Podcast in the Classroom: Listening to Teachers who Work in the Education of Young People, Adults and Elderly People

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Abstract:
The Brazilian National Curricular Common Base - NCCB (2018) presents the podcast as a multisemiotic genre that can be mobilized in the context of mother tongue teaching. But, after all, how do teachers who work in the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People (EYAE) understand this didactic instrument? Our article focuses on this issue with the aim of reflecting on what a group of teachers, working at EYAE, say about the podcast in their pedagogical practices. The work dialogues with Bakhtin's (2000) studies of textual genres; Schneuwly and Dolz (2004, 2011); Marcuschi (2003, 2007); and with theorists of teacher training, such as Ribeiro (1999), Saviani (2009), Cortada (2014) and Freire (1999). Data were collected from video-recording during an extension course for EYAE teachers and analyzed qualitatively. The study reveals central questions for the professors, among them, i) curricular demands; ii) interest in getting to know the instrument better; ii) feasibility of using the genre with the target audience. These categories helped us to understand the role assigned to the podcast by the teachers and how such an instrument can collaborate with education in the modality in focus.

Keywords:
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INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian National Curricular Common Base (BRASIL, 2018) presents the podcast genre as something that can be mobilized in Portuguese language teaching practices. This document highlights the need to diversify, in the didactic proposals, the approach with “genres, support and media defined for socialization of studies and research”, whether they are oral, written or multisemiotic genres, which is the case of “podcast” as a genre (BRASIL, 2018, p. 516). The search for these types of genres increased in the context of social isolation, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the teaching practices have come to be mediated to a large extent by digital tools, many of whom teachers had not enough training to make use of them in the teaching context (BRITO, 2023).

The pandemic context demanded from the teachers, in a broader way, the use of technological resources, such as e-learning platforms, WhatsApp, Google Meet, Google Classroom, radio, TV, among others. With this, oral, written and multisemiotic genres, like podcasts, gained ground in some teaching practices, proving themselves as important tools to approach curricular knowledge, among them, the teaching of mother language (BARBOSA, 2020; COSTA-MACIEL, 2013; KLERING; ROSA; KERSCH, 2021).

In the face of this change of scenery, concerns related to teacher training in cases of the use of technology, specifically the ones related to podcasts, signaled by The Brazilian National Curricular Common Base as an auxiliary tool in organizing teaching, emerge (BRASIL, 2018). Consequently, aiming to reflect on what a group of teachers from the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People (EYAE) think about podcasts in their teaching practices, we retrieve video interactions from an action developed virtually in Google Meet platform, in 2022, with 30 (thirty) teachers. In this action, divided in 4 (four) modules, we organized the work in a reflexive and attentive manner, listening to what the teachers said and understood regarding the uses and applications of the podcast genre.

In order to meet the aim of this paper, we initially provided a theoretical background to approach the podcast genre, considering its constitutive elements and its social application, especially in education. In parallel with this discussion, we approached teacher training, since our data come from this specific context. We also highlight the specificities of EYAE as a teaching modality committed to guaranteeing rights of lifelong education. In this way, we begin with the theoretical background of this study.

1. PODCAST AND TEACHER TRAINING: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Podcast genre is a great oral tool of mediation of human activities, which involves a grouping of different textual genres “with the concreteness of life events” (VILLARTA-NEDER; FERREIRA, 2020, p. 37). “Such genre, present in the digital world, can be made of text, video or audio, while the latter being the predominant one” (VILLARTA-NEDER; FERREIRA, 2020, p. 37), making it “multisemiotic” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 516).
As a genre, podcasts are articulated to the social practices as historical phenomenon, linked to social and cultural life (MARCUSCHI, 2005). It is in this context that podcasts assume their malleability, dynamism and plasticity. These are the aspects that permit that this modal can shift and establish itself, in a way in which the borders between the oral language and written language cannot be precisely defined. In this sense, we do not invest in characterizing what it is an oral and what it is a written genre, because we consider, based on Street (2014, p. 169), more relevant to comprehend the “contact of the oral/literate channels”.

Although it was not created with a scholar or academic purpose, podcasts rapidly grounded a pedagogical application (VILLARTA-NEDER; FERREIRA, 2020, p. 36). Configured as a teaching tool/pedagogical tool, this genre requires a series of planning which covers the definition of themes, the organization of the pre-production, production and post-production process. With it, it is possible to know the length of the program, whether it is organized in seasons/episodes and the target audience. The content is another element to be planned in dealing with the genre and it should be analyzed after a search for reliable sources of information, which requires extra study and research that need to be advanced in a systematic way. (VELOSO et al., 2018, p. 14).

The use of this genre in the educational context requires that both content and methodology depend on the connections the students make with regard to their doubts, their questions, their interests, their needs in study qualification (VELOSO, et al. 2018, p. 8). Through this, we understand that podcasts emerge from the need of a specific audience, and being planned accordingly, in the pedagogical context. According to the Brazilian National Curricular Common Base (BRASIL, 2018), to make pedagogical use of genres, which transit in digital medias, means to contribute to teaching of the specificities and to contribute to different language practices. Through the use of technologies, we can stimulate students’ critical view of the use of digital tools, by also considering ethical, aesthetic and political aspects.

According to Dudeney, Hockly and Pegrum (2016),

Working on ethical, aesthetic and political abilities are notorious concerns for the mankind development, once today students should be prepared for a future whose contours are unclear at best. We do not know what new jobs will be created. We do not know what social and political problems will come up. (DUDENEY; HOCKLY; PEGRUM, 2016, p. 17).

In this way, the sense of criticality and responsibility to be developed, prescribed by the Brazilian National Curricular Common Base (BRASIL, 2018), points out that students cannot simply accept the information that circulates on the web, without a critical sense, but they must act consciously through it. It is in this direction that podcasts can be used as a teaching tool and as a mobilizer of knowledge of different orders.

When looking podcasts this way, we assume that

[…] textual genres come from, place themselves and interlock in the cultures they are developed. They are characterized much more by their communicative, cognitive and institutional functions rather than by their linguistic and structural specificities. They are also difficult to formally define and, therefore, they should be contemplated in their sociopragmatic uses and conditioning characterized as socio-discursive practices. (MARCUSCHI, 2005, p. 20).

These socio-historically situated genres are embedded in structural social activities and they depend on previous texts, which impact on the activity and on the social organization. In this way, it should be understood that the interaction between people is constantly mediated by texts, whether they are oral or written, building interactive patterns that introduce different daily activities.

Concerning podcasts, the Brazilian National Curricular Common Base (BRASIL, 2018) also displays multiple references through its proposals. The document inserts this genre within orality practices when it describes, in oral skills, multiple types of podcasts: news podcasts, cultural podcasts, scientific dissemination podcasts, literary podcasts, among others. Besides that, it describes the elaboration of scripts, expected for the
development of Portuguese language skills, including since the Elementary School and High School (BRASIL, 2018). When taking the importance of dealing with orality in the classroom through different textual genres, the Brazilian National Curricular Common Base takes podcasts as one of these tools, acknowledging their importance as part of the process of strengthening/consolidating the digital technologies in the teaching practices.

The challenge of this paper is to take podcast genre under the comprehension of teacher who work with Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People. For this, it is important that we bring the theoretical bases that help us to think about the object focused on this paper. According to the Brazilian National Curricular Common Base (BRASIL, 2018), besides identifying the recognizing the knowledge already constructed by the students, an endorsement that could also be applied in the EYAE, the school has the responsibility of guaranteeing and deepening knowledge about technologies, as well as the ethical and political implications of their use in society. In this direction, it is necessary that the EYAE guarantee conditions for participation in the world of work and culture to the students, based on a critical understanding of reality and society. It is a movement committed to the target public of this modality, so that it can develop and expand the consistency of its social role, that it is capable of consciously and significantly intervening in the search for an improvement of students’ reality, actively participating in society.

Knowing the public is a requirement when working with the EYAE. According to the Law and Guidelines of the Brazilian Education System, number 9.394/96, the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People is designed for the ones who had no opportunity to complete primary and secondary education at the age corresponding to age/grade. The law provides free education to young people, adults, in addition to the elderly, who were unable to study at the regular age or had no appropriate educational opportunities. The law for the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People, in this way, takes into account the characteristics of the target students, their interests, their living and working conditions, by offering them courses and exams.

França (2019, p. 67) characterizes the public of the EYAE as housewives, masons, peasants, rural workers, ribeirinhos (traditional population in who lives near rivers), street sweepers, doormen, Maracatu artists, grandmothers. Besides, a part of the population that attends this modality, especially in the literacy years, comes from religious communities, and they aim to learn to read the books that circulate in the religious environment; young people (repeaters) who are already 15 years old, migrate to the EYAE etc.

Among the factors that cause the “quitting/abandonment/expulsion” of the EYAE students are: entering (early) in the labor market; lack of schools near students’ residence (FRANÇA; COSTA-MACIEL, 2020, p. 560), prohibition by parents of girls (young women) from attending schools, with the allegation that the access to reading and writing could be used by them as tools to “write letters to boyfriends and plot breakouts from home (Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People female students report)1. In summary, these are issues that circumscribe personal, socioeconomic, political matters which transcend the educational scope.

To Arroyo (2007)

[...] the life of young people and adults do not become easier; on the contrary, it has become more unpredictable and uncontrollable for themselves, even for the adolescents who are forced to attend evening classes. Despite the flexibilization, abandonment rates in the EYAE show that students struggle to conciliate their personal lives with school duties. The impasses are set. (ARROYO, 2007, p. 46).

The formation of the EYAE students, thus, must consider their background, socioeconomic aspects, and particularities of their personal profile, such as age, economic and activities carried out by them, as well as geopolitical aspects and, above all, think about these elements from the curricular perspective. Several studies

1 The reports mentioned here are available in France (2019), a Dissertation written in the context of the Professional Master Degree in Education of University of Pernambuco.
have pointed to different problems in teacher training and teacher performance who work directly in the EYAE (RIBEIRO, 1999). According to this author, the lack of specific training sometimes causes inappropriate behavior, as shown by research carried out by Brito (2023) and Silva (2017), in which resistance from teachers was observed when they were required to expand teaching strategies for EYAE. These teachers claimed that students could demonstrate lack of interest in dealing with school knowledge explored from a methodology that demand greater involvement from them in the execution of activities.

According to Saviani (2009), the transformations in Brazilian society in the last two centuries reveal different periods in the history of teacher training in Brazil. It is necessary to think about the teacher training for the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People, considering the need for political and pedagogical effort, recognizing the specificities of this teaching modality, as well as its strengths and its weaknesses. The importance of knowing, in a more systematic way, the target students is an optimizing path for the EYAE, as it goes beyond the guidelines aimed at this modality, advancing beyond the walls of the school. With this in mind, as Perrenoud (1997) points out,

Teacher training only has a chance of becoming a force for change in the school if it acquires greater autonomy in relation to the system, if it identifies more with the needs of goers and teachers rather than the needs of the power that governs the school. (PERRENOUD, 1997, p. 96).

With this, we understand that, besides to the curricular guidelines built based on the underlying power of the government that was in office in the period from 2018 to 2022, the autonomy of the teacher in the preparation and the application of his/her work is fundamental to promote significant changes in the lives of his/her students. Therefore, knowing the reality of their classes and having autonomy to develop their practice should go beyond the guidelines of the education system and not be limited to it. In this perspective, we add the contributions of Nóvoa (2014), whose understanding reveals that the current situation imposes transformations on education that come to be understood as a process that goes beyond the walls of schools. The author defends the understanding of an educational public space, in which many institutions and places are recognized as educational spaces and have responsibility for education.

With this, we emphasize that continuing education is the space in which the pedagogical work can be discussed and reflected on, based on collective and individual experiences. According to Luz and Melo (2007),

Continuous trainings, regardless of the definitions or modalities that characterize them, must be understood as a way of collective and solo reconstruction/reappropriation of knowledge, in which the meaning of lived experiences becomes clearer for individual consciousness and the relationship with knowledge becomes more important than knowledge itself. It is a movement that allows awareness of their condition as co-authors in the process of personal and professional training, and thereby overcome the barriers that reinforce resistance to the new and motivate them to training proposals. (LUZ; MELLO, 2007, p. 4).

We defend, therefore, the premise that aligning the curriculum guidelines of the education network, knowing different strategies based on the experiences of other teachers, during continuing education and understanding the profile of their classes is fundamental, but not decisive for success of Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People. Since, there are many levels in the debate for the improvement of this modality, which involves its students, above all, from a utopian education (FREIRE, 1996). In this utopian universe, we defend, for instance, public policies which effectively embrace Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People students, whose right to education was denied to them since childhood and youth.

In other words, it is necessary to think on the application of school learning for the EYAE students, thinking about the context or applicability in everyday life, especially if we consider what Ribeiro (1999) proposes an emphasis on the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People as a political practice, which identifies the
nature of practical knowledge, considering the challenge of modifying or adapting school contents in the practical life of students.

It is in this act of thinking about training and reframing the practice that the podcast genre was presented in the debate proposed and it was developed within the scope of the extension course, in which the teachers (presented in this article with codenames) participated. In general, the course manifested as a formative space for teaching and listening to teachers’ demands, inviting them to operate the genre as a tool available for reflection to guarantee students’ access to podcast genre as an instrument that can favor learning.

With this theoretical background, we now focus on how the participant teachers see the role of the podcast genre in the EYAE.

2. Podcast in Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People: Description and analysis of the data

In order to understand the perspective of the EYAE teachers about podcasts in their pedagogical practices, we collected some statements, produced in the context of an extension activity, that can illustrate our analysis. As there was greater oral participation by 3 (three) participants, at the time of the course held virtually, their statements were used in this paper, as they helped us to explore the object in focus and achieve the objective proposed for this work.

We start this section with Ms. Bernadete, who presents the podcast within the curricular intricacies in the school system in which she worked at the time she was attending the extension activity:

This excerpt helps us understand, among other issues, the relationship that this teacher draws between the curriculum for the EYAE, the designing of support material for pedagogical practice and the genre. It is not our intention to examine which curricular conceptions certain teaching systems are based on. By considering that what was exposed by this teacher, that does not give us subsidy to analyze which curricular conception these teachers are based on to build the curriculum. However, it would be interesting to reflect on each curricular conception in another moment, in order to analyze the possible activities developed, based on the aforementioned curriculum, understanding that this guiding document is not neutral in the set of knowledge, nor in the choice of texts and content.

When we bring these discussions about the curriculum, it is worthwhile to notice the values underlying the teachers practices when choosing the content. That interferes, for example, in dealing with the repertoire of textual genres that are brought to the classroom. Besides that, we need to pay attention to what textual genres can be worked in a way that meet the different needs of the students, by making them aware of their own potential.

Consequently, it is not enough to draw a profile of the EYAE and point out what contents must be taught, but it is necessary, on the other hand, reflect on how to meet the young, the adults and the senior students and to know which are their specific needs. Working with textual genres is part of this process of preparing didactic proposals and, in this context, podcasts can be configured as one of the tools that can help a practice committed to lifelong learning. Ms. Bernadete looks interested in new methodologies. This eagerness reminds us of the need for continuing education (a commitment of our extension course), seeking to present possibilities that enhance significant learning, through the use and production of podcasts in the day-to-day classroom.

Continuing with the data analysis, we selected from our archive the Ms. Maria das Dores. She highlights her conception about podcasts:
[...] podcasts are something new, similar to the radio ... and teens know how it works and, at the same time, different from the radio, it is very new, because it is a kind of a radio without commercial breaks, you can choose what topic you want to listen to. So, that is fantastic, this possibility to access offline, for example, the possibility to listen to it from a mobile phone, while you’re commuting, it stimulates the memory, stimulates the attention, enhance the world awareness, so, that is a very rich possibility. (Maria das Dores).

Ms. Maria das Dores’ statement seems to be in tune with Marcuschi (2005) defends. He states that technology favors the emergence of innovative forms, but not absolutely new forms of textual genres, because new genres are not absolute innovations. With regard to the genres, one anchors on the other and it is characterized and defined by socio-communicative and functional aspects (MARCUSCHI, 2005, p. 20), a noticeable phenomenon in the relations between radio and the podcast.

The thinking about the genres must consider that they are produced within the scope of social interactions and are characterized by the thematic content, by the spheres of circulation, which means, according to the thematic circulation and the interaction of the speaker (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 2011). With regard to thematic content, we must consider that podcasts are structured around one or more themes. In the case of the EYAE, social themes can be significant strategies, because they connect with the specificities of the public that attends this modality.

In the next excerpt, Ms. Bernadete highlights her interest in exploring the social themes in the EYAE, in the scope of the reflection about thematic that can be addressed by the podcast: “[...] so that was a motivation, learning more about the application of podcasts, mainly with this social thematic footprint to produce a material that is reproduced in the education system”. (Bernadete).

The search for training courses by teachers can reveal their recognition of the importance of knowledge contributing to day-to-day work in the classroom. Ms. Bernadete’s motivation makes this perspective clear, as it reveals her intention to learn to produce materials focused on social issues through podcasts. On the subject of teachers’ concerns, Arroyo (2000) states that the attachment to knowledge, to study, to qualification, to individual and collective identity, to the field of their practice is something inherent to teachers. (ARROYO, 2000, p. 25). For this reason, we understand the constant concern of these teachers with their own training and that of their students.

Ms. Bernadete seems to seek an integral formation of the subject for her/his students in the search for new knowledge linked to new educational parameters that involve new resources and social themes. In addition to this teacher, we perceive the same search for integral formation in the statements of Ms. Maria do Amparo, when listing general themes that concern the daily life of young, adult and elderly people assisted by the EYAE:

[...] I believe that, within this social context, we have a lot of themes beyond the ethnic-racial issue, of facing the discussion of gender identity [...] if we did a quick survey there, who they are or what the representational number of the EYA students is [...] we’re gonna have the black population, then, if we look it back to the past to notice why they are victims or why we have a debt to help this population of men and women today? So we already have elements to make a very broad podcast. (Maria do Amparo).

We see listed in the teacher’s statement some social themes that can be explored as thematic content in the podcast genre. The mention of ethnic-racial relations, for example, was a point worth mentioning, as it is an object of Law 10.639 of 2003, that defends an anti-racist education in a society that, although it denies being racist, structurally observes practices that feed racism. Ms. Maria do Amparo’s attitude is in tune with what Freire (1996, p. 94) says, for whom it is impossible to “separate teaching from the ethical formation contents of students into two moments. [...] The teaching of contents implies the ethical witness of the teacher. The beauty of the teaching practice is composed of the living desire for competence of the teacher and the students and their ethical dream”. This article is based on this critical perception. We look at the podcast as a genre that can contribute to the beauty of formation for citizenship.

In summary, the statements of the teachers refer to the following scenario:
Table 1 - Perceptions about podcast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Teacher's perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bernadete</td>
<td>Need of curricular orientation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Importance of didactical resources.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on new technologies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Podcast genre as a teaching tool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Maria das Dores</td>
<td>Acknowledging podcast as a genre.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emphasizing podcast as something new; but with already known bases.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Connection of podcasts with generational factor.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comprehension that podcasts demand a theme.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on the use of podcast (online and offline).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indication of podcasts streaming support (smartphones).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference on the uses of podcast (listening to it while commuting).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social enhancements (enrich world knowledge) and cognitive skills arising from accessing podcasts (memory and attention).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: authors (2023).

We can notice, by taking a general look at the statements, that for the teachers, podcasts are seen in their composition, content, didactic support and social function. It is a horizon that highlights, in some way, the possibilities of exploring this genre within the scope of EYAE, whether in an autonomous or integrated perspective (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY; HALLER, 2004). With that, podcasts can be taken as tools to approach the oral, a tool to learn/develop discursive abilities, such as explaining, arguing, narrating within the scope of the different school contexts and the varied curricular components; and from the perspective of the autonomous oral, in which such genre can be taken as a teaching and learning object, without being mobilized as a mean for the apprehension of discursive behaviors associated with other disciplinary knowledge.

Below, we will present our final considerations, however, we do not conclude the reflections started here, because we understand that scientific research must be constantly expanded and/or replicated, above all, in investigations that take the EYAE and its specificities.

**Brief Considerations**

The present work was developed considering the textual genres as social practices for communicative purposes. This consideration highlights the importance of discussions about new genres and their application in the classroom, since such tools materialize as concrete elements through which the teacher can operate the language teaching, as well as other curricular knowledge, and the student can be helped to understand the different social language practices with which he/she relates in the different contexts of language use.

Bringing the teaching view of podcasts to the debate allowed us to perceive that the concerns on the part of the EYAE teachers who attended our extension activity, revolve around various issues to work with the genre, among them: attention for the curriculum; the use of the genre as a new tool to be used in the production of other didactic resources; as well as promoting skills related to memory and attention.

The contours of the statements reach plural perspectives, which transcend the nature of the genre, such as, for example, those linked to neurological functions. In the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People, in addition to working with new genres, we need to understand their specificities and, for that, it is important to explore themes that dialogue with the social reality of this population, reinforcing the teaching of podcasts as an oral genre (TRAVAGLIA, 2017) or both oral and written genre (MARCUSCHI, 2005), as a right that must be guaranteed to all.

The teachers’ understanding of issues concerning the EYAE permeates the conceptions they have built throughout their experiences in the classroom. It is a view that is in tune with the perspective that textual
genres are sociocommunicative instruments that mediate human activities. Therefore, the teaching work has an important role in the teaching of genres by enabling students to develop and expand the skills inherent to these communicative activities. In this sense, understanding the use and function of genres, especially podcasts, contributes to the integral formation of the students of the EYAE, since there are, in a way, some barriers that arise to prevent them from fully enjoying the rights of active citizens.

Finally, we hope that the discussions established in this article will motivate investigations that look closely at teaching from the use of textual genres, with emphasis on the podcast oral genre, a teaching tool that can be used as a way to introduce/consolidate new (inter)disciplinary knowledge. This view of ours is strictly related to what Bakhtin highlights (BAKHTIN, 2000, p. 285, emphasis added), in defending that “the better we master genres, the more freely we employ them, the more fully and clearly we discover our individuality – autonomy – in them, we reflect in a more flexible and subtle way the unique situation of communication”. With this, we understand that the contact and use of the podcast can collaborate to expand the language skills of the Education of Young, Adult and Elderly People students.

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