REVISTA RAÍDO
FLUXO CONTÍNUO
OPEN ACCESS
UFGD editora
DOI: 10.30612/revi.v12i24.10093

Social Justice, Vulnerability, and English Language Teaching: the use of Didactic Sequences and Possibilities of Articulation of Socio-Discursive Interactionism

Justiça Social, Vulnerabilidade e Ensino de Língua Inglesa: o uso de Sequências Didáticas e Possibilidades de Articulação com o Interacionismo Socio-Discursivo

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Abstract: Socio-discursive Interactionism (SDI) has offered a solid ground for inquiry in Applied Linguistics over the past decades, and it has enabled researchers to investigate different aspects of language teaching (Bronckart, 2003; 2006; 2010; Cristovão; Stutz, 2011; Magalhães, Cristovão, 2018; among others). As English teachers, we claim that teaching this language can maintain or interrupt deeply forged social injustices (Braga; Vóvio, 2015). Therefore, working from an SDI perspective implies the incentive to develop a critical conscience and awareness of textual and contextual features of the uses of language in a text. Therefore, this paper aims to present three studies from an SDI perspective that embraced similar themes and discuss how they con-

verge in terms of their discussion on social vulnerability, social justice, and English teaching. We present some of the possibilities the SDI perspective poses for a language education that is socially responsible and encourages students to speak up. The results of the analysis show that there is fertile terrain for the development of Language Capacities (Dolz; Noverraz; Schneuwly, 2004) when controversial issues such as social justice and social vulnerability are part of the activities designed for English teaching.

Keywords: Social justice; social vulnerability; social projects; socio-discursive interactionism, English teaching.

Resumo: O Interacionismo Socio-discursivo (ISD) ofereceu um terreno sólido para a pesquisa em Linguística Aplicada nas últimas décadas e permitiu que os pesquisadores investigassem diferentes aspectos do ensino de línguas (Bronckart, 2003; 2006; 2010; Cristovão; Stutz, 2011; Magalhães, Cristovão, 2018; entre outros). Como professores de Língua Inglesa (LI), afirmamos que ensinar esse idioma pode ser um meio de manter ou interromper injustiças sociais (Braga; V**óvio**, 2015). Portanto, ensinar para a ação de linguagem na perspectiva do ISD implica no incentivo ao desenvolvimento da consciência crítica e na consciência das características textuais e contextuais dos usos da linguagem em um texto. Por isso, o objetivo deste artigo é apresentar três estudos em uma perspectiva ISD que abordaram temas semelhantes e discutir como eles convergem em termos da discussão que propõem sobre vulnerabilidade social, justiça social e ensino de inglês. Apresentamos algumas das possibilidades que a perspectiva do ISD oferece para um ensino de línguas que seja socialmente responsável e estimule os alunos a se manifestarem. Os resultados da análise mostram que há um terreno fértil para o desenvolvimento das Capacidades de Linguagem (Dolz; Noverraz; Schneuwly, 2004) quando questões polêmicas como justiça social e vulnerabilidade social fazem parte das atividades pensadas para o ensino de LI.

Palavras-chave: Justiça social; Vulnerabilidade social; Projetos sociais; Interacionismo Socio--Discursivo; Ensino de Inglês.

Recebido em: 03/06/2023

Aceito em: 31/07/2023

INTRODUCTION

The disparity between the wealthiest and the poorest sectors of society has long been a preoccupation of citizens, policymakers, and scholars. Nevertheless, facing a global pandemic has raised more red flags regarding social inequality and its consequences since the enormous gap between rich and poor was, more than ever, brought to our attention. The impacts of such disparity are felt in several dimensions[1]: a) gender roles: when the pandemic impacted girls more heavily than boys, because they had to choose between household chores and studying; b) social roles: while private schools rapidly adapted their teaching methods to the remote learning, public schools thrived on providing access to virtual and online educational materials, when the reality was that the majority of students did not have a personal computer or internet access; c) access to healthcare: citizens who were dependent on the Brazilian universal healthcare system suffered the consequences of the pandemic in a grander scale than those who could pay for private healthcare; and d) safety: we watched the rise of a global movement against police brutality and racism[2] and, at the same time, many anti-LGBTQIA+ bills were voted on Congress[3], while Brazil was once again considered the most violent country in the world for transgender individuals[4] and environmental activists[5]. Amidst all this climate, traditional pedagogies that do not seem to consider social aspects as part of their curriculum are sometimes still defended and implemented in the country.

To challenge such complacency of education towards social issues, we put forward an argument for the need for a consistent movement towards social justice and equality through education, especially in English teaching. To rethink the democratic participation of students in the educational context does not mean to essentialize, romanticize or objectify the lives of those in vulnerability, but in fact, attempt to act accordingly to the current necessities of the next generation. As hooks (1994) affirms, the

1 Available at: https://www.politize.com.br/vulnerabilidade-social/. Access in: May 10, 2023.
2 Available at: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2020-06-06/vidas-negras-importam-chacoalha-parcela-de-brasileiros-entorpecida-pela-rotina-de-violencia-racista.html. Access in: May 10, 2023.
3 Available at: https://www.casaum.org/em-3-anos-deputados-apresentaram-mais-de-120-pls-anti-lgbti-nos-estados/. Access in: May 10, 2023.
4 Available at: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/radioagencia-nacional/direitos-humanos/audio/2023-01/brasil-e-o-pais-que-mais-mata-ransexuais-no-mundo#:~:text=Em%20relat%C3%B3rio%20divulgado%20pela%20Antra,assassinados%20no%20pa%C3%ADs%20em%202022. Access in: May 10, 2023.
5 Available at: https://www.conectas.org/noticias/brasil-e-o-pais-que-mais-mata-ativistas-pela-terra-de-acordo-com-relatorio-da-global-witness/#:~:text=S%C3%B3%20no%20Brasil%20foram%20342,foi%20de%20ind%C3%ADgenas%20ou%20negros. Access in: May 10, 2023.

academy still allows the classroom. Further, the author suggests education as praxis, the incessant reflection on actions and constant reinvention of theory and practice as embedded components, focusing on liberation.

Thus, the objective of this article is to present three studies (Lenharo, 2016; Trevisan Ferreira, 2020; Monteiro Pena, 2021) that were carried out by members of the Language and Education research group (*Linguagem e Educação*, CNPq/UEL) and discuss how they converge in terms of the discussion they propose on social vulnerability and social justice and the intersection with English teaching, within the scope of Socio-Discursive Interactionism (from now on SDI).

In the following sections, we discuss our understanding of the relevant concepts that guided our projects and describe the three studies at hand, concluding with some thoughts on their points of convergence.

1 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY: A PROJECT FOR ENGLISH TEACHING THROUGH RAP

A socially vulnerable subject is anyone who resides mainly in the poorest regions and is exposed to crime, drug trafficking, and other risky behaviors. In this sense, language plays an important role when we address the issue of social vulnerability. Firstly, an individual able to communicate in English has the power to interact with people anywhere in the world, in addition to finding out about the most diverse subjects conveyed in that language (often not available in their mother tongue). Secondly, knowledge of English can broaden individuals' world view, increasing their critical awareness and expanding their possibilities to participate in society significantly.

According to Silva and Silva (2015), the expression "social vulnerability" is of relatively new use since it appeared for the first time in 2004 in an infra-constitutional document (an official document that is hierarchically located below the Constitution), notably the final text of the National Social Assistance Policy (PNAS in Portuguese). In a similar perspective, Abramovay et al. (2002, p. 13), in a document organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), state that social vulnerability is

> the negative result in the relationship between the availability of material or symbolic resources of the actors, whether individuals or groups, and access to the structure of social, economic, and cultural opportunities from the State, the market, and society.[6]

Experiences show that stimulating the participation of young people as protagonists results in the mitigation of vulnerable social conditions, according to Abramovay et al. (2002). The work of these authors also highlights the appreciation of the voices and practices of young people, such as their proximity to the hip-hop movement, as a positive manifestation in expanding individuals' agency[7]:

> Appreciating typically youthful forms of expression, such as rap and graffiti, helps young people and the rest of society recognize these actors as capable of contributing and building peaceful solutions to social conflicts (Abramovay *et al.,* 2002, p. 14-15).[8]

Therefore, we emphasize the need to provide students with contextualized learning, concerned with bringing to the classroom topics that have to do with students' daily lives so that they identify with the proposal and genuinely participate in constructing knowledge around that theme. This concern led to thinking about the theme of hip-hop and the rap music genre as mediators of students' English learning, which culminated with the research project developed by Lenharo and Cristovão (2018). The focus was to create a Didactic Sequence (henceforth, DS) to raise students' awareness of their condition in the world, the social roles they occupy, the place of speech that is granted to them and the one that is assumed by them, among other fundamental aspects for the development of critical thinking. Souza (2011, p. 58-59) corroborates the view that hip-hop by itself already enhances this development in students, since

6 Our translation to: "*o resultado negativo da relação entre a disponibilidade dos recursos materiais ou simbólicos dos atores, sejam eles indivíduos ou grupos, e o acesso à estrutura de oportunidades sociais, econômicas, culturais que provêm do Estado, do mercado e da sociedade.*"

7 Agency can be defined as the ability of being active in the world by means of diverse semiotic modes, with particular attention to enhancing one's own learning conditions through that capacity (Larsen-Freeman, 2019, p. 62).

8 Our translation to: "*a valorização das formas de expressão tipicamente juvenis, tais como o rap e o grafite, colabora para que, tanto os próprios jovens quanto o resto da sociedade, reconheçam esses atores como capazes de contribuir e construir soluções pacíficas para os conflitos sociais"* (Abramovay *et al*., 2002, p. 14-15).

> Hip-hop is best known for stories in which social prohibitions and restrictions are confronted by articulating ways of resisting through language, uses of the body, and art (Souza, 2011, p. 58-59).[9]

Considering, then, that the target audience of the intervention carried out by Lenharo and Cristovão (2018) already demonstrated contact with English, primarily due to their proximity to basketball, a DS was elaborated by the authors considering the musical preference and knowledge of the participants about the hip-hop movement as a way of starting from what is familiar to students to awaken their motivation and engagement (Souza, 2011; Pinheiro, 2015). In addition, through themes known to them, the intention was to stimulate social participation and critical awareness through English learning, articulating the theme of vulnerability and periphery to the discussions.

DS are a range of activities that offer tools and opportunities to learn language operations, enabling students to develop Language Capacities (from now on LC) through text genres. The capacities intend to facilitate and organize a lesson, including one or more genres per unit, considering previously decided learning objectives.

LC can be divided into 1) *Action capacities*, related to the construction of knowledge about the situation of communication; 2) *Discursive capacities,* referring to the perception about the organization of a text and what it represents; and 3) *Linguistic-discursive capacities,* the understanding of language resources and operations needed to create a text). In addition, researchers from the Language and Education research group suggest expanding SDI capacities. They are *Multisemiotic capacities* (Lenharo, 2016) and *Significance capacities* (Cristovão; Stutz, 2011). The first is related to recognizing the different roles that non-verbal signs play in communication, while the latter allows the awareness and ability to interact with varied human themes and experiences upon representation of diverse social practices.

To develop the DS mentioned above, the two main Language Capacities addressed were the Significance and Multisemiotic ones due to the nature of the genre rap and its characteristics. In the next section, we explore how these LC were implemented in a DS designed for a project on antisexist language education.

9 Our translation to: "*o hip-hop é mais conhecido por histórias nas quais o enfrentamento às interdições e restrições sociais se dá pela articulação de formas de resistir por meio da linguagem, dos usos do corpo e da arte*" (Souza, 2011, p. 58-59).

2 FEMINIST THEORIES AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

In the 1990s, feminist north American and European scholars questioned the naturality of heterosexual and polarized and hierarchized gender use in philosophy, linguistics, sociology, history, literary theory, psychology, and politics. Since then, feminist theory has spread into different areas of knowledge and challenged the *status quo*.

More specifically, in language studies, there has been an ongoing debate on how language ignores women and, more often than not, demeans them (Henley, 1987; Lakoff, 1975). For instance, in suffixes such as -ess (e.g., Mister/Mist*ress*; Actor/Act*ress*) and -ette (e.g., Bachelor/Bachelor*ette*; Suffrag*ette*), in nouns such as Wife beater (sleeveless undershirt) or the use of the word “female” in front of male-dominated professions (e.g., *female* doctor) and the word “male” before female-dominated jobs (e.g., *male* nurse; *male* nanny, or “manny”).

The existence of hierarchized gender use in communication demands a rethinking of pedagogies since the myth of a neutral and genderless language (Moulton, 1981) is even more damaging than a naturally accepted sexist one; as it is known, language is socio-historically located (Pennycook, 2006). More than a *buzzword* or *buzz* research theme, language teaching, and sexism investigations contribute to rethinking teaching (Maher; Rathbone, 1986) and education (UNESCO, 2018; Shrewsbury, 1987).

In Brazil, the didactic book is one of the main tools used to teach English. Our context is complex and many schools more technological, physical, and personnel effective numbers to achieve effective language teaching (British Council, 2014). Therefore, it is only natural that new research in the field of applied linguistics has emerged about the analysis of foreign language textbooks (Araújo, 2020, Loch; Romanowski, 2013; Silva, 2015; Silva, 2020, among others).

Social Justice Education (henceforth SJE) (Adams; Bell; Griffin, 1997) suggests an education aiming at equity, in which individuals are encouraged to develop critical and analytical skills to understand and challenge the structure of oppression in their environment and how their identity contributes and can interrupt such power structures. This pedagogy presents a possibility of an engaged education. They suggest a standard model that makes learning practical and guides actual action. Such a model needs to consider obtainable objectives based on the availability of time to develop

the activities. SJE consists of three general purposes: "*increase personal awareness, expand knowledge,* and *encourage action"* (Bell, 1997, p. 47)[10].

It is essential to address that the action encouraged in SJE can be defined as language action precisely because all human action is through language (e.g., Emma Watson's *speech* at HeForShe Campaign; Meghan Markle's *letter* to the soap company; Greta Thunberg's "School strike for Climate" *poster* during protests, etc.). These actions are language actions. Therefore, in this section we discuss the possibility of a correlation between ESJ and language teaching through SDI, considering that ESJ does not describe specific actions (or language actions) as a final objective.

As stated above, a DS aims to help students master a genre, empowering them to write or speak more effectively in any given communicative situation (Dolz; Noverraz; Schneuwly, 2004). These language actions are always set in a previously decided theme, for example, environmental responsibility, indigenous culture, or, as in the investigation presented in this section: Anti sexism and Gender Issues.

Consequently, this language capacity presents criteria for analyzing language beyond the practical uses of action verbs. However, the LC are connected and should be kept distinct. Its activities can be used to structure DS to empower students to participate in any communicative situation through language action via genres. Similarly, SJE encourages actions but guides students to be aware of their identity, expand their knowledge about the world, and encourage actions in situations with prejudice. In the master's dissertation, "Antisexist Language Action and English Teaching Through Textual Genres: a documentary analysis" (Monteiro Pena, 2021), the correlation between ESJ and SDI was explored to create materials considering relevant social issues.

In the study, the following steps were considered: a) analyze the occurrences of language capacities on the modules, b) observe the number of movements for social justice education, and c) evaluate the possibilities of modification of the DS so it can be guided by transgression. The research was considered a documentary analysis.

During the investigation, the author suggested the creation of a table of criteria for analysis based on the three general objectives/movements in SJE (Adams; Bell; Griffin, 1997; Bell, 1997, among others): "*increase personal awareness, expand know-*

10 Check the full text for access to the proposal for structuring movements for SJE (Monteiro Pena, 2021).

ledge, and encourage action" (BELL, 1997, p. 47)[11]. It is essential to highlight that the first versions of the activities analyzed with the criteria of LC and SJE served as models for a reconfiguration of the material and an object to test the usage of the measures suggested in the study. For instance, the material presented some possibilities for re-design based on the numbers shown in the analysis.

Chart 1 - Social Justice Movements in First Version of Didactic Sequence



Source: Monteiro Pena (2021, p. 69)

The numbers illustrated how the SJE movements, for example, could be distributed more throughout the material. IPA[12] was only present in the two first modules of the DS. This data enabled the author to rethink the activities to create coherent material from an SJE perspective, adapting some of the activities for undergraduate students proposed by Goodman et al. (1997) to a language teaching context.

In this master's thesis, we argue how through the criteria for SJE and LC from SDI, one could grasp the challenge of creating a material/analysis that not only aims at language teaching for language action but also considers the broader context within which power circulates at multiple levels (Pennycook, 2001). Language teaching can be socially engaged while developing the capacities needed to communicate effectively in the 21st century.

11 Check the full text for access to the proposal for structuring movements for SJE (Monteiro Pena, 2021).

12 IPA = Increase of Personal Awareness

3 QUEER PEDAGOGIES AND SOCIO-INTERACTIONISM

Critical pedagogies have been the object of debate for a long time. Such ideas are present in the primary documents that rule the educational practice in Brazil, suggesting a focus on constructing a more just society. There is a consensus in Brazilian academia (in education, at least) on the importance of critical pedagogies and critical literacy, which is reinforced by the presence of such ideas in different educational laws. For instance, the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) argues that English language education in Brazilian public schools should have the capacity of "enabling the access to the necessary linguistic knowledge for engagement and participation, contributing to the critical agency of students in the exercise of active citizenship[13]" (BRASIL, 2017, p. 241).

When addressing the idea of critical pedagogies in language teaching, Tílio (2017) presents an intersection with queer pedagogies to propose a problematizing practice in language education as a tool for developing critical literacy. It is a proposal based on the conception of "critical" put forward by Pennycook (2001) and rejects concepts that consider knowledge univocal, objective, or neutral. Tílio deepens the argument by offering guidelines for critical pedagogies in a queer perspective, which include: guiding students to constantly challenge the status of normality and naturality of the ideas brought to the classroom; developing work with education for social justice, which is committed to social transformation; enabling self-reflection and self-questioning; keeping high expectations for students' performances and achievements. Those are part of what Tílio calls "critical socio-interactional literacy."

In 2020, Trevisan Ferreira – a member of the Language and Education research group – defended his master's thesis, proposing an articulation of such ideas and the theoretical framework of the Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI) under the supervision of Dr. Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão. This study is briefly presented as follows.

The master's thesis "Gender and sexual diversity in English Teaching: the education of critical citizens in a Context of social vulnerability" (Trevisan Ferreira, 2020) had the objective of investigating the existing relations between language education, the development of critical thinking and issues of gender and sexuality diversity. This re-

13 Our translation to: "*o estudo da língua inglesa pode possibilitar a todos o acesso aos saberes linguísticos necessários para engajamento e participação, contribuindo para o agenciamento crítico dos estudantes e para o exercício da cidadania ativa*" (BRASIL, 2017, p. 241).

search was implemented in a non-profit organization in Londrina – PR, south of Brazil, *Associação Guarda Mirim de Londrina*, which serves the city's vulnerable youth. For the research, the author developed a DS (Dolz; Noverraz; Schneuwly, 2004) to enable students to participate in a communicative situation in which they could reflect upon issues of gender and sexuality diversity. The DS was then used as the material for this institution's English Language Teaching course.

The participants in the course came from socio-cultural backgrounds in which they were constantly exposed to different types of violence. As argued by Abramovay et al. (2002), social vulnerability can be considered one of the causes of the episodes of violence and criminality that students experience. The students' personal stories constantly reinforced this argument during this course's implementation. One of the categories of violence present in students' self-reported levels was gender and sexuality violence, which is also commonly present in the school environment (Abramovay *et al*., 2002; Abramovay; Castro, 2004). It is with a focus on this type of violence and in the face of the urgent need for understanding the mechanisms through which this violence is established, reproduced, and reiterated that Trevisan Ferreira's research was developed.

During the implementation of this course, the researcher analyzed the interactions students had with their peers, the teacher, and the material regarding the representations of gender and sexuality. Based on Butler's concepts of reiteration, subversion, and the heterosexual imperative (Butler, 1997; 2003), the author categorized two types of utterances present in students' speeches: utterances that reinforced the establishment of gender and sexuality violence (which were then called *reiterative utterances*) and utterances that subverted such structures of gender and sexuality violence (which were then called *subversive utterances*).

The researcher also pointed out that subversive utterances were usually a response to reiterative utterances that could either be present in the immediate context of interaction (*immediate subversive utterance*) or be a report of a past interaction (*non-immediate subversive utterance*). Reiterative utterances, on the other hand, aim to exclude and diminish individuals that do not fit the norms of hegemonic gender identities and sexualities to reinforce the heterosexual imperative and force those individuals to fit the standard. Reiterative utterances that were recognized in the interactions of this course were grouped into three categories: *derogatory terms* (when the person uses words with a negative semantic load to refer to a person recognized as presen-

ting a non-hegemonic identity), *scorn* (when the individual aims at ridiculing a person that is recognized as not offering a hegemonic gender identity or sexuality) and *refusal* (which consists in the refusal to acknowledge non-hegemonic identities as legitimate or not wanting to participate in the discussions of such theme).

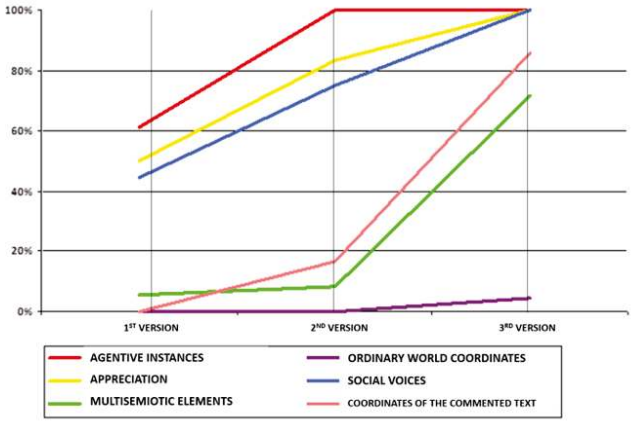
We present an example of the reiterative utterance of derogatory terms as an illustration of this analysis[14]. In the following excerpt, student A seems to correlate the spontaneous act of complimenting someone in English, produced by student C, as evidence of non-hegemonic identity and then creates a reiterative utterance using a derogatory term (*bichona*):

> Felipe: *cientista, a cientista representa o quê?*
> [a scientist, what does a scientist represent?
> C: *a ciência*
> [science
> Felipe: *a ciência, perfeito, então é a voz social da ciência, escrevam aí, ciência*
> [science, perfect, so this is the social voice of science, write it down, science.
> C: *very good*
> **A:** ô, bichona!
> **[you big faggot!**
> C: você nem fez, fica quieta!
> [*you haven't even done it, shut up!* (Trevisan Ferreira, 2020, p. 114)

Apart from analyzing the reiterative and subversive utterances, the researcher also investigated the development of critical literacy of the participants in the course through their productions in the proposed didactic sequence. The analysis was carried out using the FAIC (*Ficha de Acompanhamento de Indícios de Criticidade*) tool – the sheet for monitoring the development of critical literacy (Trevisan Ferreira, 2020; Trevisan Ferreira, Cristovão, 2021). This is an assessment tool that is based on the guidelines of a critical socio-interactional queer perspective (Tílio, 2017; Lin, 2014) and the theoretical and methodological framework of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (Bronckart, 2003; 2006; 2010), especially concerning the didactic model of the genre online comment. Thus, the criteria proposed for monitoring the development of critical literacy are agentive instances, appreciation, multisemiotic elements, ordinary world coordinates, social voices, and coordinates of the commented text. The following graph presents the development of these criteria in the texts produced by the participants of the course in their process of writing, reviewing, and rewriting:

14 Check the complete text for a more detailed analysis (Trevisan Ferreira, 2020).

Chart 2 – General view of the development of critical literacy (divided by criteria)



Source: Trevisan Ferreira (2020, p. 153)

The evidence of the development of critical literacy increased in writing and rewriting, with the support of the didactic sequence. At the same time, the monitoring of the development of critical literacy also informed the design of the material, given that it enabled the teacher to perceive the gaps in student's knowledge and their specific needs – since the didactic sequence was not ready beforehand, but developed through the course of its implementation.

Finally, Trevisan Ferreira argues that it is possible that the participation of these students in the course, with the support of a didactic sequence, assisted students in the development of critical literacy and in mastering the elements of the genre online comment, which enabled them to participate in an authentic communicative situation, in a socially responsible way.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The objective of this paper was to present and describe three different Masters' studies developed within the Language and Education research group under the supervision of Dr. Vera Cristovão. Firstly, we introduced Lenharo's research, which articulates the SDI with the Multisemiotic capacities and the elements of rap and hip-hop culture (Lenharo, 2016). Subsequently, Monteiro Pena's study provided an articulation of SDI with theories of feminism (Goodman *et al.,* 1997; Hooks, 1994) and education

for social justice (Adams; Bell; Griffin, 1997; Goodman *et al.,* 1997) to suggest criteria/ movements for the analysis and creation of DS or materials for English teaching in an Education for Social Justice perspective (Monteiro Pena, 2021). Finally, Trevisan Ferreira's research presented an articulation of SDI with queer theory, specifically for language teaching, based on Tílio's (2017) perspective of critical socio-interactional literacy - besides proposing categories of analysis for classroom speech, based on Butler's concepts of reiteration and subversion (Butler, 1997; 2003).

These studies provide an exemplification and a solid argument for the overture and possibility of articulating the theoretical-methodological foundations of Socio--discursive Interactionism to other disciplines and theories (e.g., multiliteracies, feminist theories, queer theory, etc.). This flexibility enables researchers to use the SDI's analytical tools and theoretical perspectives to investigate issues of social relevance. Hence, educators can explore the specific problems they seek to address while being grounded in a valid academic tool for analyzing inequalities. As Pennycook puts it: "It is worth reminding ourselves that it is perhaps compassion, but a compassion grounded in a sharp critique of inequality, that grounds our work" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 7).

Another point of convergence of the three studies presented is the usage of Didactic Sequences (DS). The articulation of SDI and the use of DS is a one of the characteristics of the Brazilian school of Sociodiscursive Interactionism. DS is material that grants flexibility for the educator to adapt and include issues specific to the group they are teaching - hence it does not impose a pretense of linearity in the learning process but seeks to develop language capacities in a comprehensive and interrelated manner. Furthermore, it also enables students to participate in using the language socially (Magalhães; Cristovão, 2018).

Moreover, studies presented here illustrate how we answer the call for the action described in the introduction of this paper: that educators should continuously challenge the complacency of education towards social issues. It is impossible to ignore the socio-cultural-political context that impacts (and is impacting) our students and their learning journeys. After all, "language is not simply a means of expression or communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs and is constructed by the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories and their possibilities for the future" (Norton; Toohey, 2005, p. 1). When teaching a language, we also prompt learners to act in the world - we work to ensure that this action is socially responsible and committed to social transformation.

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