the context. In a more updated version that is more concerned with interaction, the Communicative Approach emerged (Leffa, 1988), bringing the student to the center of the process, promoting learning based on exchanges. By shifting these roles, students are active participants on their own learning, while teachers become a guide or an architect, whose responsibility is to design tasks in which students have the opportunity to use the second language (L2) in a meaningful way (BALLMAN, LISKIN-GASPARRO, MANDELL, 2001; ELLIS, 2012; LEE & VANPATTEN, 2003; LIGHTBOWN & SPADA, 2013; SHRUM & GLISAN, 2015, VANPATTEN, 2017)

Based on the assumption that interaction promotes the development of linguistic and communicative skills through construction with others, it is worth mentioning the contributions of Jean Piaget (1974), Henri Wallon (1989) and Lev Vygotsky (1987), who converged on the concept that individuals build knowledge through their actions in the environment.

The Piagetian theory shows that knowledge is not gained through transmission, but that learning is built by the student, without referring to the contribution of the social aspect. Piaget (1974) postulates that the development of a person's intelligence progressively matures from infancy to adulthood, founded on the principle that cognitive activity cannot be dissociated from bodily functions. People go through predictable and ordered changes, organized in stages, affected by individual biological differences or provoked by the external environment.

Wallon (1989) characterizes the child as a socio-cognitive being, whose emotional being is composed of the exchanges that it establishes with others, through imitation, the process by which the child builds its subjectivity based on that which is concrete. Imitation is taken as the construction of meaning through the child's actions and, as a consequence, the main objective is to develop its personality. It is a period in which language is crosschecked with reality: language already exists and is detected even before the idea of speaking a word. The French philosopher elevates socialization as indispensable to a subject's development, and states that with language and it fosters conditions to improve and transform thought. Regarding thought in children, the author points out the absence of position-taking and reflective thought.

Lev Vygotsky (1987) claims, in his understanding, that social interactions and living conditions are sources for the intellectual development of children, defending that thinking in children is built gradually in a historical and social environment. For this author, children are born into a determined family,

established in a specific social environment and use language to interact in immediate situations with adults.

Therefore, individuals create possibilities favored by the environment, and are seen as people who act in the world through conscious behavior - thought, memory and attention: elements that distinguish men from other animals through the social relations that they establish. The interactive individual expresses knowledge built upon objects while considering the intersubjectivity that it creates in social, cultural and historical relations.

For Vygotsky (1987) “play is not a means for the child to have fun. Rather, it serves a fundamental role in the child’s development, because it creates a zone of proximal development in which the child “always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior” (VYGOTSKY, 1987, p.102). For Cook (1997, p.227) “Play has something to do with enjoyment and relaxation... Play is an exuberance of the mind, something which occurs naturally and authentically when there is a space to be filled.

Taking these points into consideration, storytelling thus, emerges as a natural activity and a resource that provides interaction in the classroom, bringing together content and learning in a playful activity. Considering stories in a school setting, Dailey (1994) mentions that they constitute a means for exploring, thinking about or creating experiences, offering to the written activity a significant end, as it favors learning and contributes to teaching writing due to its role in spoken literature. For Winston (2013) the role of play and its benefit to language learning can be summarized in five categories: “(1) stimulating language development; (2) introducing and clarifying new words and concepts; (3) motivating language use and practice; (4) developing metalinguistic awareness; and (5) encouraging verbal thinking.” (WINSTON, 2013, p.4).

When considering speaking and listening, we can observe the involvement of the skills of language, thinking and sensory perception. For Hamilton and Weiss (2005), storytelling is a link that unites these skills, since, when the story is told the listening audience is invited to actively listen, accessing the imagination, regardless of age range. Furthermore, as Winston (2013, p.13) states, “cultural theory of play can help us appreciate the intimate connection between language development and the aesthetics of play”.

The practice of storytelling in English as a Foreign Language class provides students with the opportunity to develop their imagination, contrasting the real with the imaginary and improving the four communicative skills essential for learning a new language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Stories instigate the contrast of denotation and connotation in the text, providing students with the opportunity to experience reality in different ways, inviting them to reflect beyond the construction of knowledge.

This way, the experience of playing finds its space in storytelling, favoring the connection between the content proposed by the school curriculum with the experiences and meanings in the students’ real context. Stories enable access to the imaginary based on individual experiences, promoting the exchange of knowledge with classmates and establishing relations.

Therefore, this study presents the analytic process of the dissertation entitled, *Storytime associated to play in teaching and learning English*. We present and describe the data from the pre-test carried out, followed by the details

of the classes that are included in the teaching experiment and conclude with a comparison with the post-test, which reveals the results obtained. Consequently, we can highlight the role of storytelling in the educational activity and its implications in the process of teaching and learning the English.

3. Methodology

To research topics that address education means exploring this diverse field, providing opportunities to build new knowledge and revealing new realities. From this perspective, the topic of this article is storytelling associated to play, and we highlight the contributions that a teaching exercise based on storytelling associated to play can provide to learning English.

This qualitative study presents a participatory observation established through a teaching experiment, structured in three classes, including playful activities in the English class. We would like to point out that the classes were taught in English, so it was necessary, at times, to use Portuguese to clarify the instructions. The proposal of activities involved the application of vocabulary in contextualized situations, not only individual words, but with a communicative purpose, involving the use of gestures, repetition, group work and the use of images.

The technical procedure used corresponded to a participant observation, as the investigation was carried out by the researcher in a first year class of Elementary School in a private school in the city of Caxias do Sul, a school that has a weekly period of one hour of duration to English Language, and in an equally first year class of Elementary School in a public school in Porto Alegre, in which English Language is not a curricular component at this stage.

The work with participant observation in the school environment contributes to the formation and qualification of teachers in their teaching practices, aiming at enhancing learning in their students. Lüdke and André (1986) note the importance of observation during the experience as a way of contributing to the teaching and learning process. The reality observed in both schools and the experience in the classroom, therefore, were described in a diary after each class, exposing whether the proposed objectives were achieved or not, how the activities took place during the classes and the description of what students managed or not to produce.

The classes were applied in two settings: two classes in the first grade of Elementary School, with one private school in the city of Caxias do Sul, with a one-hour per week English class as a curricular component, and a public state school in POA, with a one-hour per week English class as a curricular component starting in the 6th grade of Elementary School. However, this latter Storytime was provided within the scope of the project *LIVE LIBRARY: support space for the teaching and learning process*.

The teaching sequence carried out in the classes also includes a meeting prior to the classes to apply the pre-test, the purpose of which was to ascertain the students' knowledge regarding the content studied: colors, fruit and numbers from 1 to 10 in English, and a meeting after the end of classes to apply a post-test. The results of the post-test were compared to the results of the pre-test to analyze the students' progress, to determine the potential contributions of

storytelling associated with play to teaching and learning the English, the question that prompted this study.

The data collection instrument over the course of these steps was a class diary, allowing us to record after each meeting all the nuances that occurred while the activities were carried out, emphasizing students' activities during the teaching and learning process.

The class diary was chosen to understand the details that emerged during the teaching practice, enabling a constant subsequent analysis and capable of generating a critical-reflective look at what was applied. This instrument is conceived as a form of registration for further reflection, since it constituted a source of data collection for the researcher to revisit her practice. Notes were registered in the class diary about the results that emerged throughout the practice, as well as the details of the reproduction of the students' statements and misses, which allowed a subsequent analysis of each class, seeking to record all the information noting the observations made. The notes contemplated the individual production of each student, so that it was possible to analyze the individual growth, as well as the class, at the end of the teaching experience.

The pre-test and post-test complemented the diary records, thus forming the corpus of analysis in this study. Therefore, an individual analysis of the development of each child was possible.

4. Results analysis

With the wealth of information and experiences from the initial and final analyses, together with the reports described over the course of the classes, we analyzed the elements collected over the course of this investigative process.

In the private school, the students already knew the teacher, since she is one of the English teachers of the institution, which offers a weekly period of one hour. We emphasize that this class had English in school since Early Child Education, that is, they have had contact with the language for three years, providing them with previous knowledge.

In the public school, the students did not know the teacher, who presented herself, explaining the activities to be done as well as pointing out the importance of the English for the world of business, entertainment and for possibility of global communication. The school did not provide English classes in the curriculum. The foreign language is included in the curriculum in the sixth grade of Elementary School. However, given the space for storytelling, provided by activities relating to the library, it became possible to work with the English Language, even though it is not in the curriculum.

The three activities planned for the pre-test analysis included the key contents to be worked with: colors, numbers and fruit, using them as a bridge for the parallel work to be carried out, contemplating the topics of healthy eating, hygiene and body care.

The first activity of the pre-test involved the *colorful elephant* game, including the words *red*, *green*, *orange* and *purple*. The teacher announced a color in English and the students would had to touch something - an object or image - in the requested color. Table 1 presents the *misses* by the students of

this activity and identifies them with the subscript p , for those in private school, and the students from the public school are presented with the subscript e , an abbreviation for *estadual* ("state" school in Portuguese).

Table 1 - Results of the pre-test of the *Colors* activity

SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
Number of misses	3 misses	11 misses
Word missed	STUDENT A _p : red STUDENT B _p : orange STUDENT C _p : purple	STUDENT A _e : red – orange STUDENT B _e : purple STUDENT C _e : green STUDENT D _e : red – purple STUDENT E _e : orange STUDENT F _e : red STUDENT G _e : orange STUDENT H _e : orange – purple

Source: Mincato (2017).

The *misses* observed here involved confusion with the colors, especially the students choosing the color *red*, when the color requested was *orange*, and vice versa. Another color that led to more doubts was the color *purple*, a new word for them, since it is not a common color.

The second activity involved the use of popsicle sticks to work with numbers from *one* to *ten* in English. Each student received ten sticks and picked up the amount that the teacher requested in English. In the private school, as well as in the public school, this activity had the least amount of *hits*, and this can be justified by the fact that the students participating in this research were in their First Grade of Elementary School and are in the process of learning mathematics. Table 2 presents the results of the proposed activity:

Table 2 - Results of the pre-test of the *Numbers* activity

SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
Number of misses	6 misses	12 misses
Word missed	STUDENT B_p: six – eight STUDENT D _p : nine STUDENT E _p : eight STUDENT F _p : seven STUDENT G _p : one	STUDENT A_e: nine STUDENT D_e: eight STUDENT E_e: two – four STUDENT G_e: eight STUDENT H_e: nine STUDENT I _e : ten STUDENT J _e : three STUDENT K _e : three STUDENT L _e : six STUDENT M _e : seven

Source: Mincato (2017).

Table 2, above indicates six *misses* in the private school, while in the public school, the number is 12. We have highlighted in bold those students who presented *misses* in the colors as well as numbers activities, with one student in the private school (student B_p) and five students in the public school (students A_e, D_e, E_e, G_e and H_e).

The activity for working with fruit in English required the student to identify the name of the fruit shown by the teacher from the given options. The vocabulary explored in this activity involved the words *apple*, *pear*, *plum*, *strawberry*, *orange*, fruit present in the *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* story. Table 3 shows the results of this step:

Table 3 - Results of the pre-test of the *Fruit* activity

SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
Number of misses	6 misses	10 misses
Word missed	STUDENT B_p: strawberry STUDENT G_p: plum – strawberry STUDENT H _p : orange STUDENT I _p : pear STUDENT J _p : strawberry	STUDENT A_e: plum – strawberry STUDENT E_e: plum STUDENT G_e: strawberry STUDENT H_e: plum STUDENT J_e: orange STUDENT L _e : pear STUDENT M _e : plum STUDENT N _e : pear STUDENT O _e : strawberry

Source: Mincato (2017).

As we can see in Table 3, collectively, it was easy for the students to identify the more common fruits, like apple and orange, and they had greater difficulty with the fruits *pear*, *plum* and *strawberry*, which are more complex words to pronounce in English. There were six *misses* by students of the private school, while the students of the public school, there were missed ten words.

Again, we have highlighted in bold those students who had *misses* in the previous activity with numbers, with two students in the private school (student B_p) and G_p) and five students in the public school (students A_e, E_e, G_e, H_e and J_e). We italicized the students who had *misses* in the three preliminary activities, with one student from the private school (B_p) and four in the public school (students A_e, E_e, G_e, H_e). There was a higher rate of *misses* with the words *strawberry* and *plum*.

Overall, the initial evaluation enables us to determine that, in the private school, there was a total of 15 *misses*, with three of them in the color activity, six in the numbers activity and also six in the fruit activity. In the public school, there were 11 *misses* in the colors activity, 12 in the numbers activity and 10 in the fruit activity, totaling 33 *misses*.

The pre-test leads us to consider that students in the private school had prior knowledge of the content, since they already had contact with the English in Early Child Education. It is this case that, based on the analysis, had the lowest rate of *misses* (15 *misses* overall in the three activities). In the public school, the English Language found a space, for the first time, with this research on storytelling with the *Living Library Project: a space to support the teaching and learning process*. The students had superficial prior knowledge of the language due to their contact with the internet, commercials, games and videos, and also outside the school environment, but had never been taught the language as part of the curriculum. This case had the highest rate of *misses* (33 *misses* overall in the three activities).

The teaching experiment in the three consequent classes was developed considering activities specific to the age range of the participants students – six and seven years of age – that are playful in nature.

The first class planned to tell the story in a playful way, highlighting the importance of a healthy diet. The teacher gathered the students in a circle and told the story, giving the students the opportunity to handle the book as she reviewed the eating habits of children and their families.

The students represented the caterpillar: each student was a segment of the caterpillar wearing the colors green (a body segment) or red (the head). Next, the names of the fruits eaten by the caterpillar over the course of the story were identified: *apple, pear, orange, plum, strawberry*, using flashcards and signs with the names in English. Finally, they created a graph of the class indicating how many students like each fruit, placing colored pieces of paper on a board representing the preference for the fruit in the story. Image 1 presents a board of the activities from the first class:

Image 1 - Summary of activities carried out in Class 1



Source: Mincato (2017).

The second class included watching a video narrating the story that had been told in the previous class, as a strategy to remember the names of the fruits eaten by the caterpillar over the course of the story: *apple, pear, orange, plum, strawberry*, with flashcards. Using plastic fruit, they were categorized into two groups: the fruit eaten, and the fruit not eaten by the caterpillar. The objective was also to identify the predominant color of the five fruits, naming them in English, gluing objects to a board cutout that corresponded to the colors studied. As a final speaking task, the goal was for the students to use the structure *My favorite color is...* including the word studied. The sequence of activities proposed for the second class is represented in Image 2 below:

Image 2 - Summary of activities carried out in Class 2



Source: Mincato (2017).

The third class planned to list the foods presented in the story with quantities, using the numbers *one* to *ten* in English. The students counted in English the number of fruits eaten over the course of the week by the caterpillar, answering the question *How many?* Then, they identified, using *realia*⁴, the names, colors and numbers of real fruit placed on the table.

The teacher directed the students to prepare the homemade play dough, with the purpose of visualizing the construction of the caterpillar with it. Together with the students, they built the caterpillar containing the segments of the body. To finish up, they prepared and ate a fruit salad with the fruit mentioned in the story, as in Image 3:

Image 3 - Summary of activities carried out in Class 3



Source: Mincato (2017).

In the following week, a post-test activity was carried out, including the same three activities completed in the initial pre-test. Table 4 below presents the students' *misses* in the first activity, which involved color words, based on the game *colorful elephant*.

⁴ *Realia* corresponds to the use of materials that faithfully represent the objects. In the case of the activity mentioned, it refers to the use of real fruits.

Table 4 - Results of the post-test of the *Colors* activity

SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
Number of misses	1 miss	3 misses
Description	STUDENT K _p : green	STUDENT A _e : red STUDENT D _e : purple STUDENT H _e : orange

Source: Mincato (2017).

We would like to point out here that the *miss* seen in the private school was by a student who did not have previous difficulties in the pre-test (student p_p) and that, when the color green was mentioned, he touched the yellow object. In the pre-test, eight public school students were observed, with 11 *misses*. In the post-test, three students had *misses* again (students A_e, D_e and H_e), though, in the initial analysis, these students had not gotten the names of two colors right and, now, after the teaching experiment, they had difficulty with only one word.

Next, we applied an activity that involved numbers from one to *ten* in English with the use of popsicle sticks. Even over the course of the classes, this activity had the highest rate of *misses* (six *misses* taken the two schools together), as shown in Table 5. We would like to point out once again that the students are in the process of learning mathematics. Therefore, any difficulty in their linguistic competence in this area may be associated with their mathematical development, which was not complete.

Table 5 - Results of the post-test of the *Numbers* activity

SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
Number of misses	2 misses	4 misses
Word missed	STUDENT B _p : eight STUDENT F _p : ten	STUDENT A_e: nine STUDENT E _e : two – four STUDENT H_e: nine

Source: Mincato (2017).

Regarding the result of the pre-test, we highlight that in the private school, student B_p missed two numbers (words *six* and *eight*). With the teaching experiment, the post-test, Table 5 evidences that this difficulty appears with only one word (*eight*). Student F_p, who, in the pre-test had difficulty with the word *seven*, was successful in this association, though he had difficulty in representing the number *ten*, placing nine popsicle sticks on the table.

In the public school, student A_e, in the pre-test, had difficulty with the word *nine*, and he repeated it in the post-test, when the teacher asked for the number *nine*, and he put *seven* popsicle sticks on the table. Student E_e continued to have difficulty with the words *two* and *four*, placing, respectively, *three* and *six* popsicle sticks on the table. Student H_e continued to have difficulty with the word *nine*. In the pre-test, he had put *eight* popsicle sticks on the table, and now, he put *ten*. We have placed students A_e and H_e in bold, since they had *misses* in the activity prior to the post-test, involving colors.

The last activity dealt with vocabulary related to fruit, which was present in the story: *apple, pear, plum strawberry, orange*. The students viewed the image of one of the fruits mentioned and were presented with alternatives to choose the word corresponding to the figure. Previously, in the pre-test, the words with the

highest rates of *misses* were the words *plum* and *strawberry*, which continued after the teaching experiment, confirmed in the post-test, according to Table 6:

Table 6 - Results of the post-test of the *Fruit* activity

SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
Number of misses	1 miss	3 misses
Word missed	STUDENT B_p: pear	STUDENT A_e: strawberry STUDENT H_e: apple STUDENT P _e : strawberry

Source: Mincato (2017).

Once again, we have highlighted in bold those students who had *misses* in the previous activity with numbers as well as the fruit activity, with one student in the private school (student B_p) and two in the public school (students A_e and H_e).

Student B_p from the private school had difficulty in the pre-test with the word *strawberry*, and now *pear*. In the public school, student A_e had difficulty with the words *plum* and *strawberry*, and still had trouble with the word *strawberry*. Student H_e had difficulty with recognizing *apple*, when in the pre-test, he had difficulty with *plum*. Student P_e did not appear to have any difficulty in the pre-test, or with the activities described above in the post-test, but here, in the activity involving fruit, he chose the word *orange* when the image represented a *strawberry*. We have italicized the students who had *misses* in the three activities proposed, with no students in the private school and two in the public school (students A_e e H_e).

5. Discussion

Stories are part of our construction as human beings. In this process, listening to a story provided each student participating in this research with the opportunity to develop and increase their knowledge of language, enriching their experience and world experience based on contact with play. It was clear in their eyes the fascination when seeing and playing with a book in English, listening to a story in a language that was unknown to them until then. We observed in each lesson a growing affection for the character in the book, the *Caterpillar* and a bond that was being established among students, the researcher and the story.

In addition to the brilliance of this story is the work that was carried out on the importance of healthy eating and the careful preparation of snacks, pure citizenship within the classroom. The choice of the story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle (1996), was precisely due to its relation to the proposed theme. This experience was extended to the families, since the students shared with them what they were learning at school, thus marking the bond between the school and the community.

This transformative perspective was a result of the teaching experiment not only for the students, but also for me, as a teacher and researcher, having the opportunity to experience different realities towards the same goal. The contexts of the public and private schools were different. The students had different profiles, each with their own unique characteristics, with their different

expectations, potential and weaknesses. However, there was a single objective: learning the English Language based on storytelling.

With the development of the same proposal in the two schools, we perceived that, upon listening to the story, the students revealed the same feelings and emotions, interacting with the characters and becoming equally involved in the narrative. They achieved the designated objectives, assimilating the words studied and developing the target communicative competence. All the activities were essentially playful, based on a communicative approach, without the use of pure grammar to structure phrases, but the real use of language in everyday contextualized situations. English was present at all times, in the teacher's instructions, in the dialogues and in the students' productions. There was also space for work social relations, when the children gathered in a circle to listen to the story. They worked in groups and talked with their classmates, exchanging experiences, listening and being listened.

The play dough to build the story's character and the use of clothing for the live formation of the character provided an opportunity to create, experiment, build and rebuild, to see and be part of the activity, setting these students up as protagonists.

With the development of the teaching practice, it became clear that, regardless of the resources available or the space in the curriculum, English can be taught in the school context, whether public or private. The investigation carried out proves that even without prior knowledge, the students, after the experience in the space of storytelling, achieved the previously established goals by working on the proposed content, such as colors, numbers and fruit, based on storytelling in a playful way.

6. Final Considerations

Society has transformed, man has evolved, but stories have continued over the course of time, making our understanding of the universe inconceivable without them. Based on language, knowledge built from experiences started to be transmitted orally, with interactions between subjects, who started to express their thoughts. Myths, legends and folk tales present over the generations were passed on to descendants through stories.

With the emergence of pedagogy, stories aimed at children have come to be seen more carefully, taking into account their identity as a social, cultural and historical element. Considering the child as an individual member of a determined group, which carries their cultural features, values and beliefs, makes one reconsider the possibilities to explore in the classroom, making storytelling worthwhile for working with values and principles.

Considering the school environment, storytelling constitutes a playful resource and has the power to teach to observe more deeply, as well as think about and reflect on the new vocabulary. It is an opportunity to incorporate values, skills and information to learning, since listening to a story is an activity in which the student learns something new, and it is expected that something is learned. As Cho and Kim (2018, p.7) argue "language play benefits L2 learning because it enhances students' metalinguistic awareness and motivates students to use L2

in a safe and explorative setting. Playful and creative language use leads to the development of students”.

Telling stories promotes creative thinking, inviting the student to go beyond simple observation, by making decisions and innovating. Therefore, it presents new possibilities to the teacher and can be effectively used in the classroom, independently of the teaching style. They evoke insights into denotative and connotative meanings in the text, requiring the student to identify whether the structures have a literal meaning or if they go beyond what is being represented, arriving at a meaning with unique expressions. Moreover, it favors the development of the four skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking, with a focus on communicative competence.

Regarding the realities experienced in public and private education, we can claim that students from both schools were able to learn English, regardless of the resources available or the space in the curriculum, which was confirmed with the increased percentages upon comparing the results found in the pre-test and those in the findings of the post-test, after the teaching experiment. Together with these results, we also have the performance of each child, recorded in the diary in each class, which makes it possible to determine individual and collective growth.

All activities presented an increase in *hits*, showing that their skills had developed with regards to communicative competence. At the end of the teaching experiment, the students from the private and public schools achieved similar learning, since they were able to complete the same activities, applying the vocabulary and structures studied in the contextualized communicative situations.

However, we observed that the decrease in *misses* was greater in the public school, considering that the students did not have prior knowledge. They did not have English in Early Child Education, differently from the students in the private school, who have one guaranteed class in the curriculum for one hour a week.

Therefore, we have observed that the English as a Foreign, found space in the public school in the form of storytelling, even though it is not a compulsory curricular component until the final Grade of Elementary Education. This construction can take place effectively and satisfactorily when practiced by a trained professional, with activities that prioritize play and are developed from a perspective that maximizes communicative competence. This production is also coherent with student's age range and, in addition to the formal content, they work with palpable principles of citizenship in everyday life and in their reality.

Reconsidering issues that involve the mixed field that is education is not a simple task, since many paths can be taken to this point of arrival, some shorter and straighter, others, more winding, which require greater depth of reflection. Given the proposed ideas, we consider relevant those studies that investigate storytelling as a playful resource in teaching and learning the English Language, justifying the role that stories have in children's imagination and in their cognitive and human development.

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Contribuição dos autores

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