THE USE OF THE "GAME RULES" TEXTUAL GENRE IN THE ENGLISH TEACHING FOR CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This article is a result of our English teaching practice in a Children Education State Center, which belongs to a State University in the north of Paraná. The study was conducted with five-year-old students who had English lessons with pre-service teachers from the same University. The overall objective of the research was to investigate the importance of mastering the textual genre "game rules" – in our case, a board game – to carry out the developed and implemented activities during classes. This research, of qualitative nature, is based on the action research methodology (SAGOR, 2000; LEWIN, 1948). The data was composed of reflective diaries written by pre-service teachers during the mandatory internship, main locus of our research. The results showed that knowing the textual genre enabled students effective engagement in the discursive event proposed, thus achieving the main objective of the activity: recalling contents from the previous semester. In addition to that, we realized that the fact that the students had been exposed to such textual genre enabled a more meaningful English learning.

Keywords: young learners, English language, textual genres, board game.

Introduction

This paper is part of the teaching practicum of the first author under the supervision of the second during the years of 2014 and 2015. The teaching practicum occurred during the mandatory internship[3], which was taken at *CEEI – Centro Estadual de Educação Infantil* located at *UEL – Universidade Estadual de Londrina*. The teaching practicum in this context follows the conception of collaborative practice

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[3] The mandatory internship is a way to provide the student teaching-learning situations, allowing participation, planning, application of knowledge, and development of necessary skills for the educational practice. This kind of internship requires the accomplishment of a workload, and is a requirement for approval and obtainment of the degree. According to Art. 1 of Res. CNE/CP 2/2002.

(ROTH AND TOBIN, 2004) in which the supervisor is present in the classes, teaching with the pre-service teachers. Therefore, this article is a coproduction of the two authors since both took part of the investigative process. The main goal of this paper is to investigate and understand better *if* and *how* mastering the genre "game rule" is important for the execution of language related activities, demystifying the idea that teaching a foreign language[4] to children requires only knowledge about the target language.

Based on the idea that "(…) it is through meaningful learning and cooperation and 'the other' participation that children learn a foreign language, (…)"[5](TONELLI, 2013, p. 312, our translation), our aim during the mandatory internship was to provide the children a classroom environment in which they would be able to have such experience, developing cognitive, physical and emotional skills, and ultimately learning English. Considering that, we proposed activities that we thought would help with providing those, however, during the development of one specific activity, an event called our attention: some of the students did not know how to play a board game, therefore, the activity did not work as expected.

The students were supposed to name the image in which the counter had stopped, however, as they did not know the rules for playing that kind of game, they could name the images, but could not go through the process to get to that stage of the game. Hence, it was identified that the problem was not regarding language itself, it was actually in the fact that they did not know how to play a board game, which we had took for granted they were familiar with.

Based on such scenario we, English teachers for young children, need to have in mind that they are subjects in formation, i.e. they are in the process of shaping their personality, of building their identity, and of co-building their knowledge regarding several aspects. We comply with Cristovão and Gamero (2009, p. 232) when they postulate that our children have the right to a full education, in which English helps shaping the individual, giving access to information and knowledge. Therefore, when

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[4] We chose to use the term "foreign language" because it refers to the use/study of a target language by non-native speakers in countries where such language generally is not a local medium of communication.
[5] "(...) é por meio de aprendizagem significativa e da cooperação e participação "do outro" que as crianças aprendem uma LE (...)" (TONELLI, 2013, p. 312).

preparing the classes, we need to think carefully about everything, from the activities we intend to apply, to the manner we talk to them.

Thus, the questions we intend to answer throughout this article are: is it important to master the "game rule" genre for the execution of language related activities? What was taught (beyond the language itself) and, consequently, what children may learn with the use of that genre?

Literature Review

Children learning Foreign Languages

The early introduction of foreign languages (henceforth FL) in children lives is quite common nowadays; the interest in FL teaching and learning has grown significantly in the most variables contexts. Many researchers have analyzed such early introduction and its effectiveness (CAMERON, 2001; SINGLETON, 2001; TONELLI 2005, 2008; CRISTOVÃO AND TONELLI, 2010). The main arguments for offering FL in young children classrooms are that it increases the total amount of time exposure, and it motivates the students, who present positive attitudes towards the FL (CENOZ, 2003). Veridiano and Tonelli (2011) also point out that parents take into consideration factors such as the job market, and future life quality.

In such a globalized world like ours (GRADDOL, 1997, 2006), people are in contact with different languages and cultures all the time; this makes the knowledge of another language crucial, which, many times, intensifies the tendency of starting the learning process earlier. It is due to this tendency that teachers must be prepared to deal with such context, which has been growing each day. Cristovão and Tonelli state "(...) the *Letras* courses must adapt itself to the new realities and needs in the language teaching performance (…)" [6](2010, p. 68, our translation).

We do agree with the authors' statement that the education of professionals who intend to work in the context of FL teaching for children has to be different from the education of FL teachers for other ages since the theoretical-methodological knowledge and also the profile of that teacher has to be differentiated. Children have different profiles from teenagers and adults; they learn in different ways, they belong to a

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[6] "(...) os cursos de Letras devam se adaptar às novas realidades e necessidades no desempenho do ensino de línguas (...)" (CRISTOVÃO and TONELLI, 2010, p. 68).

different reality. However, according to Tutida and Tonelli (2014) there are only few universities concerned with this context and, in the authors' view, the universities should include in their curriculum disciplines that deal with the FL (English specifically) teaching and learning for children.

With the increasing demand for the teaching of FL for children (CAMERON, 2001; DIMER and SOARES, 2012; PEIXOTO and JAEGER, 2013), teachers and researchers seek for ways to contribute and reinforce the children's success concerning the target language. Some ways of teaching children (not only a foreign language) are the use of music (VICENTINI and BASSO, 2008; SIMIONATO and CHIMENTÃO, 2010), games/plays (BROUGÈRE, 2002; CHAGURI, 2009; CHAGURI and TONELLI, 2014), and children's story (TONELLI, 2005). In this paper, as already mentioned, we focused on the use of games for the teaching of FL to children.

Using Games to Teach FL to Children

The usage of games and ludic activities has been largely supported in younger learners' classrooms research field (COOK, 2000; CHAGURI, 2009, for example). Games facilitate language learning, especially for young learners, because it provides not only relaxation, but also encourages the use of the language in a creative and communicative manner. There is a tendency of using games in classrooms; however, the game should be carefully planned and chosen since it is not a time filler designed only for fun. As pointed out by Figueira (2010), the games need to be seen not only as a motivational activity, but also as an activity that cooperates in building language.

Games involve, "many factors such as employing rules, fostering cooperation while making learning fun" (YOLAGELDILI and ARIKAN, 2011, p. 220), and motivate the students because they provide meaningful contexts, goals, and competition. Everybody needs to cooperate to reach the end of the game; therefore the students end up learning the idea of cooperation and social interaction, and as Yolageldili and Arikan (2011, p 220) say, "It is believed that when cooperation and interaction are combined with fun, successful learning becomes more possible".

Cristovão and Gamero (2009, p. 231, our translation) state that according to Vygotsky (1993, p. 107) "(...) the game is the natural child work form, the activity form

that is inherent, the preparation for the future life."[7] This is the reason why playing is considered indispensable in the children's education. It allows children to interact with others, with the world, with reality, and to be a part of the society. Vygotsky (1988 apud GOMES and CASTRO, 2010, p. 3) argues that playing with games has a fundamental part in the development of the children's thought because it brings an imaginary situation and rules related to what is happening or being represented.

Besides, it also develops the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)[8] in various ways such as when the children subjects to the rules exercising the development of the control – meaning that the children behaves beyond the usual behavior for that age, developing, in this example, essential life skills in society that are appropriated in a specific way. Another example is when they imitate the other, and as they stop repeating or imitating, they start performing the activity conscientiously – meaning that they have internalized and appropriated the game. Thereafter, Vygotsky (2003, p. 58, our translation) points out that "(…) Today's Zone of Proximal Development, will be tomorrow's level of actual development [9](…)[10]".

The learning of another language tends to be more pleasurable when it happens through ludic activities. According to Figueira (2010), it provides a light, favorable and pleasurable environment for both the lexical learning and the interaction within classroom. According to Chaguri (2009), for a game to be a ludic activity, it needs to have a certain pedagogical/linguistic goal and educational benefit. The lucidity, in the scholar context, makes the content easier to the children's eyes; therefore, they get more interested on watching and paying attention to the class. As Figueira (2010) points out, the games need to be seen not only as a motivational activity, but also as an activity that builds language. Hence, in the teaching praxis, we decided to put these ideas in action because we do agree with the idea that children learn more or better with the aid of games, considering that the classroom becomes a lighter weighted environment, and as McCallum (1980 apud YOLAGELDILI and ARIKAN, 2011) stated, by using games,

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[7] "(...) o jogo é a forma natural de trabalho da criança, a forma de atividade que lhe é inerente, a preparação para a vida futura" (VYGOTSKY, 1993 apud CRISTOVÃO and GAMERO, 2009, p. 231).
[8] ZPD is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (VYGOTSKY, 1978 apud CONGMIN, 2013, p. 23).
[9] Level of actual development is the sort of task a child can perform individually.
[10] "(...) a zona de desenvolvimento proximal hoje, será o nível de desenvolvimento real amanhã (...)" (VYGOTSKY, 2003, p. 58).

the interest and motivation – which are some of the main factors to successful learning – enhances.

Brougère (2002) argues that it is by playing that children create their ludic culture, which is a set of procedures that make the games possible, and which is necessary to the player in order to play. Therefore, the children have to learn how to play the games, and have to recognize certain essential features of the games before being able to play it. In Brougère's words (2002, p. 30, our translation), "The game is first and foremost the construction place (…) of a ludic culture."[11]

As it is reported, the game creates a cycle with culture; it is, at the same time, a cultural product and cultural creation, "(…) the game produces a culture that he requires to exist"[12] (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 30, our translation). When one plays a game, it means that one has learnt the preexistent structures and *how* to play – thus acquired culture; and it also means one is putting the so learnt culture into practice – thus creating his/her own set of structures and significances. "(…) the experience is not transferred to the individual. He is a co-builder"[13] (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 27, our translation) which means that the child is not a mere receptor of culture and experience; he/she interprets, reacts and participates in its construction. It is also important to point out that culture and ludic culture are not completely separated; they have a connection and are interdependent.

Textual Genres

When we think about textual genres, we think of it as a way of using language; in Hyland's words (2003b, p. 18), genres are "(…) abstract, socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes". As Marcuschi (2002, p. 35) points out, textual genres are not individual creations, they are "(…) ways socially matured in communicative practices[14]." Every genre has a purpose or function and as stated by Hylland (2003, p. 18) "We don't just *write*, we write *something* to achieve some *purpose*; it is a way to get things done".

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[11] "O jogo é antes de tudo o lugar de construção (...) de uma cultura lúdica." (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 30).
[12] "(...) o jogo produz a cultura que ele próprio requer para existir." (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 30).
[13] "(...) a experiência não é transferida para o indivíduo. Ele é um construtor" (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 27).
[14] "(...) formas socialmente maturadas em práticas comunicativas." (MARCUSCHI, 2002, p. 35).

To Millar (2011, p. 4) "A genre represents a group of texts that all share a communicative purpose. They do not need to be identical, (…) they tend to share similar discourse structures and to use language in similar ways." From this perspective, Figueiredo (2010, p. 128) believes that, "Virtually everything we do involves some kind of genre." This thought is connected with Bakhtin's idea (1997 apud TONELLI, 2008) that verbal communication is only possible by the use of a textual genre. It is also in accordance with Marcuschi's opinion that "(…) it is impossible to communicate verbally unless you use some genre[15], (…)" (2002, p. 22, our translation).

Having the concept of genre in mind and using it can be favorable for a FL classroom because it provides "a basis for a curriculum oriented to socially grounded, purposeful language activities." (FIGUEIREDO, 2010, p. 136). Knowing genres – even if unobtrusively – is important for the students because it provides them access to new ways of communication that will probably be necessary someday, it enhances their cultural/social understanding and practices, and it raises the students' genre awareness[16].

According to Hasan (1996, apud HYLAND, 2003, p. 25), another benefit that genre approaches have is that they "(…) seem to offer the most effective means for learners to both access and critique cultural and linguistic resources." Figueiredo (2010) asserts that genres allow us to operate in society and interact socially – achieving social goals – because its pattern is not random, it was structured in an effective way that was proved to be functional.

The game rule genre is a textual genre that has the goal of making the player act in a certain way. It provides commands that have to be followed in order to achieve an outcome – the end of the game (MEDEIROS, 2009). This textual genre has real purposes and social use in the children's daily lives because games are part of their culture and world.

Methodology

This research is of qualitative nature, and is based on the action-research methodology (SAGOR, 2000; LEWIN, 1948), which is a form of investigation based on

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[15] "(…) é impossível se comunicar verbalmente a não ser por algum gênero (...)" (MARCUSCHI, 2002, p. 22).
[16] "Genre awareness is the ability to select and use an appropriate genre based on a number of factors, including the purpose of communication, the context, and the people involved." (MILLAR, 2011, p. 2).

self-reflexion in order to improve ones educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which theses practices are carried out. Sagor (2000) characterizes it as a process conducted by and for those who take the action. The author even points out that one of the main reasons for engaging in this type of research is to assist the "actor" in improving his/her own actions. Elliot (1997 apud BEHRENS and RODRIGUES, 2015, p. 60) postulates that this methodology "allows [one] to overcome the gaps between educational research and teaching practice, i.e. between theory and practice, and the results extend the capabilities of teachers' understanding and their practices, thus widely promote changes."[17] It is widely used in the education field due to its benefits such as the efficacy concerning/in regard to the transformation of the situations in the classroom, and the increase on the teacher's self-knowledge and critical reflection towards his/her actions/practice.

In order to achieve our objectives – investigate the importance of the "game rules" genre, and examine what is being taught (beyond the language itself) and, consequently, what children may learn with the use of this specific genre – our research was carried out in a FL young learners' classroom that will be further described in the following section.

Participants and Setting

This research was carried out at the *CEEI* (Centro Estadual de Educação Infantil) of the State University of Londrina (UEL – Universidade Estadual de Londrina) as an integrated part of the mandatory internship, which has to be taken in the two last years of the *Letras* undergraduation course. The teaching practicum at *CEEI* happens in pairs – one student from the third year and the other from the fourth year. The first author of this paper accomplished the mandatory internship and during the second year of internship, Leonardo[18] was our student-teacher partner in the teaching practicum, both under the supervision of the second.

The children who attend *CEEI* range from nursery to the age of six, they have full-time classes and music lessons as extracurricular activities. The students of this

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[17] "(...) permite superar as lacunas existentes entre a pesquisa educativa e a prática docente, ou seja, entre a teoria e a prática, e os resultados ampliam as capacidades de compreensão dos professores e suas práticas, por isso favorecem amplamente as mudanças" (ELLIOTT, 1997 apud BEHRENS e RODRIGUES, 2015, p. 60, our translation).

[18] Fictitious name in order to preserve the identity.

school, and participants of this research, did not have English classes with regular teachers, however, the teaching of English is offered to certain classes since 2013 as part of a project[19], and also as part of the mandatory internship for senior year *Letras* students. The students enrolled in this school are all and exclusively children of the university employees and the specific students who participated in this research are from the E5 classroom, which was composed by young students with age varying from four to five.

Discussion of Data

In the context of teaching English to children as a mandatory internship, one of the requirements for the pre-service teachers is to write reflexive diaries after every class. This task is given to them in order to create a reflective process, which is a path towards teachers' transformation (LIBERALI, 1996). By writing about their own performance in their reflexive diaries, teachers can think about their own practicum, and how it could be improved.

In order to generate data, one of the first author's reflective diaries from the first year of internship was selected. Besides, one diary from Leonardo[20] was chosen. These specific diaries were chosen due to the focus of the research on the usage of games in young learners' FL context. The choice for these data was because the reflexive diaries were a source of narrative data that contributed to the understanding of the development of the class and of the activities. In addition to that, they provide written accounts on what happened during the class according to the pre-service teachers' point of view, and what may have called their attention using their own words.

The data analysis occurred through the content analysis assumptions (BARDIN, 1977). This method utilizes techniques for qualitative data analysis, and is understood as a set of research techniques with the aim of looking for meaning(s) in the messages.

First Author's Diary

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[19] "O Trabalho Do Professor No Ensino-Aprendizagem Da Língua Inglesa Para Crianças: Uma Proposta De Formação Docente" (PROPPG/UEL N° 08379) (2012-2015), designed and coordinated by Professor Juliana R.A. Tonelli, PhD. Information at: https://www.sistemasweb.uel.br/system/prj/pes/pdf/pes_pesquisa_08379.pdf.
[20] Fictitious name.

Having in mind that one of the approaches to teach a FL to children is the use of games and plays (BROUGÈRE, 2002; CHAGURI, 2009; CHAGURI and TONELLI, 2014), the idea of using a board game to recall the subjects learned came to our mind. As previously mentioned, using a game is believed to facilitate language learning, especially for young learners, because it not only provides relaxation, but also encourages the use of the FL in a creative and communicative manner.

By analyzing the first author's reflexive diary from 2014, it is possible to see that the methodology used to apply the game in classroom was what led to the problem. The game has to be carefully thought of before being applied because, as Figueira (2010) states, it cannot be seen only as a motivational activity, it has to be also seen as an activity that builds language; and besides that, games are not time fillers designed only for fun. The activity we proposed for the classroom was a ludic one because it had both pedagogical/linguistic goals and educational benefits, which are, according to Chaguri (2009), characteristics for a game to be considered a ludic activity.

In the previous class, we did the board game activity with the students but it was not a completely success due to the fact that not all of them knew the how to play and the rules of a game board. In this class, the board game activity worked better because they were more familiar with the rules (one at a time, order of players, everyone throws the dice, order on the board,...) so they could play it more easily.

Excerpt 1 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

In the excerpt 1, we can see that the 'mistake' with the game activity was in the fact that we, teachers, took for granted that the students already knew how to play a board game and we did not explain them the rules, which made the activity not as productive as it could have been, although it was a ludic activity and, in theory, would be successful. The children were not familiar with the basic game rules (one at a time, order of players, everyone throws the dice, order/sequence on the board), and we assumed they were, which made them unable to play the game as expected. On the following class, we taught them the rules, and they could already play the game better. Since "everything we do involves some kind of genre" (FIGUEIREDO, 2010, p. 128), knowing this specific genre - game rules - was essential to the development of the

activity. Millar (2011) mentions the fact that knowing genres is important for the students because it provides them access to new ways of communication that will probably be necessary someday, thus enhancing their cultural/social understanding and practices, and raising the students' genre awareness.

The subject of the board game was a revision of the three main songs that were worked with on the previous semester (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Old Mac Donald Had a Farm and Head, shoulder, knees and toes).

Excerpt 2 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

The linguistic content of the activity did not seem to be the problem; the game was a recalling activity that had the objective of making the children remembering the vocabulary related to the songs worked with on the previous semester (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Old Mac Donald Had a Farm and; Head, shoulder, knees and toes). According to the diaries, this did not seem to present greater problems; the children remembered the majority of the words, and related them to the images. Sometimes they would say some words in Portuguese (see Excerpt 3), but the pre-service teachers asked a colleague to help him/her, which made the learning process be more collaborative and participatory. This way, students ended up learning the idea of cooperation and social interaction, which, as Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) said, when combined with fun can lead to a more possible successful learning. Therefore, knowledge was co-built, and students could understand that nobody knows everything, and one can always use help from others. They could also see by themselves that they really were learning another language.

Sometime the students would answer in Portuguese, so I would ask a colleague to help him or her, as a result, everybody could feel participatory, the learning process was collaborative and the knowledge was co-built. The student-student interactions had the goal of making them aware that they can help their friends and their friends can also help him or her, and that you can always use a little help from someone.

Excerpt 3 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

The roles played by the teachers and by the students were also mentioned in the diary (Excerpt 4). The main role was the students' one because the class was led according to their attitude, answers and doubts; the pre-service teachers' role was only to mediate and assist the students by offering them aid and tips. There was no need of harsh repression by the teachers; if the activity is ludic, and lowers or maintains the affective filter [21] low, and if the environment is light, the students will want to participate in the activity and will not try to disobey you or your requests. Therefore, the input acquisition is less likely to be blocked, i.e. it will be simpler for the students to seek and receive more input, act with more confidence, and be more receptive to the input they receive.

> My role in this class was of a mediator and assistant, since I helped them with some tips, offered aid and guided the game whether it was necessary. The role of the students was the focus on this activity because it was their attitude, answers and doubts that led the class.

Excerpt 4 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

It is mentioned in the diary that the students have acquired some culture (see Excerpts 5 and 6); this idea matches Brougère's (2002) notion that by playing children create their ludic culture. Games create a cycle with culture, and it is, at the same time, a cultural product and cultural creation. In Brougère's words, "(…) the game produces a culture that he requires to exist"[22] (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 30, our translation).

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[21] Learner's emotional state or attitude can be seen as an adjustable filter that can impede or block the input acquisition, affecting the way they interact, and learn. It can reduce the amount of language input the listener is able to understand.

[22] "(...) o jogo produz a cultura que ele próprio requer para existir." (BROUGÈRE, 2002, p. 30).

The contributions of this class for the students were diverse. First, they could remember everything they learned on the previous semester and see that they are really learning another language; second, they learned the rules, how a game board works and how to play it, and thus a piece of culture was given to them. Third, they developed their ability of playing and working in groups, not only individually; and forth, they ended up, indirectly, learning some numbers when rolling the dice.

Excerpt 5 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

This class contributed for the students' citizenship in the way that they were able to work together without major problems; they helped each other and respected their friends and their time. They also learned culture, the game board culture; something we thought they would already have when we first did it with them.

Exceprt 6 – Exceprt from the reflexive diaries

Leonardo's Diaries

Leonardo's diaries were written in Portuguese and were focused on the methodology used in the classroom; he tried to show how the activities were applied; he told systematically (step by step) how the class happened. However, in a few moments, he also described some things that did not happen, in his words, "according to the plan" and he gives his opinion and observations about the activity, or the students.

When talking about one of the games used in class (memory game), Leonardo did not mention if the rules were explained. However, since we were his internship partner and supervisor and we were present in the classroom he was teaching, we know that the rules were not explicitly explained. Nonetheless, in that occasion, we asked the students if they knew that game and its rules. The pupils said what they already knew about the game and we only added some additional information they did not mentioned. Therefore, the students played the game having the rules and the how-to in mind. When children take part in games with rules, they are being for adult life, i.e. they are learning how to live with each other in society (SOLER, 2005).

> O segredo principal para começarem a ter mais chances no jogo, seria as crianças perceberem que os cartões de cores eram brancos, enquanto os cartões de números eram azuis. Porém, o desempenho dos alunos não foi bom na hora de encontrarem os cartões iguais. Eles conseguiram dizer os nomes das cores e dos números ao virarem-nos, que era o ponto principal da atividade, porém, não conseguiram desenvolver a parte do jogo, que era o que deveria lhes proporcionar diversão, talvez por falta de tempo. A atividade não mudou de rumo nem mesmo quando o aluno Afonso percebeu o fato que os cartões tinham cores diferentes (números azuis, cores brancos).

Excerpt 7 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

On the excerpt 7, it is possible to see that Leonardo's opinion on the students' performance was not positive in terms of playing the game. He stated that they were not able to find the equal cards, even though they were able to say the colors and numbers when turning the cards. We believe the problem was in the fact that they were having some difficulty when trying to establish a connection between images and position on the board. Thinking that the students are aged between four and five years, there were too many cards for them to make this connection; there were ten cards with numbers and eight cards with colors, thus thirty-six cards, which may have made the game too hard to solve.

> O aluno Gabriel teve dificuldades e não conseguiu achar o seu par, o que fez com que ele caísse em prantos e a professora Ana Beatriz tivesse que conversar com ele para contê-lo e explicar que nem sempre é possível vencer. Fora isso, todos os alunos se saíram bem, inclusive Lucas, a quem auxiliei para a execução da atividade. Por fim, todos os alunos conseguiram encontrar os pares de seus cartões e a atividade foi um sucesso.

Excerpt 8 – Excerpt from the reflexive diaries

Excerpt 8 was taken from Leonardo's second reflexive diary, in which he talked about the subsequent class, when the activities started on the previous class were finished. Again, his diary was very descriptive in the sense that it portrayed what

happened and how the activities were applied. On that day, who conducted the memory game was he; however, in the diary, nothing regarding the game rules was mentioned.

In the excerpt, Figueiredo's (2010) idea about the fact that genres allow us to operate in society and interact socially can be clearly seen. The student was not able to find a matching pair and started to cry; however, the pre-service teacher tried to make him understand that we will not and do not need to win everything every time. Cristovão and Gamero (2009, p. 231, our translation) state that according to Vygotsky (1993) "(...) the game is the natural child work form, the activity form that is inherent, the preparation for the future life."[23] This is the reason why playing is indispensable in the children's education; it allows children to interact with others, with the world, with reality, and to be a part of the society.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we intended to answer the formulated questions – is it important to master the "game rule" genre for the execution of language related activities? What was taught (beyond the language itself) and, consequently, what children may learn with the use of that genre? –, and increase knowledge on the subject researched, articulating it to the cultural context to which it belongs. We attempted to approach aspects concerning the usage of the game rule genre in young children foreign language classrooms. This textual genre is widely used with children, both literate and illiterate, because then they will interact with the genre even though they do not know it yet.

To use games in classroom, it is extremely important for children to have the rules well understood in mind before playing, whether by being explained by the teacher or by having previous knowledge, because the group will only focus on the game, and be able to play it when they understand the logic of the game. When the student does not comprehend the rules, he/she might lose interest on the game or activity; therefore, these should be clear and without much complexity in order to motivate the student, making him/her look for interest in the challenge and desire to win.

Summing up the findings of this paper, it seems safe to conclude that the game rule genre is in fact utterly meaningful in the learning of the students because it allows

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[23] "(...) o jogo é a forma natural de trabalho da criança, a forma de atividade que lhe é inerente, a preparação para a vida futura." (VYGOTSKY, 1993 apud CRISTOVÃO and GAMERO, 2009, p. 231).

them to be acquainted with a genre – in this case in the oral form – even though they are not fully aware of it. In other words, the children will know the game rule genre without knowing that they know it. Besides that, the participants of this study were exposed to this new genre, which was acquired due to activities promoted by the teachers; by doing this, the genre becomes more present in the students' scholar lives, which can avoid future difficulties with other new genres.

When establishing a comprehension of the data collected, it is possible to see that knowing the game rules makes the students willing to play it; thus, they are more likely to achieve the major objectives of the activities, which were learning new words, and recalling previous knowledge. Likewise, children learn essential life skills to live in society because living in society means dealing with rules at all times and in games, it is no different. In addition to showing that the restrictions may represent fun challenges, rule games develop important issues such as the adequacy to limits, strategies making, cooperation and competition; students can see meaningful learning and cooperation and 'the other' participation whilst learning a foreign language.

With this research, we could better see that teachers of English for children teach not only language – vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. One example of what was taught with the use of games in classroom is culture; children could learn (or learn more) about the game and were able to co-build their ludic culture, and at the same time, the "adult" culture as well. (BROUGÈRE, 2002). When the students played the game, they took part in the culture cycle; i.e. they have learnt the preexistent structures and *how* to play – thus acquired culture; and it also means they are putting the so learnt culture into practice – thus creating their own set of structures and significances.

This idea converges with Brougère's (2002) conception that has been mentioned previously. Besides acquiring culture, children also learn social rules (wait your turn, do not cheat, etc.) that will be necessary in the future, i.e. they are being prepared the future life (VYGOTSKY, 1993 apud CRISTOVÃO and GAMERO, 2009) by employing rules, fostering cooperation, and building language.

The current study revealed that generating data on your own works fosters continuous growth and development, building, therefore, a reflective practitioner who sees each lesson "(…) as an empirical investigation into factors affecting teaching and learning" (SAGOR, 2000, p. 7). Having a register of the classes and writing reflexive

diaries about the teaching practice is of paramount importance in the education of pre-service teachers since it allows them to think, reflect and, consequently, improve classes, activities, and practice. Finally it is important to say that we do agree with the idea that by reflecting upon the findings from each work can give the teacher a direction of what to do next, developing "(…) greater mastery of the art and science of teaching" as states Sagor (2000, p. 7).

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O USO DO GÊNERO TEXTUAL "REGRAS DE JOGO" NO ENSINO DE INGLÊS PARA CRIANÇAS

RESUMO

Este artigo é fruto de nossa prática docente no ensino de inglês em um Centro Estadual de Educação Infantil pertencente a uma Universidade Estadual no Norte do Paraná. O estudo foi

desenvolvido com alunos de 5 anos que tinham aulas de inglês com alunos-professores da mesma Universidade. O objetivo geral da pesquisa foi investigar a importância do domínio do gênero textual "regras de jogo" – no nosso caso, o jogo de tabuleiro – para a realização das atividades desenvolvidas e aplicadas durante as aulas. Esta pesquisa, de natureza qualitativa, baseia-se na metodologia de pesquisa-ação (SAGOR, 2000; LEWIN, 1948). Os dados utilizados foram os diários reflexivos escritos pelos alunos-professores no decorrer do estágio obrigatório, *locus* principal de nossa investigação. Os resultados mostraram que o conhecimento do gênero textual "regras de jogo" possibilitou o engajamento efetivo dos alunos no evento discursivo proposto atingindo assim o objetivo principal da atividade: revisar conteúdos referentes ao semestre anterior. Além disso, percebemos que, o fato de os alunos terem sido expostos ao gênero em questão possibilitou uma aprendizagem mais significativa da língua inglesa.