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**NONVERBAL LANGUAGE IN EFL PRO-ENEM READING CLASSES: AN ACTION
RESEARCH**

CAMPINA GRANDE – PB

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao Curso de Graduação de Letras (Hab. Língua Inglesa) da Universidade Estadual da Paraíba, em cumprimento à exigência para obtenção do grau de Licenciado em Letras (Língua Inglesa).

Orientadora: Prof^a. Dr^a. Daniela Gomes de Araújo Nóbrega.

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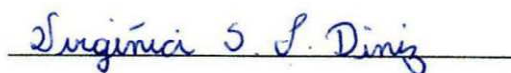
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this work is to analyze the importance of Nonverbal Language (especially, pictures related to comic strips and articles) in meaning construction process at *Pro-ENEM* course, during activities that priorizes the reading skill. This research is theoretically anchored by studies on Reading skill and English Teaching (BERNHARDT, 1991; GOODMAN, 1970 *apud* Silveira, 2005; BROWN, 2000, 2001, 2007; De Souza, 2003; DAVIES AND JONHS, 1983; PCNEM (2000); RUMELHART, 1997 *apud* Aebersold and Field, 2011) and on studies on Nonverbal Language (AGUDELO, 2013; KOVALEK AND CHICOSKI, 2008 *apud* Portugal e Araújo, 2013; KUSANAGI, 2005; NIKAZM, 2008; NÓBREGA, 2011, 2012). Based on activities applied in this research, nonverbal language together with verbal language (written) was revealed as an interactional and effective resource in reading ability development with students.

KEYWORDS: English Language. Reading. Nonverbal Language. Pictures.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Língua Inglesa. Leitura. Linguagem Não Verbal. Imagens.

INTRODUCTION

One of the sentences English teachers are used to hearing from their students in the very first class and also what I initially heard at the Pro-Enem¹ course, was for example, the assumption: “I don’t know Portuguese, imagine if I know English!” or “I know nothing from English, The only thing I can remember is the “verbo tu bi²”. Based on these learners’ premises, one of the teacher’s roles is to break this kind of barrier by motivating them to learn the target language, English. Showing the students what they know seems to be an effective way in learning a Foreign Language and nonverbal language (present in texts: comics,

¹ Enem (the National Secondary Education Examination), created in 1998, aims at evaluating students performance at the end of the basic education. It is allowed to participate in the exam students who are completing or have completed high school in previous years. Enem is used as a selection criterion for students who want to apply for a scholarship at the “University for All” program.

² The Brazilian student’s pronunciation of the verb “to be”.

pictures, etc) can be considered as an interactive sign when it comes to interpret texts successfully.

Bernhardt (1991) discusses about reading not only as a cognitive, social but also as a sociocognitive act. The author defends that reading changes according to many factors: reader, context, intent, time, culture, etc. As texts are part of communication, they serve to transmit ideas, that is to say, texts have a social function. (DAVIES and JOHNS, 1983). With basis on nonverbal studies, to complement verbal language (oral), nonverbal language has crucial importance in interaction.

According to Agudelo (2013), in order to succeed in a varied context of social interactions people need to have not only the linguistic knowledge but more than this, they need to process much other information that can be expressed by gestures, postures, etc. The importance of gestures in social interactions as a whole and in the learning and teaching environment is pointed out by Kusanagi (2005), Nikazm (2008) and in Nóbrega's works (2011; 2012).

The importance of nonverbal language³ in the teaching and learning context is a fact and it has been discussed for many researches, but attention also should be given to printed nonverbal language⁴, since it seems to contribute in the teaching/learning process. One example of nonverbal language contribution in teaching is presented by Kusanagi (2005), who posits that nonverbal language can be used in order to: (1) manage the classroom; (2) give instruction; (3) give input; (4) regulate the interactional moments and (5) promote interaction by cooperative learning for enhancing the affective side.

Considering such contribution of nonverbal language to teaching, it seems also significant to posit the relevance of printed nonverbal language to teaching. Kovalek and Chicoski (2008, *apud* Portugal e Araújo, 2013) present the importance of visual clues in teaching/learning domain. According to them, learning with this kind of tool is likely to be

³ Nonverbal language is categorized by Brown (2000) in six groups: (1) Kinesics; (2) Eye contact; (3) Proxemics; (4) Artifacts; (5) Kinesthetics and (6) The olfactory dimensions. Kinesics refers to body movements, gestures, facial expressions and postures. The second category explains that eye contact has different interpretations related to place and culture and can lead to misunderstanding. The third refers to the use of the space whereas chronemic is related to the use of the time that can be monochromic, in which people do one thing at a time and polichronic, in which people do a number of activities simultaneously (SANTOS, 2004). The fourth present the importance of clothing, ornamentation, jewelry and other kind of artifacts in identifying such personal and social characteristics. The fifth category which one Rector and Trinta (1985) *apud* Dantas and Tavares (2008) calls Taxestic, comprises the use of the touch in order to interact; and the sixth one related to the importance of smells in twentieth's society. In this work the term "nonverbal language" refers to the first topic and the term "printed nonverbal language" to pictures, images and symbols, for example.

⁴ See the explanation above.

“more attractive and pleasurable”. For example, taking my own reality as reference, in a reading of a text about how earthquakes happen, the use of pictures which illustrated the process of earthquakes formation seemed to motivate the learners and help them in the reading and comprehension process.

The kinesics, specially the smile in my case, has served me as a motivational resource that encouraged me to improve my skills in English Language. By having experienced the contribution of this resource in learning a Foreign Language, my purpose was to investigate the implications of printed nonverbal language in the reading comprehension process and how it could help the learners to develop their reading skills.

Being supported by the presented theory, this work aims at investigating how printed nonverbal language together with the use of some reading strategies, such as cognate words and inference, can help students in developing reading comprehension in EFL.

2 THEORY

In order to mention the importance of nonverbal language in the reading comprehension process, it is relevant to follow some steps, such as (2.1) presenting some notions on reading; (2.2) the use of cognate words and inference strategy and prediction in EFL reading; and (2.3) nonverbal language in different contexts of English teaching.

2.1 Defining reading

To understand the reading process in the individuals' mind, it is relevant to define this skill presenting its cognitive, social and sociocognitive views. This work makes use mainly of a sociocognitive view, considering that people are not the same readers in different texts, in several contexts or time (BERNHARDT, 1991, p. 15).

According to the Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary (1971 *apud* BERRHARDT, 1991), there are some definitions for reading. These meanings range from a more superficial definition, in which it is considered the process of receiving a message, to a

deeper definition which considers not only the act of reading but the interpretation attributed to the message or text

These definitions range from “*to receive or take in the sense of (as letters or symbols) by scanning;*” to “*to understand the meaning of (written or printed matter);*” to “*to attribute a meaning or interpretation to (something read)*”. (p. 5)

A cognitive view points out the idea that reading consists of an individual act in which it is followed by some cognitive mechanisms to achieve the reading goal. In this view the printed characteristic is more important than “meaning”. According to Bernhardt (1991, p. 8)

This individual act consists of processing steps that are separated and measurable, although interdependent. Such a view generally implies that the sum of these individual processing steps constitutes the act of reading; furthermore, that as each reader performs in this manner, the output will be the same successful product.

In this view the text and the process of reading itself are emphasized. If readers have these processing steps internalized in their brain, they will have the same successful understanding of a message or comprehension of a text. For example, when reading a comic strip, the reader will use the visual cue to identify spelling pattern code, visual word code, visual word group code, and images, in order to create a text internal (brain) conceptualization which can differ from reader to reader. In other words, “[...] *processing* is, to a large extent generalizable – not unique to particular readers, but that output is individual”. (BERNHARDT, 1991, p.9)

A social view concerning the reading process defends the idea that the reader needs to have access to information considering the context in which the text circulates

Words and sentences are not enough. It argues that a second language reader, in order to be successful, must somehow gain access to implicit information possessed by members of the social group for which the text was intended. (BERNHARDT, p.14)

According to Bernhardt (1991), how much readers have access to social context information more success they will have in reading. As the same text can have different interpretations according to the context, extra-linguistic knowledge has an essential role in the process of reading. For example, in comic strips both verbal and nonverbal language work together to promote an effect of humor. If it is analyzed only the comics’ verbal language its

social function will not have the same social effect. By knowing the importance of social functions in reading the reader can become aware of the influence of context in the act of reading.

A sociocognitive view defends that individuals react differently according to the moment, the context, the subject, and features involved in the process of reading, that is to say, considering its pragmatic nature⁵

Text is no longer characterized simply by its linguistic elements (semantics and syntax), but also by its structure, its pragmatic nature, its intentionality, its content, and its topic. These sets of features interact with the reader in process. The model also posits that readers are not static entities, but are individuals who change and react differentially – in other words, are different readers at different times. (BERNHARDT, p. 15)

In other words, text itself is not a closed entity in which only linguistic elements are taken into consideration in the reading moment. As individuals think differently, the way they comprehend a text can be influenced by their background knowledge which is brought from their reality or social context to reading. As it is discussed by Davies and Johns (1983), texts have social and economic functions, that is to say, texts can work as a resource for communication or “transmission of ideas”. The authors had outlined an approach to classroom use of texts for developing reading skills in a Foreign Language for a specific purpose defending the idea that the Text As a Vehicle for Information (TAVI) method has achieved more success in teaching reading as a Foreign Language through written texts than the Text As a Linguistic Object method (TALO).

Through a comparison between these two methods, the authors explain what is the focus of the proposed activities by the TAVI method

[...] that is to say, we shall concentrate in the first place on *information* rather than language, on *overall meaning* rather than points of detail and on what is *known* rather than what is not known. As has already been indicated, the preparatory activities will have directed the students towards the information to look for in the text. (DAVIES and JOHNS, 1983, p.10)

⁵ “Pragmatics, in fact, encompasses everything that characterizes people as language users in their social contexts”. (NÓBREGA, 2011, p. 26)

This idea presented by Davies and Johns (1983) is also defended by Rumelhart (1997 *apud* AEBERSOLD and FIELD, 2011, p.5) in saying that: “[...] reading involves *the reader, the text, and the interaction between reader and text*”. In other words, the interaction between reader and text makes the act of reading itself.

Considering this interactive process as a crucial factor in reading, I followed in my research a sociocognitive view since what I could perceive in my analysis was that students' interpretation was a result of ideas exchanges that happened between student-text, text-student-student, student-teacher-text and mental researches that happened when students used their background knowledge by activating it through pictures and cognate words.

2.2 The use of cognate words, inference strategy and prediction in EFL reading

There are many features which can help readers in the process of meaning construction in EFL reading. These features are not in the text without any intention or purpose, but they work together to make the information clear to the reader, to facilitate the process of communication. Cognate words are one of the crucial elements in the process of reading since it helps the reader to predict or infer meanings and consequently reconstruct this meaning while reading. According to De Souza (2003, p. 24), for cognate word it is understood: “any pair of words which are orthographically similar, share at least one meaning across the two languages and are recognized as such by learners”.

The similarity between two or more languages can have an effective effect in reading since the comparison made by cognates activates the reader background knowledge of a specific word. For example, the term *Globalization* which in Portuguese language means *Globalização* can help in students' activation of background knowledge. That is to say, readers can reconstruct meaning according to their background knowledge which is activated by cognate words while reading. As it is defended by Goodman (1976, p. 471 *apud* SILVEIRA, 2005, p. 30):

⁶ “The meaning, in turn, is not in the graph input, but in the meaning that the author gives when writing. It is up to the reader to reconstruct this meaning when reading.” (GOODMAN, op.cit)

That is to say, the reader can use the meaning of a cognate word to make predictions or infer meaning according to others textual elements (context, genre, purpose, etc) and this strategy can facilitate text reading comprehension. By selecting some productive elements on the text the reader can predict the information and consequently have an efficient reading. According to Goodman (1970 *apud* SILVEIRA, 2005, p.28):

⁷ Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading does not result from an exact perception and identification of all elements, but from the ability of selecting few but productive cues necessary to the correct guessing work solution from the first attempt. The ability of anticipating what has not yet been read is vital in reading, as well as the ability to anticipate what has not yet been heard is vital in listening comprehension. (op.cit)

Making predictions and inferences about what is being read are effective strategies that readers can use in order to increase reading comprehension abilities and become a more efficient reader. According to Brown (2007), referring to inference readers use it

to: guess the meaning of a word, guess a grammatical relationship, guess a discourse relationship, infer implied meaning (“between the lines”), guess about a cultural reference, guess content messages, etc. (op. cit., p. 369)

Inference strategy seems to help the reader in having autonomy in the act of reading itself since it is necessary the use not only of linguistic features but extra linguistic ones (which involves contextual or cultural knowledge, etc) in order to better comprehend the information that is in and outside the text. Reading is not merely a cognitive process but it is made through reader and text interaction considering its pragmatic nature.

⁶ (My translation from Portuguese): “O significado, por sua vez, não está no insumo gráfico, mas no significado que o autor lhe atribui quando escreve. Cabe ao leitor reconstruir esse significado quando lê”. (GOODMAN, 1976, p. 471)

⁷ (My translation from the Portuguese): A leitura é um jogo psicolinguístico de adivinhações. Ela envolve uma interação entre o pensamento e a linguagem. A leitura eficiente não resulta de uma percepção exata e da identificação de todos os elementos, mas da habilidade de selecionar poucas, porém produtivas pistas necessárias para dar solução correta à adivinhação desde a primeira tentativa. A habilidade de antecipar o que ainda não foi lido é vital na leitura, assim como a habilidade de antecipar o que ainda não foi ouvido é vital para a compreensão oral. (GOODMAN, 1970, op. cit)

Defending the idea that inference and prediction play an important role in reading comprehension and with basis on Hosenfeld's research (1977), Davies and Jonhs (1983) discuss about what is considered a successful language-learner

The successful language-learners in her study, on the other hand, paid attention to the overall meaning of the text, had developed the ability to guess or to skip using information from the rest of the text, and used the dictionary far less often. (DAVIES and JONHS, 1983, p. 10)

In other words, these strategies (as well as prediction and inference) can be used to supply learners' difficulties in reading since guessing information from the whole text diminishes the use of the dictionary and encouraging students to use these strategies is a role of the teacher. (DAVIES and JONHS, 1983, p. 11)

In the next section (2.3) I discuss about the importance of nonverbal language not only in EFL context but in other ones.

2.3 Nonverbal language in different contexts of English teaching

Researches concerning the study on nonverbal communication have demonstrated that its focus has been on the analysis of Kinesics⁸ (especially gestures), vocalics⁹ and chronemics. Kusanagi (2005) makes an overview of at least 27 studies on various areas related to general nonverbal communication in Language Education (Target Language) not specifically concerned with Second Language study. The author presents the importance of the gestures' role in Language education and defends the need of more empirical studies related to gestures and related nonverbal behaviors.

⁸ Brown (2000) categorizes nonverbal factors in six groups: (1) Kinesics; (2) Eye contact; (3) Proxemics; (4) Artifacts; (5) Kinesthetics and (6) The olfactory dimensions. Kinesics refers to body movements, gestures, facial expressions and postures. The second category explains that eye contact has different interpretations related to place and culture and can lead to misunderstanding. The third refers to the use of the space whereas chronemic is related to the use of the time that can be monochronic, in which people do one thing at a time and polichronic, in which people do a number of activities simultaneously (SANTOS, 2004). The fourth present the importance of clothing, ornamentation, jewelry and other kind of artifacts in identifying such personal and social characteristics. The fifth category which one Rector and Trinta (1985 *apud* Dantas and Tavares, 2008) calls Taxestic, comprises the use of the touch in order to interact; and the sixth one related to the importance of smells in twentieth's society.

⁹ For vocalics it is understood "the transfer of meaning through vocal cues". (KUSANAGI, 2005, p.383).

According to Kusanagi (2005), teacher's nonverbal behavior (kinesic, especially gestures) has the role of: (1) managing; (2) instructing; (3) giving input; (4) regulating and (5) affecting. The first role involves teacher's control over the classroom and students' behavior; the second, concerns the use of mimes or representational gestures to give any sort of instruction related to the activity; the third refers to teacher's control over the level and amount of input that must be given to the students; the fourth, to regulate conversation in the classroom by encouraging students, giving feedback, etc; and the fifth role is to promote an environment of teacher-student and student-student interaction.

In Nikazm's (2008) research, it was analyzed the use of teacher's gestures (iconic and deictic)¹⁰ to provide the learners with cues about the meaning of the studied vocabulary instead of giving directly the translation of the Second Language vocabulary. Teachers' gesture was also used to provide them with cues about the correct or acceptable answer and give correct feedback through iconic and deictic gestures. In this research it was observed that teacher's gestures play an important role in teacher-student interaction and they are a "fundamental aspect of teacher's pedagogical repertoire". (NIKAZM, 2008, p. 236)

As it is defended by Kusanagi (2005), studies on nonverbal language have demonstrated its importance in interaction and language learning. In his work, the author makes an overview corresponding on 27 studies related to nonverbal communication in language education. According to his research, gestures are likely to be the main focus on nonverbal studies. The importance of gestures and speech in human interaction is also presented by Nikazm (2008), who discusses about the use of gestures as a resource to give comprehensible input and correct errors through teacher-learner's interaction.

In the field of nonverbal language it have been also investigated the use of students' spontaneous smile in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom and its interactional function in the process of oral production (NÓBREGA, 2011; 2012). Many studies on

¹⁰ McNeil and Levy (in the article *Gesture: a psycholinguistic approach*, university of Chicago) propose a new classification for gestures with four categories: (1) iconic, (2) metaphoric, (3) deictic, and (4) beat, in which: (1) iconic gesture "presents images of concrete entities and/or actions. For example, appearing to grasp and bend back something while saying 'and he bends it way back'. And (3) deictic gesture is "an extended 'index' finger, but almost any extensible body part or held object can be used. Indeed, some cultures prescribe deixis with the lips (Enfield 2001). Deixis entails locating entities and actions in space vis-à-vis a reference point, which Bühler called the origo (Bühler 1982, Haviland 2000)".

nonverbal language have been carried out and several of them had focused on the use of gestures as an important interactional resource in English classes.

Agudelo (2013, p.62) argues about the importance of nonverbal language in communication process. The author argues that ¹¹“nonverbal communication enriches interaction of people, especially from different cultures and languages”. That is to say, nonverbal communication has an important role in interaction, sharing knowledge and consequently learning. For example, in oral communication a simple smile can give or not continuity to a conversation by demonstrating sympathy, empathy or shyness, etc.

The author also advocates that the speaker needs to have not only linguistic knowledge but also extra-linguistic one and emphasizes the idea that

¹² “For a speaker to succeed in their communication acts, having command of grammar and communicative skills are not enough, he must be able to process many other non-linguistic information that can be: gestures, postures, expressions, voice tone or behaviors”.(op. cit., p. 61)

This author discusses about the importance of processing nonlinguistic information in a communicative act. This nonlinguistic processing can also relate to reading, to the way readers construct meaning while they speak or read a text composed by both verbal and nonverbal language. For example, as it was observed in classroom, images present in comic strips can explore many nonverbal factors and these factors can influence in the comics’ interpretation.

Kovalek and Chicoski (2008, p. 10 *apud* Portugal e Araújo 2013, p. 84) speak about the importance of images in teaching/learning process: teaching ¹³ “becomes more attractive and pleasurable and even for someone with no knowledge of vocabulary, it is possible to make a reading of the visual text and acquire relevant vocabulary to it”. Images serve as a complement of verbal language and can work as a nonverbal resource in English classes, since it can promote interaction between students/students and students/teacher leading them to acquiring vocabulary and improving their reading comprehension abilities. This

¹¹ (My translation from Portuguese): “a comunicação não verbal enriquece a interação das pessoas, principalmente de culturas e línguas diferentes”.

¹² (My translation from Portuguese): “Para um falante ter êxito em seus atos de comunicação, não basta que ele tenha domínio da gramática ou das competências comunicativas, há de ser capaz de processar muitas outras informações não linguísticas que podem ser: gestos, atitudes corporais, expressões, tom de voz ou comportamentos.” (AGUDELO, p. 61)

¹³ (My translation from Portuguese): “se torna mais atraente e prazeroso e mesmo para alguém sem conhecimento vocabular, é possível fazer uma leitura do texto visual e adquirir vocabulário pertinente a ele”.

nonlinguistic resource also can help students in inferring meanings and making different text interpretations.

Brown (2001, p.165) argues about the importance of interaction in meaning construction and negotiation

Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. Theories of communicative competence emphasize the importance of interaction as human beings use language in various contexts to negotiate meaning, or simply stated, to get an idea out of one's person's head and into the head of another person and vice versa.

Based on Brown's (op. cit) assumption, interaction seems to be crucial in human communication and the exchanging and negotiation of ideas between two or more individuals are part of their lives and consequently of their learning.

This article presents some works in which researches have analyzed nonverbal language (body language, gestures, etc) in English as a Foreign Language context and other contexts. In contrast (in the topic 4), this work will introduce a research carried out at Pro-ENEM course in which the focus has been the use of nonverbal language (images in comic strips) together with verbal language in reading comprehension process.

3 METHODOLOGY

This research was initially applied in two classrooms (1 and 2) of Pro-ENEM course offered by the Universidade Estadual da Paraíba (UEPB)¹⁴, whose classes happened once a week, lasting 50 minutes each class. Its main end was to analyze how nonverbal language (understood here as comics, pictures), can help the students to develop their reading comprehension abilities in EFL.

In order to achieve the main objective, this research was carried out during seven months of 2014. A total of at least twenty classes were analyzed but only some of them are described in this paper. This work makes part of a Practical Action Research, since its

¹⁴ UEPB – Campus I, situated in “Bodocongó: Bairro Universitário” S/N, located in Campina Grande city.

analysis was set out in a specific context: course, classes, English level, etc, carried out by me and it aims at investigating the use of nonverbal language as a resource to improve learners' reading abilities and teachers' pedagogical practice.

According to Literature, the called Action Research is divided by a dichotomy: Practical Action Research and Critical Action Research, in which the educational theorists discuss about the type of question each Research should focus on or try to answer. As it is probable to see in Literature, there are different objectives for each form of Action Research: "Practical action research is theorized as illuminating the day-to-day issues teachers face. Critical action research seeks to not only improve teaching and learning in the classroom but also to improve society" (MANFRA, 2009, p. 41), the author defends her point of view by arguing that classroom researches may work with both critical issues and practical questions.

About the participants involved in this study, they were students from public schools who intended to do the ENEM test for the first time. As it was observed through the reading activities applied, the students had a very basic knowledge in the English Language, except one of them who had taken an English course and because of this he presented a higher level of proficiency in the language.

Since it was in my own classes that this study was carried out and I was the responsible for this research, it is worthwhile describing about my professional profile and research. I am an undergraduate learner at Modern Language at UEPB where I have been studying for four years and where I have improved my English skills. I taught at a private school (primary school) for at least five months and actually I have been teaching for a year and a half at the Pro-ENEM course. In order to investigate the progressive process of reading abilities development I made use of a Practical Action Research, in which the teacher in interaction with the students worked with the purpose of investigating the importance of nonverbal language in reading. That is to say, my purpose was not only to present the importance of nonverbal language to the students but also make them to see it and understand it.

In order to facilitate the process of analysis of this research two instruments were used: written texts (articles for example), comic strips and pictures (nonverbal language). These instruments were chosen according to the main purpose of this work that has to be with the development of the reading skill through nonverbal language.

This study was investigated into three moments. Initially it was verified students' English knowledge through activities, before working with the reading abilities. Then, it was worked the reading abilities and presented the importance of nonverbal language in the reading comprehension process by providing the students with comic strips and pictures. After this moment, it was observed how students reacted in relation to an activity (with basis on ENEM main purposes) after being exposed to explanations that priory reading abilities and printed nonverbal language during a seven months period.

The following section aims at presenting the description and analysis of some applied activities.

4 ANALYSIS

This research was divided in three moments. The first moment attempted on students' knowledge related to reading comprehension ability and grammar. The second moment focused on analyzing students' reaction in to a comic strip (based on ENEM objectives) after being exposed to reading strategies and have studied the basic English Language tenses (Simple Present, Simple Past and Simple Future (*will and going to*)) and the third one focused on verifying students' capability of making an interpretation using a picture and some words related to "Pollution".

In this topic, I am going to use some activities in order to discuss (4.1) learners' English knowledge, (4.2) Nonverbal Language in EFL reading and (4.3) Students' reaction in relation to an activity that priory some ENEM objectives. The first activity aims at investigating students' knowledge in relation to reading comprehension ability through an article. The second activity was divided in two parts, the first part had as a main objective to analyze students' reaction in relation to the verbal language of a Monica's Gang Strip and the third part to see students' reaction in relation to both verbal and nonverbal language. The third activity aims at verifying students' reading ability development through a writing activity that consider the interpretation process as a sociocognitive act. (BERNHARDT, 1991)

4.1 Learners' English knowledge

The main objective of this research was to investigate how printed nonverbal language together with cognate words and inference strategy can help students in the construction of meaning and consequently improve their reading skills in English Language. As it is defended by Goodman (1976) *apud* Silveira (2005), readers can reconstruct meaning while reading according to their background knowledge which can be activated by cognate words. Before working with cognate words and inference strategy I gave an article to the students of the two classrooms entitled “English as a Global Language”, and a comprehension activity (with 6 questions in Portuguese) in order to verify mainly students’ reading comprehension abilities.

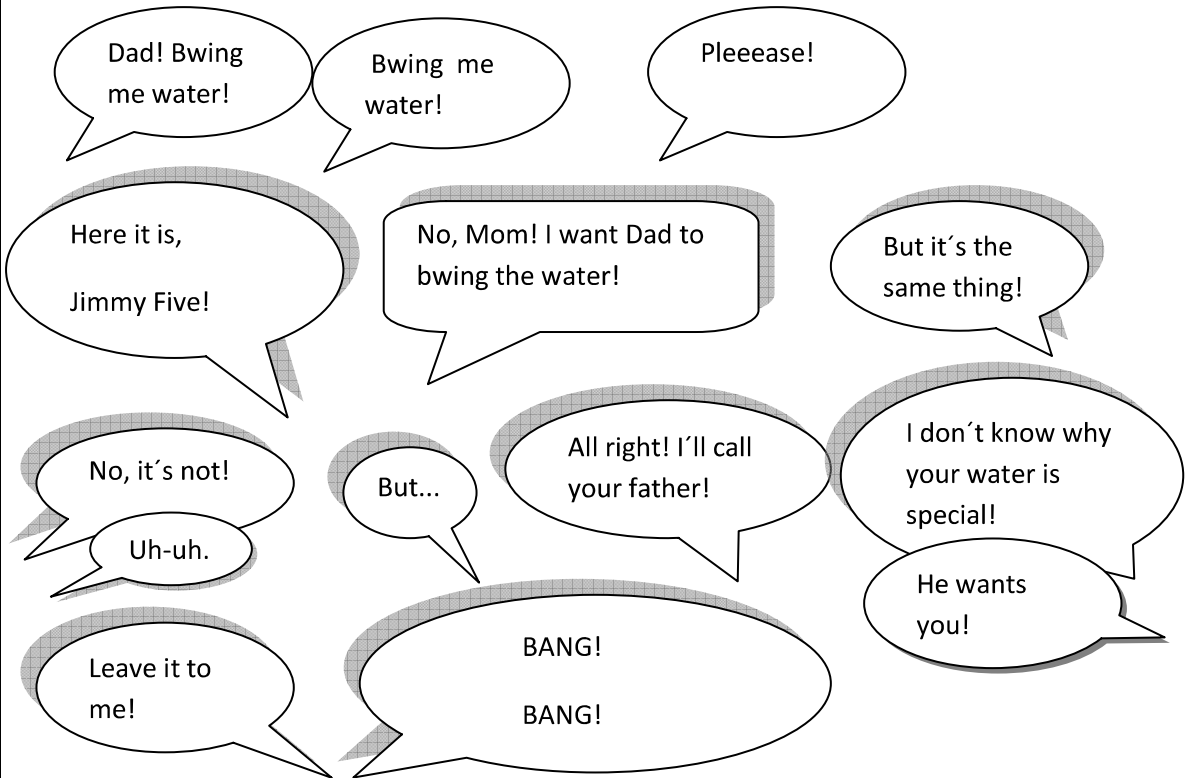
By the application of this activity it was perceived that almost all of the students did not answer half of the questions and only 2 students get coherent interpretations for all the six questions. Concluding, almost all of the students were not prepared to make a simple interpretation of a text.

4.2 Nonverbal Language

The second activity was divided in two moments: in the first moment, the students were provided with the verbal language of Monica’s Gang strip and in the second with both verbal and nonverbal language of this strip to verify students’ different interpretation. The main purpose of this activity was to make students aware of inference and prediction strategies importance. (BROWN, 2007)

(See in the following example the first moment of activity 2).

Activity 2 – first part



1. Qual a ideia principal do texto abaixo? Faça um breve resumo da história.
2. Quantas pessoas estão envolvidas no diálogo? Como chegou a essa conclusão?
3. Você pode inferir o porquê do uso da expressão “bang! Bang!” no final da história?

(Adapted by Larissa Oliveira)

According to students answer it was possible to see that many students got coherent and also different interpretations on question 3 that could not be considered wrong, especially because students did not have the nonverbal part of the activity yet.

In the second part of this activity the 14 students were provided with the nonverbal language of Monica's Gang comic strip in which they would analyze the comic strip and answer some interpretation questions.

(See in the following example the second part of the activity 2)

Activity 2 – second part

Leia e responda as questões abaixo:



(Comic strip available in: <http://inglesenice.blogspot.com.br/2013/02/monicas-gang.html>)

1. Qual a ideia principal do texto? Faça um breve resumo da história.
2. Quantas pessoas estão envolvidas no diálogo? Como chegou a essa conclusão?
3. Analise o porquê do uso da expressão “bang! Bang!” no final da história?

As result it was noticed that almost all of them got coherent interpretations in relation to verbal and nonverbal language together.


4.3 Students’ reaction in relation to an activity that involves ENEM objectives

In the third analyzed activity, students were provided with a picture related to pollution. The main objective of this activity was to verify students’ abilities to make the reading from a nonverbal text. (See in the next page an example of the activity 3)

Activity 3:

Curso Pro-ENEM
 Coordenador: Faustino Moura
 Professora: Larissa Pereira
 Aluno (a): Lucas

According to the Picture below make a reading of it and write a text. Don't forget the title!



A Planeta pede socorro

O aquecimento global é uma consequência de alterações climáticas ocorridas no planeta. As causas do aquecimento global são muito pesquisadas pelos cientistas e o fenômeno é como um processo natural afirmando que a Planeta Terra está numa fase de transição natural em processo longo e dinâmico.

(Picture available in: http://areaprojecto8a.wikispaces.com/file/view/tipos_de_polui%C3%A7%C3%A3o.png/43751323/tipos_de_polui%C3%A7%C3%A3o.png)

Through the answers of this activity I could perceive students' interpretation progress, since by comparing the first applied activity in the beginning of the course with the last one the learners seemed more confident about reading comprehension. As PCNEM (2000, p. 32) points out, Foreign Language teaching might focus on developing many abilities, in which one of them is: "utilizar estratégias verbais e não-verbais para compensar as falhas, favorecer a efetiva comunicação e alcançar o efeito pretendido em situações de produção e leitura"¹⁵.

¹⁵ (My translation from Portuguese): "use verbal and nonverbal strategies in order to compensate failures, provide effective communication and achieve the intended effect in production and reading situations."

CONCLUSION

This work was worried in presenting the importance of nonverbal language in the process of meaning construction of the learners' reading comprehension. In order to help in students' text comprehension, nonverbal language (comic strips, pictures) was studied with the intention to build expectations, make inferences, predictions, by using also students' background knowledge as a nonverbal sign to comprehend the message.

According to the observed reality presented in the Pro-ENEM course, nonverbal Language seems to have an important contribution in the learners' reading performance. The interactive moment can function as a resource to keep the sharing of knowledge between teacher-student/student-student in order to put doubts out, and this could be noticed during the research. (Nikazm, 2008, p. 231)

Printed nonverbal language when complemented with written verbal one (cognate words and reading strategies) can help in students' reading abilities improvement, promoting an effective comprehension by using it as a pre-reading activity, for example, as it is pointed out by Aebersold and Field (2011).

Concluding, based on what I perceived in my analysis, nonverbal language might serve to not only complement oral communication, but it is also likely to appear as a complement to written texts and function as a primordial factor which contributes in students' reading ability development. The awareness concerning the importance of nonverbal language in reading might facilitate the leaning of a Foreign Language; helping to break the myths defended by the students' themselves, who says that: "I understand nothing from English".

RESUMO

O objetivo deste trabalho é analisar a importância da linguagem não verbal impressa (principalmente imagens relacionadas a tirinhas e artigos) no processo de construção de sentido no curso *Pro-ENEM*, durante atividades que priorizam a habilidade de leitura. Essa pesquisa é teoricamente ancorada por estudos da leitura e do ensino de inglês (BERNHARDT, 1991; GOODMAN, 1970 *apud* Silveira; BROWN, 2000, 2001, 2007; De Souza, 2003; DAVIES AND JONHS, 1983; PCNEM (2000); RUMELHART, 1997 *apud* Aebersold e Field, 2011) e em estudos da linguagem não verbal (AGUDELO, 2013; KOVALEK & CHICOSKI, 2008 *apud* Portugal e Araújo, 2013; KUSANAGI, 2005, NIKAZM, 2008; NÓBREGA, 2011, 2012). Com base em atividades aplicadas na pesquisa, a linguagem não verbal juntamente com a linguagem verbal (escrita) tem se mostrado um recurso interacional e efetivo no desenvolvimento da habilidade de leitura com alunos.

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