

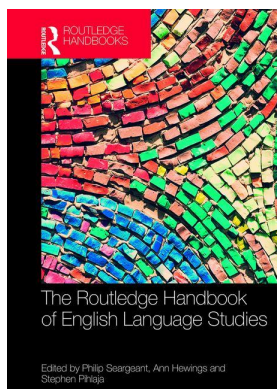
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Philip Seargeant, Ann Hewings, Stephen Pihlaja

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Paula Tatianne Carréra Szundy, Constant Leung

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Teaching English as an Additional Language in Anglophone and Brazilian contexts

Different curriculum approaches

Paula Tatianne Carréra Szundy and Constant Leung

Introduction

The continuing global spread of English has made English Language an important school curriculum subject in a large number of educational jurisdictions in many parts of the world. Following Stenhouse's (1975) argument that curriculum can be seen as a selective reflection of cultural and political values in society, the focus of this chapter is on the ways in which the conceptualization of English as an Additional Language (EAL), influenced by ideas associated with a socio-historical perspective, is understood and taken up by policymakers and educators in diverse local national and/or regional curriculum environments. Our main aim is to show that while EAL teaching has been broadly influenced by a collection of internationalized ideas associated with the concepts of communicative competence and Communicative Language Teaching, specific historical and policy factors in different social and cultural environments can have a significant impact on the actual curriculum design and practice.

The concept of communicative competence was attributed to Hymes (1972, 1977) who, as an ethnographer, was interested in the ways in which people accomplish actual communication in context, beyond the use of words and other grammatical resources. This concept has been further elaborated by a whole host of applied linguists and language educators in relation to additional/second¹ language teaching (for a more detailed discussion see Leung and Lewkowicz, in press). The seminal work of Canale and Swain in the 1980s made a significant contribution to the consolidation of this development and laid the foundations for subsequent expansions and refinements (Canale 1983, 1984; Canale and Swain 1980a, 1980b). Their rendering of communicative competence for additional/second language education is made up of four components: grammatical competence (vocabulary and grammar rules), socio-linguistic competence (socio-cultural conventions of language use), discourse competence (cohesion across the components of a spoken/written text and content meaning coherence) and strategic competence (making use of all available language and other semiotic resources to achieve communication). These competences, mainly modelled on native speakers, have

been consolidated into a teaching approach widely known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In many ways CLT has become the orthodoxy in the language teaching profession in many parts of the world; indeed it has been assumed as the dominant international paradigm, particularly by textbook publishers, English language testing organizations, private sector English language teaching (ELT) providers, and transnational educational agencies. For instance, elements of CLT can be found in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001). The CEFR is a language teaching and assessment framework initially developed for education systems within Europe but it has now been widely adopted internationally. The CEFR (Council of Europe 2001: 9) ‘views users and learners of a language primarily as “social agents” (. . .) who have tasks (. . .) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment, and within a particular field of action’. Therefore the goals of language education and language teaching are to provide learners with the opportunity to develop the desired capacity and the knowhow to communicate with others in real world contexts.

The assumptions and principles underlying CLT are necessarily formulated at a very high level of abstraction. We cannot assume that the highly abstract principles are translated in the same way at different times and in different places. In practice, language teaching takes place in schools, universities and other educational contexts that are subject to a variety of cultural, social and political influences. As Stenhouse (1967: 57) argues, ‘the curriculum may most profitably be regarded as a selection of culture, it must be seen in relation both to the social life of the classroom, of which it is the medium, and to the background of the culture of our society as a whole’. To understand any particular curriculum development or pedagogic practice, we need to take account of the specific ‘local’ conditions and histories.

With this perspective in mind, we will look at the conceptualizations and educational values underlying the curriculum provision for the teaching of EAL in two different contexts. These two situated accounts will help make the point that CLT principles can be interpreted and enacted in different ways; the specific character of EAL in any education system is shaped, at least in part, by a confluence of the perceived educational needs of students, prevailing pedagogic approaches, social values and attitudes, and societal priorities. In the next part of this discussion we will provide a brief account of the ways in which EAL has been conceptualized and realized as curriculum provision in school education in England.² After that we will focus on English in the Brazilian school curriculum, paying attention to the national policy framework and its translation into a particular state level curriculum, as a context-specific conceptualization of EAL in a Latin American setting. We will conclude with some remarks on the need to construe EAL as a situated curricular artefact, the characteristics of which can only be understood in terms of a confluence of local and trans-local intellectual, socio-cultural sensibilities and practical considerations.

English as an Additional Language in England

EAL is a significant educational issue in England. At the present time over 20% of the primary school population and over 15% of the secondary school population are classified as learners of EAL (Department of Education/Office for National Statistics 2016). These students are from linguistic minority communities and they attend regular state-funded schools. Under the current policy all students with EAL backgrounds are integrated into their age grades, irrespective of their English language proficiency. This policy is known as ‘mainstreaming’. In England, the language of schooling is English, so EAL learners are expected to learn the

age-appropriate curriculum content and English Language at the same time. To understand the current provision of EAL it is necessary to understand the background developments.

Curriculum provision of EAL first attracted attention in the 1950s when large numbers of workers were recruited to the manufacturing industries and public services from (then) British Commonwealth countries such as Jamaica and India.³ When the children of these workers arrived at local schools with little English or speaking a different variety of English, the educational response was to make them ‘become “invisible”, a truly integrated member of the school community ... as soon as possible’ (Derrick 1977: 16). In practice, the newly arrived students were, where resources and staffing allowed, put into specially instituted full-time or part-time English language classes, separate from the mainstream curriculum and school. The pedagogic approach to the teaching of English was underpinned by elements of a language-as-structure view and pragmatic everyday language use. For instance, the Ministry of Education (1963: 18) advised that

The teacher, through his [or her] own clear and natural speech should act as a constant example of the normal intonation, rhythm and pitch of ordinary conversation, using pictures, objects, actions and improvised dialogues to ensure comprehension and to enlarge vocabulary ... Most teachers ... would stress the importance of basing oral work on a carefully graded vocabulary and carefully introduced sentence patterns.

There was no national uniformity in this provision. The length of time spent by students in these English language classes varied between a few weeks and 18 months, depending on the policy and resources of the local (county level) education authorities. This separate provision was seen, for a time, as the most efficacious way to teach English to migrant children; it also served the purpose of reducing the visibility of the presence of ethnically different EAL learners in the mainstream school which triggered outcries of ‘lowering standards’ in some quarters (see Leung and Franson 2001).

However, the educational merits of this separate English teaching provision, first instituted in the 1950s and 1960s, were beginning to be questioned in the 1970s. Emerging evidence suggested that these English classes did not provide the students with an adequate preparation for integration into mainstream schooling (Department of Education and Science 1971, 1972). At this time changing social attitudes were beginning to be sensitive to issues such as equal opportunities and racial discrimination. The practice of teaching EAL learners in separate classes was seen as potentially socially problematic. An official government statement advised that

the Secretary of State wishes to emphasise that on suitable occasions the children should join from the beginning in the normal social life of the school and gradually take their place in the ordinary classes as their command of English allows.

(Department of Education and Science 1965: 2)

Another important educational policy statement suggested that

Common sense would suggest that the best arrangement is usually one where the immigrant children are not cut off from the social and educational life of a normal school ... Specialist language teachers need to work in close liaison with other teachers ... they should ... be in touch with the child’s education as a whole.

(Department of Education and Science 1975: 289–290)

This move away from separate ELT was re-affirmed and emphasized in yet another official policy statement a decade later:

We believe that the language needs of an ethnic minority child should no longer be compartmentalised . . . and seen as outside the mainstream of education since language learning and the development of effective communication skills is a feature of every child's education. In many respects, ethnic minority children's language needs serve to highlight the need for positive action to be taken to enhance the quality of language education provided for all pupils . . . since . . . we have the additional resource within our society of bilingual . . . communities, it is surely right and proper that the education system should seek to build on the opportunities which this situation offers.

(Department of Education and Science 1985: 385–386)

By the mid-1980s, this separate English language provision had been dismantled because official opinion, reflecting community sentiments, had deemed this form of EAL provision represented a form of racial discrimination (Commission for Racial Equality 1986). This shift in social attitudes was accompanied by a fundamental curricular and pedagogic reorientation. EAL was no longer regarded as a separate subject; it was now to be acquired as part of the everyday curricular communication and learning. The following statement by Bleach (1990: 63) expressed this view clearly:

In English lessons, when students are working on the comprehension of texts, we already know that sensitive questioning can lead them to the heart of the text. It is clear that we could learn to write questions in such a way that our students would be given the necessary support to code their answers to the questions. Within this sort of task, too, we should be able to ensure that some systematic work on new structures was being done in the mainstream English lesson.

In this view the opportunities to develop English proficiency in all subject lessons were to be exploited for EAL learners. Indeed this approach was extended to all areas of the school curriculum to form what was (and is), in effect, an EAL across-the-curriculum policy and practice. The theories of Krashen (1982, 1985) and Cummins (1984, 1993, 2000) have been drawn on to lend intellectual support. Krashen's distinction between 'language acquisition' and 'language learning' was seen as particularly important. In one official curriculum document 'acquisition' is interpreted as follows:

the acquired system is a subconscious process very similar to that which children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language where the focus is on natural communication.

(Department for Education and Skills 2006: 12)

'Language acquisition' through meaningful use is preferred to 'learning' which is likened to conscious efforts to master vocabulary and grammar rules (which by extension harks back to separate language classes). The appeal to the 'naturalness' of this approach can also be seen in the allusion to first language development in the above quote. (For a fuller discussion see Leung 2016.)

In a way, EAL in the school curriculum in England can be seen as a particular form of CLT. The principle of 'acquisition through meaningful use' is embedded in the statutory National Curriculum. Paradoxically, because EAL is completely embedded into the content and activities

of the mainstream curriculum, little explicit attention has been paid to issues related to EAL-sensitive content-language integrated teaching, learning outcomes, teacher education and so on in the past 30 years. No specialist qualification is needed to teach EAL. The quality and amount of EAL provision for these students are largely in the hands of individual schools and teachers.

English as an Additional Language within foreign modern languages provision in the Brazilian public educational system

Given the territorial extension of the country, its large school population and diverse educational provision, it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a general account of how English is taught in schools in Brazil. Instead, as with the focus on schools only in England within the United Kingdom, we will focus on national and state level policies designed to set out curricular orientations for modern foreign language teaching. By focusing on these policies, we intend to offer an informed account of the conceptualization and curriculum realization of the subject 'English' in Brazilian public (state) schools, where it is the additional language most frequently taught to the large and heterogeneous public school population. An account of how the curricular goals and teaching process of modern foreign languages, of which EAL is one, is envisaged in national and state curricular framework can be seen as a telling contrast to EAL in England. Terminologically, we have chosen to use the term 'Additional Language' (instead of 'foreign/second') when we refer to English within the Brazilian modern foreign languages curriculum. As the analysis will illustrate, this choice is justified by the fact that languages are usually conceptualized as additional resources to students' linguistic repertoires in the target documents. That said, the umbrella term 'modern foreign language/s' will be used when referring to Brazilian language education policies and frameworks to reflect the terminological use in the relevant documents and legislations.

While additional languages may be introduced as early as kindergarten in private education and in the earlier years of elementary schools in a few public-funded schools, it is not until the sixth grade of elementary school (at the age of 10/11) that modern foreign languages should be compulsorily introduced in schools, according to the legislation LDBEN 9394/96 (Brasil 1996), the law that lays down the foundations for Brazilian education today. This law requires that at least one modern foreign language should be included in the curriculum from the sixth grade of elementary school to the third year of high school (at the age of 14/15). It also states that the language to be taught should be chosen by the school community, taking into consideration the local needs and institutional characteristics.

A study conducted by the British Council (2015) in ten states reveals that, except for Pará, a state in the north of Brazil where the teaching of Spanish is the most sought-after provision in schools, English is the most taught language in public schools in the other nine states included in the study. This study also shows that the number of English classes in most states tends to be limited to two 45 or 50 minute classes a week, and in some schools, especially in the North and Northeast regions, a single class a week is offered. The 2013 educational census showed that only 39% of English teachers in public schools hold a specific major in English from their pre-service training. This relatively low level of teacher proficiency in English, together with the small number of classes a week provided to students, has engendered a widespread perception that the quality of the teaching in English is generally low. Within this context, the national policies are intended to provide educational leadership and to inform curricular developments, teacher education and textbook choices through the establishment of principles aimed at promoting the learning of modern foreign languages. In addition to asserting that modern foreign languages can and should be learned in public schools, these policies emphasize their

importance as a means of fostering wider participation in the social world, which is understood as a *sine qua non* for the exercise of a more participatory and transformative citizenship.

Expanding the notion of citizenship from civic awareness to the competence of understanding, producing and transforming meanings in diverse social spheres, the national curriculum framework (*parâmetros nacionais* in Portuguese), first established to orient modern foreign language curricula across the 26 states of Brazil, is largely framed by a socio-interactional view of teaching-learning additional/foreign languages, a socio-historical perspective of language, and a critical stance towards (multi)literacies. These three theoretical pillars emphasize the role of interaction with other people and cultural artefacts in diverse social institutions (Vygotsky 1930 [1998], 1934 [1998]). Therefore, in the socio-interactional perspective advocated by these documents, first and/or additional languages should be taught/learned through the engagement of participants in situated language uses and practices. According to this view, meanings expressed in language are socio-historically (trans)formed by interlocutors to account for and reflect changes in society and culture (Voloshinov 1929 [1986]; Bakhtin 1953 [1986]). In this sense, the assumptions that orient the Brazilian curricula frameworks for language teaching seem to lie on clearer ideological and pedagogical principles than those in the Anglophone documents loosely based on CLT.

Framed by these perspectives, the next two subsections will examine the curriculum conceptualizations that inform the teaching of EAL in the public sector schools and how they are translated into the Minimum Curriculum designed by the state of Rio de Janeiro.

National framework for modern foreign languages in Brazil: curriculum conceptualizations

Building on the aforementioned views of how languages should be taught/learned, the Brazilian Ministry of Education policies (Brasil 1996, 1998, 2006, 2014, 2016) set out the expectations of the central curriculum authorities in terms of pedagogic orientations (Szundy and Cristóvão 2008). Therefore, these policy texts can be regarded as prescriptive statements on the approach and organization of the teaching-learning processes for languages (Machado and Cristóvão 2005). To capture the kind of ELT legitimated by curriculum policies in Brazil, we proceed to the analysis of specific excerpts from the policies mentioned above. Taking into consideration the time span involved in the publication of three of these official documents, PCN-LE (1998), OCEM-LE (2006) and BNCC (2016), and by examining some of the key passages in each of these policies concerned with teaching-learning processes, we can glimpse a view of the historical trajectory of how EAL (and other languages) has been understood in Brazilian public education.

The Brazilian curricular approach has been strongly influenced by a socio-historical perspective, in turn strongly influenced by Vygotskian and Bakhtinian views of languages as semiotic instruments which are constantly (re)shaped through human interactions. This perspective can be seen in the excerpts below.⁴ They point to the ways in which modern foreign language teaching-learning processes are conceptualized in terms of social interaction, situated learning and identity (de-/re)construction.

Excerpts 1, 2 and 3 – PCN-LE (1998)

[...] Every meaning is dialogic, that is, constructed by the participants of discourse. In addition to that, every interactional encounter is crucially determined by the participants' social world: by institutions, history and culture.

(p. 27)

[...] The markers that define social identities (as poor, rich, women, men, black, white, homosexual, heterosexual, elderly, youngsters, people with special needs, speakers of (non)stigmatized varieties, speakers of languages enjoying more or less social prestige etc.) are intrinsically connected with how people can act through discourse or with how other people can act with them in the various oral and written interactions in which they engage. It is worth saying that the exercises of power and resistance in discourse are typical of daily experienced interactional encounters.

(p. 27)

[...] In order to make the construction of socio-interactional meanings possible, people use three kinds of knowledge: systemic knowledge, world knowledge and textual organization knowledge. These three kinds of knowledge compose the student's communicative competence and prepare him/her for the discursive engagement.

(p. 29)

Excerpts 4 and 5 – OCEM-LE (2006)

[...] In such a conception [of grammar], language can be described, taught and learned as an abstract system composed of abstract rules – all of this distant from any specific socio-cultural context, community of practice and distinct group of users.

(p. 107)

[...] by imposing normativity and a sole model, the homogeneity marginalizes and eliminates the sociocultural and linguistic variations that constitute a natural part of any language.

(p. 108)

Excerpts 6 and 7 – BNCC (2016)

[...] In its educational dimension, the curricular component Modern Foreign Language contributes to the appreciation of the sociocultural and linguistic Brazilian plurality so as to stimulate respect to differences. Working with texts in other language(s) places the student in contact with diversity.

(p. 121)

[...] The focus is not on comprehending a set of theoretical concepts and linguistic categories for later application, but on learning, for use and through use, linguistic discursive and cultural practices that may be added to other knowledge that students already carry in their repertoires in Portuguese, indigenous languages, heritage languages, sign languages, among others.

(p. 121)

In the seven excerpts above, the socio-historical premise, found in the works by Vygotsky (1930 [1998], 1934 [1998]), Voloshinov (1929 [1986]) and Bakhtin (1953 [1986]), can be clearly seen. In particular, a strong theoretical principle for curricular development is that individual students' conscience and identities are (re)shaped through and in interactions with other(s) in different social spheres. In this sense, teaching English or any other language at schools is largely justified by the possibility of exposure to and construction of otherness: other interactional encounters and dialogues (excerpt 2), other linguistic and cultural varieties (excerpt 5), knowledge about other areas and other possibilities of social interactions (excerpt 7). The incorporation of a responsive attitude to otherness as a condition for discursive

engagement in the additional language portrays the influence of the dialogic conception of language (Bakhtin 1953 [1986]) in the design of these curricular policies. Whereas dialogism is understood as engagement in institutionally, historically and culturally located meaning construction processes in the curricular policy published in 1998 (excerpt 1), in the ensuing documents, published in 2006 and 2016, the scope of dialogism is widened to encompass plurilingualism, interpreted as cultural-linguistic heterogeneity (see excerpts 5 and 6). This extended scope has clear interconnections with the view of languages as additional situated resources interacting with students' multilingual repertoires. It can thus be related to current focuses of EAL research on how 'teaching and learning work in local, situated practices in different schools, classrooms and local education authorities' (Leung 2016: 166).

Because language is understood in terms of its socio-interactional and dialogic dimensions, traditional pedagogic practices in which grammar is taught for its own sake are not promoted by the three policy documents. Instead the focus is on situated language use. Although the term communicative competence is only explicitly used in the third excerpt from PCN-LE, the Hymesian ethnographic precept that 'competence in language use is not just a question of an abstracted knowledge of grammar residing in the individual, it also involves social conventions of use in actual contexts of communication' (Leung and Street 2012: 85) seems to be present in all three documents, reflecting what Leung (2013) defines as a widened notion of the 'social' in the teaching of EAL. Therefore, rather than restricting it to users' competence to apply different language functions in a variety of contexts, the scope of the social in these three curricular policies is enlarged to include 'the markers that define social identities', 'the exercises of power and resistance in discourse' (excerpt 2); '[...] specific socio-cultural context, community of practice and distinct group of users' (excerpt 4), and 'the contact with diversity' (excerpt 6). In this more complex and diverse view, communicative competence in a language should be accomplished both through students' engagement in language use and through their reflections on the processes of use (Rojo 2000), which are informed by the view that meanings are constructed through 'three kinds of knowledge: systemic knowledge, world knowledge and textual organization knowledge' (excerpt 3), and that learning comprises linguistic-discursive and cultural practices 'in the use and for the use' of language (excerpt 7).

In face of the dynamic social views of uses, practices, (inter)actions, identities and meanings that characterize the views that these three national policies embrace, the term 'foreign' to qualify languages other than the mother tongue seems less appropriate than 'additional'. While the main reason for privileging the term 'foreign' in official documents lies in the fact that the name of this curricular component in the law that founded the premises for these policies (LDBEN 9394 – Brasil 1996) is 'Modern Foreign Language', the educational perspective that is voiced in the excerpts above seems closer to the concept of additional language, which recognizes that 'pupils have other linguistic resources before learning English' (Leung 2016: 159). This perspective, however, is only indirectly expressed through the idea of plurality of oral and written interactions emphasized in the first two documents, but it is clearly voiced in the position expressed in the third document that learning should take place through 'linguistic-discursive and cultural practices that may be added to other knowledge that students already carry in their repertoires in Portuguese, indigenous languages, heritage languages, sign languages, among others' (excerpt 7).

Taking the curricular framework of the second biggest state in Brazil as an example, the next section focuses on how these wider national curriculum statements are translated into learning objectives in curricular policies that should orient additional language teaching in public schools in Rio de Janeiro.

Curricular frameworks at state level: the Minimum Curriculum of Rio de Janeiro

Taking into consideration the learner's identity as a speaker of Brazilian Portuguese, the Minimum Curriculum of Foreign Language (Secretaria Estadual de Educação do Rio de Janeiro 2012) aims to provide students with opportunities to learn and experience different varieties of the foreign language in conjunction with the mother tongue, Brazilian Portuguese. The cross-curricular work is realized through the selection of speech genres (*gêneros discursivos*, in the original Portuguese text) that constitute both oral and written competence in the foreign language. In addition, the Minimum Curriculum also emphasizes that the speech genres may trigger interdisciplinary dialogues with other areas.

The reference in the Minimum Curriculum (Secretaria Estadual de Educação do Rio de Janeiro 2012) to the notion of speech genres as varieties of texts and utterances that organize and influence people's participation in different situations of interaction can be clearly related to the Bakhtinian definition of speech genres as relatively stable types of utterances developed by each sphere in which language is used (Bakhtin 1953 [1986]). Framed by this notion of genres, the Minimum Curriculum lists the genres that should orient the provision of English and/or Spanish as additional languages in each term of the school year. Since the school year is divided into four terms of two months in duration, the Curriculum indicates an average of four genres to cover written and oral production/comprehension in each grade of primary and secondary school. In addition to listing the genres, the Curriculum requires that understanding and producing written/oral language should be regarded as the main competences (under 'axis' in Table 12.1 below) to be developed; it also sets out the goals to be accomplished in each of these competences in respect of each genre/groups of genres.

Table 12.1 presents an overview of the speech genres that integrate the Minimum Curriculum that establishes frameworks for ELT in public schools in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

With the organization of language teaching in speech genres and the variety of genres listed in Table 12.1 in mind, it is possible to infer that, similar to the national policies analysed in the previous section, the Minimum Curriculum of Rio de Janeiro is also informed by a socio-historical view of language and the teaching-learning processes. In the interpretation of national policies in this state curriculum framework, the socio-historical purview is locally translated into a syllabus that covers social (inter)actions in different speech genres. As these overlap with the students' other curricular activities in Portuguese, the oral and written topics seem to be regarded as additional resources to be added to a linguistic repertoire students already hold and/or are developing in their first language.

However, the translation of the dynamic socio-historic view of language into curriculum practice has shown signs of reification. Whereas Bakhtin's emphasis on the patterned but also contingent nature of the utterances can be related to a situated and ideological perspective of literacies (Oliveira and Szundy 2014), the Minimum Curriculum appears to treat the concept of genre in additional language teaching as a static phenomenon. The reification of the social dimension through the objectification of speech genres in the state curriculum of Rio de Janeiro is illustrated in the content defined for the first term of the sixth grade of elementary school in Table 12.2.

In Table 12.2 the descriptors for the written and oral production/comprehension of the genre comics/comic strips seem to suggest that language use can be replicated across contexts and tasks in a stable way. There is a strong sense that the 'autonomous' language model – in which linguistic forms and functions are stable and neutral irrespective of the context of

Table 12.1 Speech genres in the Minimum Curriculum for Modern Foreign Language

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL					
TERM	SIXTH GRADE	SEVENTH GRADE	EIGHTH GRADE	NINTH GRADE	AXIS
First	Comics/comic strips	Diaries/blogs	Advice letters	Encyclopaedia entries/science-popularization articles	– written and oral competence – language in use – written and oral production
Second	Tales (fairy tales/legends/fables)	Advertisements	News/reports	Readers letters	
Third	Game rules/recipes/instruction manuals	Adventure narratives/science fiction	Interviews	Opinion articles	
Fourth	Instant messages, notes, mailbox messages	Songs and poems	Cartoons	Short stories	

Table 12.2 Content for the first term of the sixth grade (Minimum Curriculum: 5)

<i>Foreign language</i>	<i>Sixth grade of elementary school</i>
Axis Abilities and competences	Comics/comic strips WRITTEN AND ORAL COMPREHENSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehend the interaction between reader, discourse and iconic element and the use of linguistic resources. • Comprehend the nature of humour present in the genre.
Axis Abilities and competences	Comics/comic strips LANGUAGE IN USE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the linguistic marks of colloquial register and figures of speech that create humorous effect (irony, comparison) • Recognize the linguistic resources to describe people (adjectives, comparisons, etc.) and the elements that characterize dialogues in this genre, such as: answers, questions and verbal structures. ORAL AND WRITTEN PRODUCTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a comic/comic strip arising from a daily or imagined situation. • Role play the dialogues of this comic/comic strip.

Note: The table was translated from its original version in Brazilian Portuguese by one of the authors.

use – is being adopted here (for a discussion see Street 2014, 2009). By interpreting the context as a fixed and stabilized entity, the Minimum Curriculum depicts a monolithic and universal rather than a dialogic and locally situated understanding of speech genres. Amorim (2014) suggests that there is a difference between such a position and the Bakhtinian view that context determines the characteristics of the genre. For Bakhtin (1953 [1986]), the relationship between genres and contexts is always dialectical, which means that they are mutually constituted and (trans)formed. Although descriptors such as ‘comprehend the interaction between reader, discourse and iconic element and the use of linguistic resources’, ‘comprehend the nature of humour present in the genre’ and ‘recognize the linguistic marks of colloquial register and figures of speech that create humoristic effect (irony, comparison)’ indicate the connection of the Rio de Janeiro curriculum with the socio-interactional perspective advocated by national curricular principles, the scope of the social is considerably more limited than that envisaged in the national documents. This is so because, despite the rhetoric in the Minimum Curriculum, we cannot see in the curriculum content (e.g. see Table 12.2) any descriptors that propose the use of comics to problematize, for instance, issues of stereotypes, prejudice and identities, which would engage with the national curriculum view of citizenship as the engagement with and construction of plural meanings.

The reduction of the scope of the social in the Minimum Curriculum is also reflected in the definition of a list of pre-determined speech genres, which seems to ignore the participants’ agency in choosing and (re-)shaping linguistic repertoires locally in school and in the classroom. By merely listing the genres and the competences that should be developed through them, the tendency to regard language as abstracted linguistic norms criticized in the national policies is reiterated as genre. In a way, the more traditional emphasis on grammar for the sake of grammar is merely replaced by the emphasis on genres for the sake of genres, which can become objectified units in the curriculum that can be replicated in many different contexts. In this sense, the dynamic agentic plurilinguism, embedded in the three national

curricular policies analysed in the previous section, seems to be absent in the interpretation of ‘autonomous’ speech genres privileged by the Minimum Curriculum. This absence of contingency and dynamism is felt in the attempt to homogenize the learning-teaching contents and processes of additional languages across the state of Rio de Janeiro. This approach would disregard the diverse socio-cultural semiotic resources of the students, many of whom are familiar with the innovations and hybridization of genres that populate lives in the heterogeneous local communities in Rio de Janeiro.

Concluding remarks

At a very high level of abstraction the teaching of EAL in both England and Rio de Janeiro would seem to fit the ‘international’ CLT paradigm. However, a close-up examination suggests that the curriculum principles are built on very different intellectual and ideological foundations. Arguably the ‘international’ CLT paradigm follows the dictum ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’, or better still for this discussion, ‘do as the native speakers do’. In other words, a (if not *the*) main goal of language teaching is to help students learn what other speakers, particularly native speakers of the focal language, do with the language. In this view language teaching should aim, first and foremost, to inculcate the capacity to produce/reproduce a pre-existing knowledge and model of use. The approach in the English school system is communicative in that EAL is completely embedded in the everyday English-medium classroom and school activities. At the same time little attention is paid to language pedagogy beyond ‘acquisition through meaningful use’; in other words, the immersion of students in an English-speaking language environment is assumed to provide most, if not all, of the support needed for EAL development. By this reckoning teachers of all subjects are also, by default, teachers of English because they teach in English. There is little discussion of language learning goals beyond helping EAL learners to engage in curricular activities. EAL in the English school system is thus a diffused idea that has no curricular focus and visibility. We can say that at the curriculum level, the concept of CLT is largely understood in terms of communicative language use in school contexts; the language teaching dimension is, at best, left to individual teachers and schools.

In contrast, the Brazilian approach, by our account, appears to aim at individual and social transformations. The purpose of language teaching and learning is thus to help students to be decentred, to learn to be the ‘other/s’. In a way CLT is seen as having the potential to assist students to realize their transformative capacity. It is perhaps a little ironic that the transformative agenda in the Minimum Curriculum of Rio de Janeiro may well be hindered by a somewhat monolithic assumption that specified ‘speech genres’ are static and context-neutral. We would contend that unless the ‘speech genres’ are themselves open to critique and transformation, students would merely be taught to reproduce what the curriculum planner and policymakers have chosen for them.

Unlike the approach to EAL in England, the Minimum Curriculum of Rio de Janeiro attempts to translate wider linguistic and pedagogic principles into concrete learning goals. However, a common challenge shared by England, Brazil and probably many other contexts where EAL is taught/learned, seems to reside in the inability of policy and curriculum designers to take proper account of the complexity involved in the enactment of situated language use in relation to student needs and pedagogic practice. While the diverse educational settings clearly call for context-sensitive pedagogic approaches, the internationalized CLT principles do not seem to speak to the local complexities and contingencies found in different world locations. This is so because in the pedagogic recontextualization of the

Hymesian ethnographic concept, CLT has rendered the ‘social’ in EAL in terms of pre-existing native speaker models and practices; in effect the ‘local’, a key concern in ethnographic perspectives, has been drained out of the concept. This conceptual reduction has meant that the CLT orthodoxy has little analytic purchase on ‘local’ conceptualizations and practices of EAL situated in diverse social and historic contexts. Thus, we argue that the conceptual *re-localizing* of CLT principles in EAL curriculum development and teacher education is a prerequisite for making the principles of CLT relevant in different educational contexts.

In practice, the relocalizing of CLT principles would encourage teachers and policymakers to abandon the idea that there is a context-free model of communicative competence and a universal pedagogic template for its development (e.g. the teaching materials represented by internationally marketed ELT textbooks). Teachers and curriculum developers should be encouraged to pay attention to the kind/s of issues/topics that would be educationally salient in their local context and how such issues/topics should be rendered into teaching materials and activities at different levels or stages of language learning. The materials development process should take account of different views of language development (e.g. naturalistic acquisition, instruction-based learning) and teaching approaches (e.g. using the target language only, using all languages available in the classroom as appropriate, and so on). Teachers and materials writers should be encouraged to consider different approaches to teaching and views on language development with broad CLT principles in mind. Ultimately though, if the concept of communicative competence is fundamentally about capturing the ways in which people do things with words and other semiotic means in particular contexts, then CLT should regard local communicative practices as the starting point in designing curriculum and pedagogy.

Notes

- 1 We are aware of the fact that the lexical choices used to refer to English Language Teaching (English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language, English as an Additional Language etc.) link authors with distinct views about language. When reviewing different scholars, we are loyal to the term a specific researcher chooses to refer to ELT. Nevertheless, we opt for the term *additional* to refer to ELT. Such an option is justified by our belief that other languages constitute additional linguistic resources to students’ as well as teachers’ linguistic repertoires.
- 2 Given the devolved nature of the governance in the United Kingdom, the education systems in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are run by their respective local administrations. While these four systems share some broad similarities, there are also local differences. For this reason this discussion will refer to the developments and events in England only.
- 3 At that time EAL was labelled English as a Second Language.
- 4 The excerpts were extracted from three official national curricular policies: PCN-LE (1998), OCEM-LE (2006) and BNCC (2016).

Further reading

- Burns, A. (ed.) (2005) *Teaching English from a Global Perspective*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. This edited volume provides a non-parochial discussion on the need to move away from a monolithic view of English, and to reconsider the importance of taking diversity into account.
- Conteh, J. (2015) *The EAL Teaching Book: Promoting Success for Multilingual Learners in Primary and Secondary Schools*. 2nd edn. London: Sage. This text provides a helpful account of how teachers can respond to linguistic diversity in their classrooms.

- Cummins, J. (2000) *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. This is a very useful text in setting out the arguments for the promotion of bi/multi-lingualism in education, particular with reference to linguistic minority students.
- Leung, C. (2013). 'Second/additional language teacher professionalism – What is it?', in M. Olofsson (ed.), *Symposium 2012: Lärarrollen I svenska som andraspråk*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitets förlag, 11–27. This text addresses the key professional issues facing additional language teachers in contemporary contexts where ethnic and linguistic diversity is the norm.
- Leung, C. (2014) 'Communication and participatory involvement in linguistically diverse classrooms', in S. May (ed.), *The Multilingual Turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL and Bilingual Education*. New York: Routledge, 123–146. This discussion demonstrates that the contingent language use in actual classrooms demands a more complex language model than the conventionally accepted view of communicative competence (as represented by many internationally marketed ELT tests and textbooks).

Related topics

- English and multilingualism: a contested history
- The relevance of English language studies in higher education
- Literacy in English: literacies in Englishes
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- English and social identity
- Sociolinguistics: studying English and its social relations.

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