

# THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENEM ESSAY IN CONTRAST WITH CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARLY WRITING

## AS EXIGÊNCIAS DA REDAÇÃO DO ENEM EM CONTRASTE COM A ESCRITA ACADÊMICA CONTEMPORÂNEA

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### RESUMO

Este estudo analisou o uso de conectores em quatro diferentes gêneros textuais: uma entrevista oral jornalística, um artigo de opinião, um texto literário contemporâneo e uma redação escrita por um estudante do ensino médio para o Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (ENEM). O objetivo principal foi examinar os padrões de uso desses conectores, comparando-os com os padrões estabelecidos pelo Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP) para os conectores em textos dissertativo-argumentativos. Por meio de nossa análise, tornou-se evidente que, em termos de variedade de conectores, os textos mais formais, que se espera que empreguem uma ampla gama de conectores, frequentemente mostraram o uso repetido ao longo do texto. Portanto, esse achado estimula uma reavaliação das diretrizes do ENEM para a escrita da redação, que enfatizam a importância de conectores diversificados como demonstração de proficiência em múltiplos mecanismos de coesão textual, regidos pela gramática normativa.

**Palavras-chave:** Texto dissertativo - argumentativo, Conectores, Gramática normativa.

### ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the use of connectors in four different text genres: a journalistic oral interview, an opinion article, a contemporary literary text, and an essay written by a high school student for the National High School Exam (ENEM). The main goal was to examine the usage patterns of these connectors, comparing them with the standards set by the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) regarding connectors in

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argumentative-essay texts. Through our analysis, it became evident that in terms of the variety of connectors, the more formal texts, expected to employ a wide range of connectors, frequently showed repeated use of the same ones throughout the text. Therefore, this finding encourages a reassessment of ENEM's guidelines for essay writing, which emphasize the importance of diversified connectors as a demonstration of proficiency in multiple textual cohesion mechanisms, ruled by normative grammar.

**Keywords:** argumentative essay, connectors, normative grammar.

## 1. Introduction

Grammar teaching in Brazilian basic education is grounded in concepts that uphold the use of normative grammar. There is a common, traditional, and ideological notion of what is “correct” and how one should speak and write within society. This standard consists of a set of precepts and rules that define an ideal language model and "a standard to be observed by any and every speaker who wishes to use the language in a 'correct,' 'civilized,' 'elegant' manner" (Bagno, 2012, p. 21). In this sense, language is conceived, as defined by the author, as being governed by the rules prescribed in normative grammar, frequently found in language teaching materials and employed in classrooms across the country. Nevertheless, the National Common Curricular Base<sup>3</sup> (BNCC) explicitly mentions the use and adequacy to the "cultured norm":

“Review/edit the text produced-news, report, review, opinion article, among others-considering its adequacy to the production context, the medium in question, genre characteristics, aspects related to textuality, the relationship between different semiotic resources, formatting, and the appropriate use of editing tools (text, photo, audio, and video, depending on the case) and adequacy to the cultured norm” (BNCC, 2017, p. 143)<sup>4</sup>.

As illustrated in this excerpt from the BNCC, it is outlined that students should develop the ability to review and edit texts, adjusting them to the cultured norm, with

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<sup>3</sup> The Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), or National Common Curricular Base, is a normative document established by the Brazilian Ministry of Education that defines the essential learning goals for all stages of basic education across the country. Its implementation occurred in 2017, aiming to ensure educational equity and consistency by outlining core competencies and skills that students are expected to develop, regardless of region or school system. Among its key principles, the promotion of language proficiency is one of the most important, which includes the mastery of standard written language as well as the ability to engage with diverse textual genres, media, and communicative practices. The BNCC serves as a guiding framework for curriculum development, textbook production, and national assessments such as the ENEM (Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio).

<sup>4</sup> Free translation from the original document: Revisar/editar o texto produzido - notícia, reportagem, resenha, artigo de opinião, entre outros - considerando sua adequação ao contexto de produção, ao suporte em questão, às características do gênero, aos aspectos relacionados à textualidade, à relação entre diferentes recursos semióticos, à formatação e ao uso adequado de ferramentas de edição (texto, foto, áudio e vídeo, conforme o caso) e à adequação à norma culta.

special attention to the specific characteristics of text genres. This perspective demonstrates that, within Brazilian education, any and all evaluative texts, such as those in the Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (which can be translated as National High School Exam, and from now on we will just refer to it by its acronym ENEM), should maintain this grammatical strictness.

The ENEM, in turn, is an exam that assesses the academic performance of students completing basic education and has become the primary route to higher education in Brazil. The essay accounts for 20% of the total score, and its evaluation is based on a five-skill rubric. Each rubric is worth up to 200 points, and together they score up to a maximum of 1000 points. This makes it one of the most important parts of the exam, as candidates are expected to write an argumentative essay in the standard variety of Portuguese.

Regarding textual cohesion, which is evaluated under Competency IV<sup>5</sup> (the subject of this article), the instructional material - the ENEM Participant's Guide edited by Instituto Nacional De Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP<sup>6</sup>) -states that a limited repertoire of cohesive resources negatively impacts the production of a cohesive and coherent text. As shown in the Competency IV criteria, a candidate who "articulates the parts of texts well and presents a diverse repertoire of cohesive resources" (INEP, 2023, p. 20) achieves the maximum score for that level, which is 200 points, while a candidate who "articulates the parts of the text insufficiently, with many inadequacies, and presents a limited repertoire of cohesive resources" (INEP, 2023, p. 20) scores only 80 points. However, the criterion of a "diverse repertoire of cohesive

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<sup>5</sup> The ENEM (National High School Exam) essay is assessed based on five official competencies: (I) demonstrating mastery of the standard written form of Portuguese; (II) understanding the proposed theme and applying knowledge from different areas of knowledge to develop the argument; (III) selecting, organizing, and interpreting information, facts, opinions, and arguments to support a point of view; (IV) demonstrating knowledge of linguistic mechanisms for text cohesion; and (V) elaborating a proposal for intervention in the discussed problem, respecting human rights.

Source: BRASIL. INEP. A redação do Enem 2023: cartilha do participante. Brasília: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira, 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/enem/redacao-do-enem-2023-veja-cartilha-do-participante>. Accessed on: 3 Aug. 2025.

<sup>6</sup> INEP, or the National Institute of Studies and Educational Research Anísio Teixeira, is a federal agency affiliated with the Ministry of Education (MEC). It serves as a center for producing and analyzing information on education in Brazil, and is also responsible for conducting important assessments and exams such as the ENEM (National Higher Education Exam) and ENADE (National Higher Education Performance Exam).

elements," especially argumentative operators, is not clearly defined, leaving the number and variety of connectors necessary for an adequately articulated text open to interpretation.

While scholarly texts should ideally follow these norms, there is an increasing trend toward a convergence between these texts and oral grammar, which does not exhibit the same diversity of connectors found in writing - and even less so, the diversity required by ENEM's evaluation standards. This tension echoes Perini's (1996, p.26) argument: he defends that journalistic and academic texts, rather than literary or prescriptive sources, should serve as primary sources of grammatical attestation - that is, attested examples from real usage - rather than literary or prescriptive sources. As the author notes: "The language of quality journalism and rigorous academic writing represents the true living standard of cultured Portuguese, balancing formality with communicative effectiveness" (p. 18). This perspective directly challenges ENEM's evaluation paradigm by suggesting its criteria may be based on artificial rather than authentic standards of cultured writing.

Bagno (2012) explains this phenomenon by stating that "our social practices, even among the affluent classes, have always been much more guided by orality than by bookish culture" (p. 5), suggesting we must recognize oral influences on students' writing. While scholarly texts should ideally follow standardized norms, contemporary writing increasingly reflects oral grammar patterns-a phenomenon at odds with ENEM's demand for connective diversity. This tension resonates with Perini's (1996) argument that grammatical documentation should derive from "publicly circulating texts (e.g., journalistic and academic), which embody cultured usage, not idealized rules" (p. 32). Although Perini's discussion in his grammar is not specifically directed at ENEM, his empirically grounded stance highlights the artificiality of the language conception that underlies its evaluation criteria. Generalizing his critique, we apply it to the ENEM framework to show how it disregards functional repetition commonly found in proficient writing.

## 2. Methodology

This is a qualitative, document-based study that adopts an interpretative and comparative approach, grounded in the principles of Bogdan and Biklen (1994). The qualitative nature of the research is justified by its objective: to examine patterns in the use and repetition of cohesive devices in genres considered part of the so-called “cultured norm” in Brazilian education. Although this study adopts a predominantly qualitative approach, a basic quantitative procedure was also employed to count the occurrence and recurrence of cohesive devices in each text. These frequency data supported the comparative analysis and helped identify patterns and divergences among genres, thereby enriching the qualitative interpretation of the material.

The corpus comprises four texts selected to reflect genre diversity: a journalistic interview, an opinion article, a contemporary literary excerpt, and a student-produced ENEM essay. These genres were chosen because they represent distinct registers (oral, journalistic, literary, and academic) that are often cited in pedagogical contexts as models of formal writing. All texts are of comparable length and were selected for their representativeness of the linguistic standard expected in official writing assessments. The ENEM essay analyzed received a score of 680, which corresponds to an intermediate performance level according to INEP's evaluation rubric (BRASIL, 2023).

All texts analyzed are publicly accessible and were retrieved from online sources. The journalistic interview was published on the legal news website *Consultor Jurídico*; the opinion article appeared on the independent media platform *Brasil de Fato*; the literary excerpt was taken from the novel *Corpos Secos* (Alfaguara, 2020); and the ENEM essay was made available through open-access databases and official training materials. Given the public and educational nature of these documents, ethics committee approval was not required.

After corpus selection, cohesive devices were manually identified in each text based on Koch e Elias (2016) taxonomy of cohesive elements. Particular attention was given to conjunctions and argumentative operators, as they are emphasized in ENEM's Competency IV. Repetition was recorded whenever the same connector appeared multiple times within or across paragraphs, then we then conducted a comparative analysis to evaluate both the diversity and recurrence of cohesive devices, in light of ENEM's scoring criteria. This procedure allowed us to observe convergences and

divergences in cohesive strategies among genres and to reflect on how each aligns-or not-with the standards enforced in educational assessments.

### 3. INEP Guidelines Concerning the Use of Connectives in ENEM Essay Writing

As outlined in the Reference Matrix for Competency IV of ENEM (Participant's Guidebook, 2023), which addresses textual cohesion through cohesive elements, the ENEM scoring rubric emphasizes the importance of demonstrating proficient command of linguistic mechanisms. These are considered essential for the development of argumentation, especially regarding the diverse use of cohesive and argumentative devices, as it is demonstrated in the table below:

|            |                                                                                                                                      |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 200 points | Excellent cohesion - Effectively connects text parts and demonstrates diverse repertoire of cohesive devices                         |
| 160 points | Good cohesion - Connects text parts with few inadequacies and shows diverse repertoire of cohesive devices                           |
| 120 points | Moderate cohesion - Connects text parts somewhat adequately with some inadequacies and shows limited repertoire of cohesive devices  |
| 80 points  | Insufficient cohesion - Poorly connects text parts with many inadequacies and demonstrates restricted repertoire of cohesive devices |
| 40 points  | <i>Deficient cohesion</i> - Barely connects text parts                                                                               |
| 0 points   | No cohesion - Fails to connect information                                                                                           |

*Source: INEP, 2023, p. 20*

These performance descriptors show that organizing a text effectively requires a varied use of cohesive elements, which is crucial for attaining a high score. However, it is worth noting that the guidelines also warn against the excessive or unnatural use of connectives. Students are advised not to artificially inflate the presence of cohesive devices simply to conform to expected stylistic standards. Additionally, INEP's official manuals for essay evaluators direct them to identify repetitive patterns, reinforcing the notion that lexical variety contributes to textual richness:

"[...] repetitions become problematic when they reduce the diversity of cohesive devices, indicating the writer's lack of attention to employing





argumentative flow, or to mirror conventions of a specific genre, in other words, judging repetition solely as a flaw may reflect prescriptive expectations rather than discursive insights.

In contrast to these critical perspectives, INEP maintains that cohesive element diversity remains essential for argumentative quality in ENEM essays. According to its official guidelines, excessive repetition-particularly of connectives-compromises textual flow and signals limited command of cohesion strategies. Therefore, varied and context-appropriate use of these elements is deemed indispensable for achieving higher scores in Competency IV. The next section presents the comparative analysis of cohesive devices in the selected texts, focusing on how repetition and variation manifest across different genres.

#### **4. Results**

In line with the methodological procedures previously described, this section presents the comparative analysis of four textual genres associated with the so-called cultured norm. The connectors present in each text were identified and categorized, allowing for a qualitative assessment of their frequency, distribution, and recurrence. This approach aimed to examine whether the use of cohesive devices in these texts aligns with ENEM's expectations, particularly the recommendation to avoid excessive repetition in favor of lexical diversity. In contrast, the ENEM essay selected for analysis-which received a median score, disqualifying it as high-standard per INEP's criteria-reveals deviations from the cultured norm. Yet it reflects typical output from high school students trained to produce cultured texts and exposed to various examples, highlighting the tension between the exam's prescribed norms and socially circulating cultured texts.

Furthermore, while oral interviews may incorporate informal lexicon (a genre characteristic), this particular case-an oral interview with a Brazilian Supreme Court justice-presumes cultured usage, aligning with formal linguistic practices expected of magistrates. The opinion article, conversely, must preserve diverse cohesive devices and argumentative operators, given its requirement for well-structured argumentation.

#### 4.1 Oral Interview: Cohesive Device Analysis

The table 1 presents the cohesive devices found in the oral interview, highlighting frequency, diversity, and predominant connective functions:

| Connective                         | Frequency | Notes                          |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| And                                | 9         | Basic additive                 |
| That                               | 12        | Overrepresented (42% of total) |
| But                                | 2         | Contrastive                    |
| as                                 | 2         | Comparative                    |
| If                                 | 7         | Conditional                    |
| When                               | 1         | Temporal                       |
| Still                              | 1         | Concessive                     |
| Diversity metric: 7 distinct types |           |                                |
| Total occurrences: 34 connectives  |           |                                |

Table 1: Connectives in the oral interview (primary data)

The analysis of the journalistic oral interview (Appendix A) reveals an unusual pattern in the repetition of the connective "que" (observed twelve times throughout the discourse). The frequent use of connectives "que" (that/which) and "e" (and) in oral interviews may be considered typical of spoken language, which tends to be more spontaneous and less planned compared to written language, even in more monitored speech situations. However, the case under analysis represents a cultured text, since the interview was given by a Justice of Brazil's Supreme Federal Court. Thus, the excessive repetition of such connectives might indicate limited lexical diversity and richness, revealing constraints in the use of cohesive devices.

Journalistic practice carries an educational responsibility, as the press, when circulating written texts, must observe the cultured norm (cf. Dias, 1996). This commitment is essential for promoting qualified and erudite discourse within the community. Pereira (2021), in more recent times, challenges this perspective, arguing that while journalistic language should follow cultured standards, there are cases where linguistic constructions aim to improve communication, which may lead to greater flexibility in applying standard norms. These two perspectives demonstrate that the requirement to use normative grammar stems from persistent, traditional teaching of a prestige variety - one that has become disconnected from contemporary linguistic usage

across diverse texts, even among speakers of cultured Portuguese, as exemplified by the interviewed Justice.

#### 4.2 Opinion Article

Table 2 summarizes the connectives identified in the journalistic article, providing a breakdown of their types and frequency of use:

| Connective                                                 | Frequency | Type          | Function         | Assessment Alignment                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| and                                                        | 12        | Coordinating  | Additive logic   | Basic (insufficient for high scores) |
| that                                                       | 6         | Subordinating | Relative clauses | Overused (30% of total)              |
| as                                                         | 3         | Subordinating | Comparative      | Moderate sophistication              |
| but                                                        | 1         | Coordinating  | Contrastive      | Basic argumentative function         |
| therefore                                                  | 1         | Conjunctive   | Causal-result    | Meets ENEM's 200pt criteria          |
| Diversity metric: 5 types (type-token ratio = 0.22)        |           |               |                  |                                      |
| Total occurrences: 23                                      |           |               |                  |                                      |
| Dominant pattern: Overreliance on and (52% of occurrences) |           |               |                  |                                      |

Table 2: Connectives in the opinion article (primary data)

In the opinion article genre (Appendix B), there is limited use of connectives, with only five different types throughout the text, notably the additive conjunction "and," which appears 12 times. This finding stands out because, being a text considered part of the cultured norm and authored by a journalist and political analyst, one would expect greater connective variety. The scarcity of argumentative operators is also noteworthy, contradicting INEP's guidelines that stipulate these elements as essential in opinion pieces.

Thus, the lack of connector diversity and the predominance of the conjunction and may indicate limitations in the text's argumentative construction, opposing INEP's directives, in which connector variety is a must for achieving high scores and ensuring argumentative orientation in opinion writing. This is particularly relevant given that, as a text adhering to the cultured norm and authored by a political journalist, one would expect a broader lexical range in cohesive devices. The scarcity of argumentative operators, such as therefore or consequently, not only contradicts INEP's guidelines but may also mislead students into believing that a minimal number of such elements is enough, potentially undermining cohesion in their own essays.

### 4.3 Contemporary Literature

Table 3 shows the distribution of cohesive devices in the selected literary excerpt, with attention to frequency and functional diversity:

| Connective                                                         | Frequency | Type          | Literary Function      | Stylistic Marking      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| and                                                                | 6         | Additive      | Narrative continuity   | Paratactic rhythm      |
| that                                                               | 7         | Subordinating | Descriptive embedding  | Psychological depth    |
| as                                                                 | 6         | Comparative   | Metaphorical linkage   | Imagery construction   |
| if                                                                 | 8         | Conditional   | Hypothetical scenarios | Ambiguity generation   |
| even though                                                        | 1         | Concessive    | Contrastive tension    | Ideological subversion |
| Diversity metric: 5 types                                          |           |               |                        |                        |
| Total connectives: 28                                              |           |               |                        |                        |
| Dominant pattern: Conditional if (28.6%) reflects speculative tone |           |               |                        |                        |

Table 3 - Connectives in Contemporary Literature (Primary Data)

In the contemporary literary work (Appendix C), one observes reduced connective repetition but frequent use of paratactic structures that approximate oral speech patterns, evidenced by the high proportion of coordinating conjunctions (and and that, together accounting for 46%) that mimic spoken cadence. This stylistic signature is reinforced by postmodern uncertainty tropes, with a notably high frequency of conditionals (if = 28.6%), and by experimental discourse choices, such as the use of a single concessive (even though) to create intentional rupture. For texts adhering to cultured norms, an ideal balance is expected between connective diversity and careful period structuring; however, this sample illustrates how contemporary literature strategically violates normative cohesion rules, presenting 72% subordinators (compared to 53% in opinion articles) to enhance syntactic complexity, while using deliberate repetition for rhythmic and thematic purposes.

Bagno (2011) emphasizes the conception of literary language as a “linguistic model” to be emulated by educated speakers, yet argues that contemporary linguistic practices are predominantly guided by orality, distancing us from bookish culture-particularly given the country’s low literacy rates. Our quantitative data support this qualitative observation, showing how current practices invert this paradigm: the

dominance of orality is evident in the high percentage of coordinators reflecting spoken-language patterns, and in anti-prescriptive trends where structural choices, such as concessive ruptures, prioritize artistic expression over grammatical norms. Over the past century, fiction writers have increasingly adapted their language to align with spoken discourse, incorporating the traits of everyday communication. This trend produces a literary language that, while less formal, seeks to capture the authenticity and spontaneity of daily exchanges. By adopting simpler, less canonical language (cf. Bagno, 2011), such texts attract readers through perceived accessibility, potentially encouraging broader reading engagement.

From a pedagogical perspective, while this stylistic pattern would be unsuitable for ENEM essays—since it diverges from the expected seven to eight connective types—it demonstrates the creative potential of breaking cohesion rules purposefully, as well as how literary authenticity often conflicts with assessment rubrics. In this way, contemporary literary texts reveal a century-long shift toward oral proximity, using spoken-discourse traits such as simpler connectives, parataxis, predominance of if-laden hypotheticals, and strategic concessive disruptions to subvert canonical expectations while enhancing authenticity.

#### 4.4 ENEM Essay

Table 4 lists the cohesive elements found in the essay, focusing on their recurrence and the range of connective types employed:

| Connective | Frequency | Type          | Function               | ENEM Scoring Relevance              |
|------------|-----------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| and        | 11        | Coordinating  | Additive logic         | Basic (limited impact on score)     |
| that       | 21        | Subordinating | Relative clauses       | Overused (repetition penalty)       |
| but        | 1         | Coordinating  | Contrast               | Meets minimum diversity requirement |
| if         | 8         | Conditional   | Hypothetical reasoning | Strengthens argumentation           |
| however    | 1         | Adversative   | Contrastive emphasis   | Scores highly (sophistication)      |
| while      | 2         | Temporal      | Comparative analysis   | Enhances thematic progression       |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |   |               |                      |                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| therefore                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1 | Consequential | Conclusion signaling | Essential for top scores |
| Diversity metric: 7 types                                                                                                                                                                                             |   |               |                      |                          |
| Total connectives: 45                                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |               |                      |                          |
| Critical issues:<br>That constitutes 47% of all connectives → Severe repetition<br>Only 2 advanced operators (however/therefore) → Insufficient for 160+ scores<br>Over-reliance on basic coordinators (and/but= 27%) |   |               |                      |                          |

Table 4: Connectives present in the ENEM Essay (original data)

Although the essay contains a greater quantity of connectives compared to the other texts examined, it was identified excessive repetition of the subordinating conjunction “that” (21 instances). This pattern suggests that the student reproduced a common oral-language feature known as *queísmo* (cf. Macedo et al., 2024), reflecting the increasing influence of spoken discourse structures even in formal written genres.

In addition, the limited variety of adversative (but, however) and conclusive (therefore) connectives reveals a restricted lexical repertoire, which negatively affects the articulation of arguments, the clarity of discourse transitions, and the orientation of the argumentative structure. But, while literary and journalistic texts in this study also presented repetition of cohesive elements and limited connective variety, such features did not compromise their argumentative effectiveness. In contrast, the ENEM essay's overuse of “that” and insufficient use of advanced operators had a direct negative impact on its cohesion and rhetorical strength. This contrast reinforces the idea that repetition, in itself, is not inherently problematic-its discursive function and contextual relevance are what determine its impact on textual quality. In the case of the ENEM essay, the repetition signals limited mastery of cohesion strategies, leading to a performance that falls short of Competency IV expectations.

## 5. Final Considerations

This study analyzed the use of connectors in four textual genres-journalistic interview, opinion article, contemporary literature, and ENEM essay-comparing their patterns with INEP's prescribed standards for argumentative writing. The results showed a significant disconnection between the cultured norm as practiced in authentic texts and the unflexible requirements imposed by ENEM's evaluation criteria. While texts considered exemplars of cultured writing, such as literary works and expert interviews,

demonstrated higher connective repetition and fewer argumentative operators than ENEM permits, they nonetheless achieved effective cohesion through strategic usage adapted to their communicative purposes. This contrast highlights a fundamental tension between normative grammar expectations and evolving linguistic practices in contemporary Portuguese.

The ENEM essay analyzed in this study exemplified this conflict. Despite displaying greater connective variety (7 types) than the literary and journalistic texts (5 types), it was penalized for overusing specific connectors while paradoxically meeting quantitative diversity requirements. This suggests students are being trained to mechanically apply INEP's rules rather than develop authentic writing skills, resulting in texts that satisfy rubric checkboxes but may lack natural fluency. The prevalence of features like "queísmo" even in high-status interviews and literary works further challenges INEP's characterization of connector repetition as inherently deficient, pointing instead to its functional role in text.

These results align with Bagno's (2012) observations about the growing divide between prescriptive standards and real language use. The oral-written continuum evident across all analyzed genres-manifested in simplified connective repertoires, preference for basic coordinators, and strategic repetition-reflects broader linguistic evolution that assessment systems have yet to accommodate. Rather than dismissing these trends as "errors," educators and evaluators should recognize them as legitimate adaptations in contemporary communication. To bridge this gap, it is highly desirable that INEP reform its Competency IV criteria to distinguish functional repetition from arbitrary overuse, clarify acceptable thresholds for connector frequency, and expand its exemplar texts beyond essays to include respected journalistic and literary models. Pedagogically, writing instruction should emphasize genre-appropriate connective usage and teach cohesion as a rhetorical tool rather than a quantitative target.

Far beyond technical adjustments, such criteria must be critically examined as instruments of symbolic regulation. When standards are vaguely defined or unevenly applied, they risk reinforcing exclusion rather than promoting fairness. As Pereira (2021) notes, when evaluation criteria become unmoored from actual usage, they risk valuing form over thought. This opens the door to a broader discussion on how writing

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assessments can serve emancipatory goals. Questioning ENEM's criteria-particularly those that prioritize surface-level correctness-creates space for alternative approaches that recognize linguistic diversity and communicative effectiveness.

Finally, this study underscores the need for assessment systems to evolve in tandem with the language itself, since aligning ENEM's standards with authentic writing practices across genres-while maintaining rigor-can foster evaluations that genuinely measure communicative competence, rather than artificial conformity. This not only supports fairer assessment practices but also contributes to the construction of more inclusive and democratic educational policies in Brazil.

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## Appendices

### APPENDIX A - Excerto da entrevista jornalística com Luís Roberto Barroso.

Essa é uma matéria ainda em discussão no Congresso e que pode gerar questionamento de natureza constitucional. De modo que eu não gostaria de opinar sobre ela do ponto de vista técnico-jurídico. Do ponto de vista político-institucional, considero que o Supremo tem servido bem ao país. E não veria razão para se tentar restringir a sua atuação.

Não acho que o Brasil viva um problema que se possa denominar de ativismo judicial, se a essa expressão se quer emprestar um conteúdo negativo. É possível que uma ou outra decisão tenha provocado uma fricção maior entre o Supremo e o Congresso. Mas foram decisões excepcionais. No geral, ao contrário do que às vezes se pensa, o Supremo costuma ser deferente para com a atuação do Congresso. A quantidade de leis federais declaradas inconstitucionais é ínfima e, em casos mais emblemáticos, o Supremo manteve a decisão política do Congresso ou do Executivo. Isso se depreende de diversos casos. Por exemplo, no julgamento sobre a possibilidade de se fazerem pesquisas com células-tronco embrionárias, o Supremo manteve a lei que foi editada pelo Congresso. No caso das ações afirmativas e a discussão do Prouni, o tribunal também manteve a decisão política tomada pelo Congresso Nacional. No caso da demarcação das terras indígenas da Raposa Serra do Sol, o Supremo manteve a decisão política do Poder Executivo. Não há um padrão rotineiro de ingerência indevida. Alguns casos estavam na fronteira, como o da tramitação do veto na questão dos royalties do petróleo e o da portabilidade do tempo de propaganda no caso de mudança de partidos. Ainda assim, o plenário do Supremo derrubou a liminar no processo relativo aos royalties. O segundo caso ainda está pendente, mas com risco real de cair. Isso mostra que não há um surto de ativismo judicial. O que há é o atendimento de certas demandas

sociais que o Congresso não pôde, ou não quis ou não conseguiu atender. Como no caso das uniões estáveis homoafetiva ou de interrupção de gestação de fetos anencefálicos. Porque as situações da vida acontecem e o Judiciário tem de atuar. E quando não há lei, não há decisão política do Congresso, o Judiciário tem de expandir sua atuação, dando a ela uma dimensão quase normativa. Isso aconteceu também com a questão da greve no serviço público e outras situações relevantes da vida que não foram regulamentadas pelo Poder Legislativo.

#### **APPENDIX B - Excerto do artigo de opinião: A Tragédia das Enchentes no Rio Grande do Sul.**

A tragédia no Rio Grande do Sul com as enchentes e alagamentos atingiu 2,3 milhões de pessoas. A cada 10 gaúchos, dois sofrem com o impacto das chuvas. Milhares tiveram suas casas, móveis, eletrodomésticos, livros e memórias destruídos. Morreram 157 pessoas e 88 ainda estão desaparecidas. As cidades atingidas chegaram a 463 (93% do total). Cerca de 180 mil pontos estão sem energia elétrica. Essa é a fotografia do desastre vivido pelo povo gaúcho com as fortes chuvas, que tiveram seus primeiros registros no final de maio, com alertas para os riscos da onda de calor no centro do país, que canalizava a umidade para o sul. Uma tragédia dessa magnitude não é apenas um acidente natural, como alguns querem fazer crer, mas consequência de um modelo de desenvolvimento econômico, do processo político-institucional e da forma de exploração dos recursos da natureza. A razão estrutural é a fase neoliberal do modo de produção capitalista no mundo e no Brasil, que intensifica as mudanças climáticas. Os desdobramentos desse sistema são a destruição da natureza com o consumo acelerado de energia e o avanço do modelo do agronegócio, a especulação imobiliária nas grandes metrópoles, a flexibilização da legislação urbana e ambiental por governos e pelos parlamentos, em todas as esferas. A questão central da crise climática é a lógica da reprodução ampliada do capital, que precisa se expandir de forma acelerada e contínua para a reprodução do sistema, como tem apontado o professor aposentado do Departamento de História da Unicamp, Luiz Marques, autor do premiado livro *Capitalismo e Colapso Ambiental*. As principais razões para as mudanças climáticas - a

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avanço do desmatamento como meio de ampliar as fronteiras agrícolas e a globalização do sistema alimentar - fazem parte dessa dinâmica do capitalismo. Por isso, o modo de produção capitalista não tem condições de colocar um limite nessas atividades e de efetivamente restringir a acelerada exploração dos recursos naturais e a emissão de um volume estratosférico de gases de efeito estufa jogados na atmosfera, que ameaçam a vida da humanidade.

### **Destruição da natureza**

Os números da expansão do agronegócio no Rio Grande do Sul evidenciam a marcha da destruição que está em curso. Em menos de 40 anos, a agropecuária absorveu 12,41% do território do estado para as suas atividades, de acordo com dados do Mapbiomas.

### **APPENDIX - C - Excerto do texto literário contemporâneo: *Corpos Secos* de Luisa Geisler.**

Na sala de conferências, a Dra. Sandra alinha com o resto da equipe o andamento da pesquisa. Recapitula o quadro do paciente, que se mantém estável passados quatro meses desde sua contaminação, sem apresentar nenhum dos sinais típicos da doença, como coágulos no sangue. Como explicar isso? O paciente não possui histórico de doenças metabólicas como diabetes nem estava submetido a nenhum tipo de tratamento médico. Tem uma vida sexual comum para um jovem de vinte e cinco anos, sem nenhum histórico de doença infecciosa pregressa. Possui bom condicionamento físico e pratica esportes regularmente. Não mantém nenhum hábito alimentar incomum, exceto preferir alimentos orgânicos, mesmo que de modo não exclusivo. Ainda não conseguiram encontrar nada que explique como seu corpo, mesmo contaminado por aquela versão mutante de Baculovirus anticarsia, não desenvolveu nenhum dos sintomas da síndrome de Matheson-França, o popular “corpo seco”. Em outras palavras, ninguém sabe dizer por que Mateus continua vivo. É estranho escutar falarem de si como se ele próprio não estivesse ali na sala, na frente de todos. Mateus conhece todos os vinte médicos da equipe, e acompanhou de perto o avanço individual no estudo de cada um. Talvez seja o único ali, além da dra. Sandra, a ter uma noção completa do próprio

quadro. Faz poucos dias que foi liberado para sair da ala de isolamento, onde viveu os últimos meses. Tem aproveitado o tempo livre caminhando pelos corredores, se exercitando, às vezes subindo ao terraço para respirar pela primeira vez o ar puro em São Paulo. E, agora, trepando às escondidas com Romero. Não que seja um completo segredo: a dra. Sandra sabe. Ele não seria irresponsável de esconder algo assim dela. Romero está ali na sala também, parado à porta de braços cruzados, escutando tudo com atenção. Mateus olha para ele e sorri, e o agente sorri de volta. Seu trabalho é cuidar da segurança pessoal de Mateus. Responde diretamente a Tulipa, a delegada federal que coordena a equipe de dez agentes que protegem a equipe médica ali dentro Sandra termina sua fala. - Alguém tem alguma pergunta? Uma mão se ergue, uma pergunta é feita. Mateus se entedia e olha pela janela, para a cidade morta se movendo lá embaixo. Seu olhar se acostumou a considerar aqueles vagares errantes como parte da paisagem, algo distante da sua vida e ao qual se tornou indiferente.

#### **APPENDIX - D - Redação do ENEM de um aluno do Ensino Médio que obteve 680 de nota.**

É de conhecimento geral, que a Proclamação dos Direitos Humanos trouxe muitos benefícios para a sociedade mundial, um dos principais, se não o principal, foi a Igualdade Social, independente ao gênero, raça e etnia da pessoa. Porém, na sociedade não funciona dessa maneira, o que vem de encontro com as desigualdades sofridas pelas mulheres em diversas esferas da sociedade, mas principalmente no mercado de trabalho, Sabe-se que as mulheres, desde sempre, enfrentaram censuras e pouca visibilidade e valorização no mercado de trabalho, ao fazer uma ponte de tudo isso com o trabalho de cuidados, seja ele de idosos ou crianças, fica ainda mais evidente as desigualdade enfrentadas pelas mulheres, que ao assumirem essa e outras funções árduas, assinam contra o próprio crescimento pessoal, visto que a remuneração, se houver, não será suficiente para sustentar uma família, e não chegará nem perto se quem exerce essa função fosse um homem. Enquanto isso, outras profissões, não tão essenciais para a sociedade são bem remuneradas, enquanto outras são completamente deixadas de lado pelo Governo Federal. Não há de se negar que existem profissões que as mulheres são

bem quistas comparado aos homens, por conta da facilidade dos mesmos em tratar a cuidar de outras pessoas, devido ao carinho e zelo que as mulheres demonstram naquilo que fazem. Pode-se notar que trata-se de uma profissão muito exigente, e que por meio de vários recursos que o governo possui, deveria ser melhor remunerada, trazendo condições mais dignas às mulheres que exercem a mesma, para que se motivem a seguir em frente em busca de todos os sonhos, fazendo com que as famílias das mesmas, que esperam em casa, sejam abastecidas de recursos básicos e necessários para a sustentação de um lar, de uma família. Infere-se, portanto, que é de extrema importância que o Governo Federal assuma essa situação, através de políticas públicas e uma melhor divisão dos seus recursos para o mercado de trabalho, principalmente destinado às mulheres. O ministério do trabalho, órgão que é responsável por cuidar de todo o âmbito trabalhista no Brasil, através de elaboração de uma proposta de melhores condições às mulheres ou por meio do aumento salarial ou pela diminuição de carga horária. Tais medidas fariam com que muitas desigualdades acabassem e obrigariam as mulheres da maneira que elas merecem, após tanto esforço e lutas diárias por uma sociedade mais justa e igualitária.

Recebido em: 15 de maio de 2025

Aceito em: 07 de junho de 2025