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"HELP SAVE THE ENDANGERED PACIFIC NORTHWEST TREE OCTOPUS FROM EXTINCTION":
Are 7th year students susceptible to fake news?

São Leopoldo
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> Dissertação apresentada como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Mestre em Linguística Aplicada, pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Linguística Aplicada da Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS).

> Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Dorotea Frank Kersch

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To the ones who once were my students, to the ones who are my students and to the one who will be my students. There is no greater satisfaction than to see you blossom.

To my parents, who have always encouraged my dreams, supporting me to accomplish them.

To Matheus, for being light in dark times.

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The aim of critical literacies is to help learners understand the ways things are constructed in the world by people's values and actions. Its assumption is that the world of learning is not simply a series of rules to be obeyed, facts to be learned and knowledge authorities to be followed. In textual terms, a critically literate person identifies relevant and powerful topics, analyses and documents evidence, considers alternative points of view, formulates possible solutions to problems and perhaps also tries these solutions, comes to their own conclusions and makes well-reasoned arguments to support their case (KALANTZIS; COPE, 2012, p.218).

ABSTRACT

Our fast-paced society requires schoolchildren to be skilled with the ability to identify online fake information in order not to be misled or influenced by the media and be capable of making well informed decisions. With this context in mind, this action research of a qualitative nature was developed with two groups of 7th year elementary schoolchildren from a private bilingual school (Portuguese-English) in Rio Grande do Sul (BR), during the remote learning period in English as a second language classes (ESL). Based on the theme *endangered animals*, the study seeks to verify if it is possible to develop critical media literacy in second language classes (L2) through interventions that challenge students to reflect about how to identify and investigate fake information. The study also aims at analyzing if the strategies developed during the interventions are employed in the creation of collective websites and what is the role of multimodal resources in students' interpretation of the theme endangered animals. The literature review is based on Literacy Studies (STREET, 1984, 1995; HEATH, 1983), Digital Literacies (DUDENEY, HOCKLY AND PEGRUM, 2013; JENKINS, 2009), Multiliteracies (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996), Critical Literacy (FREIRE, 1987; JANKS, 2013), Critical Literacy and L2 learning (JORDÃO; FOGAÇA, 2012); and Critical Media Literacy (KELLNER; SHARE, 2007, 2016; KERSCH; LESLEY, 2019). As for the methodology, firstly students analyze a hoax website, partly replicating the study of Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018); secondly, a series of activities was developed; and, finally, students created their own collective websites about endangered animal species. The activities intended to contextualize the theme, potentialize students' abilities to verify online information, and develop reading and writing skills in English. To analyze students' collective websites, the Transpositional Grammar for Multimodality Analysis Framework of Kalantzis and Cope (2021) was used. On the one hand, the initial results showed that students have major difficulties in checking the lack of veracity in the fake website. On the other hand, they have proficiently employed the learnings acquired throughout the interventions in the production of their collective websites, confirming the development of critical media literacy in L2. Finally, a framework for incorporating CML in L2 is proposed, with the purpose of helping L2 educators who are willing to develop criticality in their lessons.

RESUMO

Nossa sociedade acelerada e dinâmica exige que os alunos tenham habilidade para identificar informações falsas para que não serem enganados ou influenciados pela mídia e para que possam tomar decisões bem informadas. Considerando esse cenário, esta pesquisa-ação de natureza qualitativa interpretativista e pesquisa ação foi desenvolvida com duas turmas de 7º ano do ensino fundamental de uma escola privada bilíngue (português-inglês) no Rio Grande do Sul (BR), durante o período de aulas remotas nas aulas de inglês como segunda língua (ESL). Com base no tema *animais ameaçados de extinção*, o estudo busca verificar se é possível desenvolver o letramento midiático crítico nas aulas de segunda língua (L2) por meio de intervenções que desafiem os alunos a refletirem sobre como identificar e investigar informações falsas. O estudo também visa analisar se as estratégias desenvolvidas durante as intervenções são empregadas na criação de sites coletivos e qual o papel dos recursos multimodais na interpretação dos alunos sobre o tema animais em extinção. A revisão bibliográfica fundamenta-se em Estudos de Letramentos (STREET, 1984, 1995; HEATH, 1983), Letramentos Digitais (DUDENEY, HOCKLY AND PEGRUM, 2013; JENKINS, 2009), Multiletramentos (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996), Letramento Crítico (FREIRE, 1987; JANKS, 2013), Letramento crítico em L2 (JORDÃO; FOGAÇA, 2012); e Letramento Midiático Crítico (KELLNER; SHARE, 2007, 2016; KERSCH; LESLEY, 2019). Quanto à metodologia, inicialmente os alunos analisaram um site fraudulento, em parte replicando o estudo de Loos, Ivan e Leu (2018); em seguida, foi desenvolvida uma série de atividades; e, por fim, os alunos criaram seus próprios sites coletivos sobre espécies de animais ameaçadas de extinção. As atividades visaram a contextualizar o tema, potencializar as habilidades dos alunos em verificar informações online e desenvolver a leitura e a escrita na língua inglesa. Para analisar os sites coletivos dos alunos, foi utilizado o modelo Transpositional Grammar for Multimodality Analysis de Kalantzis e Cope (2021). Por um lado, os resultados iniciais mostraram que os alunos têm grandes dificuldades em verificar a falta de veracidade do site falso. Por outro lado, empregaram com proficiência os aprendizados adquiridos ao longo das intervenções na produção de seus sites coletivos, confirmando o desenvolvimento de letramento midiático crítico em L2. Por

fim, é proposto um framework para incorporação de LMC em L2, com o objetivo de auxiliar os educadores de L2 que desejam desenvolver a criticidade em suas aulas.

Palavras-chave: ESL alunos; letramento crítico em L2; letramento midiático crítico; informações online falsas; multimodalidade.

SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

Information is everywhere. It is on television, on news websites, on social media, on instant messaging apps, which makes information something easy to find and access, for most people. In some situations, we do not even have to search for it, information simply comes to us, through Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. The online era has brought us incredible advantages, however, as warned by the fairy tale character Rumpelstiltskin: "all magic comes with a price".

As the internet easily provides us information with a simple touch or click, the responsibility of selecting and analyzing this information comes along. If we are unaware of the downsides of this "magic" creation, we may pay its price, once information is not a synonym for knowledge. The so-called fake news, false information spread in order to mislead the reader, is an imminent threat to the entire society, and its propagation can cause real life damage. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021) has shown us the power of fake news. Anti-vaccine movements around the globe have grown stronger and we could see science being discredited over posts in social media. This complex scenario has proven that being able to tackle fake news is indeed a matter of life and death.

During the COVID-19 context, I[1] realized the assiduity of fake news when I came across the receipt of many of them through WhatsApp and Facebook, from one of the most respectable sources in my life: my mother. I was constantly being forwarded with updates on miracle remedies to cure the virus and conspiracy theories about its origins. From that moment on, I reserved time to question and research the veracity of those pieces of news, later informing my mother of the results I found, leaving her either disappointed or relieved.

The same way I was provoking my mother to question the information she received before sharing it, I realized I needed to encourage my students in the classroom to do the same. I have been working as an English language teacher in a private school with a bilingual curriculum (Portuguese/English) in Rio Grande do Sul, South of Brazil, for four years now. The bilingual curriculum at this school attends students from kindergarten (2 years old) to the 9th year of elementary school, giving

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[1]Throughout the enunciation of this thesis, the alternation between the first-person and the third-person perspective is made, considering that in action research there are personal insights from the researcher-teacher herself.

English lessons more time and importance if compared to monolingual curriculum schools. Students do not only have classes about English, but also in English, using the language as a tool to learn other contents, such as Science, Financial Education and Programming, which is the reality in many different classrooms as well, not exclusively in the ones with a bilingual syllabus. Therefore, for me, English classes were never solemnly about grammar and vocabulary, I always wanted to give meaning and purpose to my lessons.

I use my English classes as spaces to nurture discussions about the most varied topics with my students and provoke them to raise their voices and hear their peers in the process. The development of criticality with both younger and older students is made through activities that propose analysis of authentic materials, literature readings, debates, among several others. However, after several episodes with my mother and the frequent spread of fake news in Brazil and around the globe, I came to realize that besides the usual advice for which websites to use for research and the necessity to mention sources by the end of a research paper, not much was being done inside my classroom to directly develop critical media literacy (CML). For Kellner and Share (2007):

> Critical media literacy is an educational response that expands the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication, popular culture, and new technologies. It deepens the potential of literacy education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information, and power. Along with this mainstream analysis, alternative media production empowers students to create their own messages that can challenge media texts and narratives (KELLNER; SHARE, 2007, p. 2).

A bilingual curriculum widens the possibilities to teach beyond the specificities of the second language (L2), propitiating the development of criticality in all its spheres, especially regarding the consumption and production of online contents. The Internet can be an excellent ally for both teachers and students of a second language. It provides an endless number of authentic materials to be explored, mostly in the English language, but it is primordial to teach our students how to benefit from it.

Therefore, after reading the article *"Save the Pacific Northwest tree octopus": a hoax revisited. Or How vulnerable are school children to fake news,* written by Eugene Loos, Loredana Ivan and Donald Leu in 2018, I decided how I would start my

journey with the formal development of critical media literacy in two groups of 7th year of elementary school (12-13-year-olds) during the emergency remote learning model of classes due to the pandemic of COVID-19. Those insights were the motivation for this study that characterizes itself as qualitative interpretative and action research and seeks to answer the following research questions: **How do 7th year students in a bilingual context identify and check the (lack of) veracity on a hoax website with information invented in English, through a questionnaire about the website? Is it possible to see the development of critical media literacy in L2 as a result from the interventions made throughout the process of data collection?**

The general objectives of this research are as follows: a) To verify if it is possible to develop critical media literacy in L2 through interventions that challenge 7th year elementary schoolchildren from a bilingual school to reflect about how to identify and analyze fake information. b) To analyze if the strategies developed during the interventions are employed in the creation of a webpage, which compounds the collective websites created by both groups, informing about endangered animal species in Rio Grande do Sul and what is the role of multimodal resources in students' interpretation of the theme *endangered animals*. From these general objectives, three specific objectives are delimited: a) To analyze the responses of the hoax website interpretation questionnaire to understand which aspects of the website, such as written information, layout, videos, pictures, made the students identify its non-veracity or believe in it. b) To compare the results with those obtained in another research with the same purpose carried out with Dutch children of the same age in 2017. c) To apply the strategies used in the organization of the intervention activities to create a framework in order to help educators implement critical media literacy proposals in their second language classes.

In order to accomplish those objectives and answer the research questions, the two groups of 7th year elementary school students analyzed the fake website "Save the Pacific Northwest tree octopus" guided by a series of questions organized in the format of an online form. Before and after that, several activities were proposed to contextualize the groups of the topic *endangered animals*. These activities are thoroughly described in the methodology section. As a final product, in trios, the students researched about endangered animal species in Rio Grande do Sul,

organizing their findings in the format of a webpage, which composes the two collective websites created by the students in both classes.

This research is justified by the need to discuss the importance of literacy studies and new literacies. In this specific case, the importance of developing critical media literacy and critical literacy not only in the first language (L1) classes, but also in second language (L2) classes. The increasingly *online* reality of students highlights the necessity to be able to discern fact from fiction, and to critically analyze the sources used to consume and produce content on the Internet. Schools that offer bilingual curriculums propitiate the development of practices that encourage critical literacy and critical media literacy also in L2 classes, since the number of hours assigned to the target language is higher if compared to schools with monolingual curriculums. Furthermore, this study discusses a topic of current relevance, especially in Brazil, which is the so-called fake news, produced in the most diverse digital media in order to accomplish various purposes.

In the linguistic scope, students were able to expand and improve their vocabulary regarding endangered and/or extinct animal species. They also engaged in reading and comprehension activities, oral discussions to finally create, and not only consume, multimodal content for a website elaborated in the target language of the classes, henceforth, English.

Finally, as the research developed itself, it was possible to propose the creation of a framework to help educators incorporate critical media literacy practices in their L2 classes. The framework was created based on the path followed by the teacher-researcher of this paper during the interventions aiming at the development of critical media literacy in English as a second language teaching environment, discussing key points to be considered for the implementation of critical media literacy practices in L2 classes.

This master's thesis is organized as follows: Introduction, in which the study is presented, alongside with its research questions, objectives and justification; Literature Review, in which the main authors and concepts that support this study are discussed, including the concepts of literacy (STREET, 1984; HEATH, 1982); digital literacy (DUDENEY, HOCKLY, PEGRUM, 2013); multiliteracies (NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996); critical literacy (JANKS, 2013; FREIRE, 1987; LUKE, 2012); bilingualism (DE MEJÍA, 2002); critical literacy in L2 (JORDÃO, FOGAÇA, 2012); and critical media literacy (FUNK, KELLNER, SHARE, 2016; KERSCH; LESLEY, 2019).

The Literature Review is followed by the Data Analysis, consisting in the analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire about the hoax website, the analysis of the interventions proposed during the classes aiming at the development of critical media literacy in L2 and the final products created by the students resulting in two collective websites about endangered species of animals in Rio Grande do Sul. In section 5, a framework for the incorporation of critical media literacy practices in L2 classes is proposed, and, finally, the Final Remarks are made followed by the References.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopts a sociocultural perspective of second language teaching-learning. The dynamic society, in which we live surrounded by technology, demands different teaching strategies, crossing the frontiers of traditional education, not only in the first language (L1) classes but also in the second language (L2) ones. We believe that second language classes ought not to be exclusively about grammar, vocabulary and syntax of the target language, but they must be seen as opportunities to potentialize critical thinking and reflect on our duties as citizens of a globalized world. With a more meaningful teaching-learning process, students understand that it is not only about being able to communicate in another language, but learning lessons for life, reflecting on how to become a critical citizen in a world which holds so many uncertainties for the future.

2.1 A brief analysis of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory approach to Second Language Acquisition

Among the many language and social life theorists of the 20th century, one of them left remarkable contributions, which are still pertinent and relevant a century later. The psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky was born in the city of Orsha in ancient Belarus in 1896 and died on June 11, 1934 in Moscow. Vygotsky developed the sociocultural theory which approaches teaching, learning and human development with an overestimated concern to both social and personal interactions. The theory recognizes the importance of both cognitive and social aspects in the learning process of the individual.

According to Vygotsky[2] (2001), the human characteristics of a subject are neither established since their origins, nor defined by the environment, but they depend on the relations constructed by the interaction between the environment and the individual. Therefore, humans can transform themselves and the environment where they live through cultural and social experiences. Furthermore, the psychic functions arise from the direct relationship of the sociocultural context and the individual, that is, human development does not happen by chance, it happens in a culturally organized environment.

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[2] Originally published in 1934.

The Russian psychologist also emphasizes the cognitive importance of one's brain. According to Vygotsky (2001), this organ of the human body is considered to be a flexible, open, and highly plasticized system, which means that new experiences could or could not shape the brain internally throughout the individual's life. Thus, development occurs from the integration of the biological abilities given to the subject, such as their brain, along with culturally organized artefacts that mediate their thoughts.

The foundational principle of Vygotsky's theory is that "all specifically human psychological processes (so-called higher mental processes) are mediated by psychological tools such as language, signs, and symbols" (KARPOV; HAYWOOD, 1998, p. 27). In our social environments, the tools we use to make sense of the world are graphs, symbols, images and especially linguistic symbols. As for physical tools, the power relies in the action rather than in the structure, you need to know how to use a tool in order to use it at your service (LANTOLF, 2011). Mediation is central in sociocultural theory, once it is through the mediation of the inside (biologic) and the outside (social) that development occurs.

Although Vygotsky did not study the teaching-learning process of second languages per se, nor did he apply his experiments in adolescents or adults, focusing only on children, his studies can be applied to second language acquisition. The central thread conducting the sociocultural theory approach to second language acquisition (SCT-L2) relies on "[...] if and how learners develop the ability to use the new language to *mediate* (i.e., regulate or control) their mental and communicative activity" (LANTOLF, 2011, p.24).

There are some important points to be considered in the relation with mediation in Vygotsky's theory. Firstly, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the interval between two zones: the potential zone and the real or effective zone. The first refers to the potential skills that a certain individual may achieve, while the second represents the knowledge already acquired by that individual. The ZPD is considered a collaborative mediation, in which the one who knows more helps the other who is not there yet to advance in their achievements.

Considering the second language teaching context, the ZPD represents the relation between teacher and student, doing things *with* the pupil and not *for* them and, also, between student and student, in which the one who knows more helps the other achieve their full potential (LANTOLF, 2011). Another form of mediation is self-

regulation, in which the individual regulates their mental activity when using the new language in a communicative situation. This process, therefore, is characterized as individual, once it occurs inside one's mind. For Vygotsky (2001), it was through mediation that the dialogical relations played an important role in human's development.

2.2 Literacy, digital literacy and multiliteracies

Literacy is present in all aspects of our lives; due to its wide scope the term is difficult to define. The traditional approach to the term referred to the abilities of reading and writing of the individuals. Later, Street (1984) expands the discussion on the nature of literacy focusing not only on the acquisition of reading and writing skills, but rather considering literacy as a social practice. That is, in addition to being able to read and write, being literate involves the application of these skills in the social sphere, using reading and writing to act in the world.

In Brazil, the term literacy emerged in the mid-1980s, when several researchers were working with written language practices. The scholars realized they were lacking a concept that also considered the sociocultural aspects of the uses of reading and writing. It was necessary to have a term that could represent more than simply the acquisition of the technology of reading and writing. From that moment, researchers began to deepen the term, expanding the abilities of decoding and writing. According to Kleiman (2014), literacy is not a method, but it is related to the individual's immersion in the world of writing.

Furthermore, Soares (2001) claims there are two main dimensions of literacy: individual and social. According to the author, the individual dimension refers to personal reading and writing skills of each subject, whereas in the social dimension, literacy is understood as a cultural phenomenon that includes the most diverse demands and social activities in which reading and writing are involved.

According to Kleiman (2014), due to the wide coverage and variation of the types of studies that fall into this domain, we can perceive the complexity of the concept. For the author, it is in everyday life that both oral and written practices are acquired. Thus, we can define literacy as a set of social practices that use writing as a symbolic system in specific contexts, for specific purposes.

Considering literacy as a social phenomenon, Street introduces the term *literacy practices* in 1984, developing and improving it as time went by. The author claims that literacy practices are "pitched at a higher level of abstraction and referring to both behavior and conceptualizations related to the use of reading and/or writing" (STREET, 1995, p.162). For the author, literacy practices are the broader cultural conception of how determined cultural contexts think about reading and writing. We constantly incorporate literacy practices in our daily routines; however, each cultural context performs them according to their own reality and particularities.

Within literacy practices are the *literacy events,* which are defined by Heath (1983, p. 249) as the "occasions in which the talk revolves around a piece of writing […]". Literacy events are regulated by social interactions, and the rules established for those social interactions regulate the amount of talk about a written piece. They define internal ways for oral language to interpret, interact, extend or deny the written material (HEATH, 1982). Thus, literacy practices are what individuals do with their literacies in the social sphere, whereas literacy events are the diverse and varied situations that compose the practices and derive from them.

To consider literacy as a social practice means it integrates daily life chores, such as the understanding of advertisements, reports, journalistic articles, among many other genres present in the most varied platforms and contexts. In this scenario, literacy is essential for the understanding of the world and, most importantly, for performing in it. For this reason, Kleiman (2014) states that the social practices are always situated, which means that the resources mobilized, the ways of carrying out the activity and the materials used will be chosen according to the characteristics and objectives of each practice.

It seems almost impossible to detach literacy from the social sphere, once that even the ones who did not have formal education interact with literate practices on a daily basis. Taking a bus, going shopping, and interpreting traffic signs are just a few examples of the constant presence of literacy in our lives outside school. Street (1995) suggests that the conceptualization of literacy should focus on the community and not isolated in schools. The author recognizes that the concepts of literacy derive not only from the schools, but from wider ideological and cultural patterns surrounding the communities. In agreement with Street (1995), Kleiman (2014) states that the social practices are always situated, as stated before. Therefore, the main goal of literacy at school is not only to teach the abilities to read and write in a certain

language, but to interact with different texts in our social lives, using the readings and writings from inside the classroom to act not only linguistically but also socially outside school. We use those abilities in life to interact with others.

The advances in technology have modified the way people communicate and interact with one another; this scenario of constant transformations has fostered and deepened the debates around the term *literacy*, causing it to cross the frontiers of decoding a linguistic code. It is time to include the screens in the process of developing literate students, notice that we are not suggesting the exclusion of analogic artefacts, but rather the addition and encompassing of the digital ones. Actually, language is 'powered up' by digital media, as observed by Gee and Hayes (2011), once the digital context offers countless possibilities to their users, especially regarding the variety of texts available at their disposal. Therefore, we need to incorporate the concept of digital literacy in our classes, considering that:

> [it] is even more powerful and empowering than analogue literacy. We need to level up our teaching and our students' learning accordingly. For our language teaching to remain relevant, our lessons must encompass a wide variety of literacies which go well beyond traditional print literacy. To teach language solely through print literacy is, in the current era, to short-change our students on their present and future needs (DUDENEY, HOCKLY, PEGRUM, 2013, p. 3).

Literacy has a fundamental role in students' lives: to develop their abilities to interact and perform with reading and writing practices within social contexts. Moreover, when it comes to second language learning, digital literacy plays an important role, it teaches students to use digital artefacts adequately, in order to potentialize their learnings. It is not simply about teaching students how to use and manage a computer or access an online dictionary for translation. More than that, it is regarding the countless possibilities of discovery and creation those digital artefacts can provide, serving as a tool to enhance students' learning of a second language. Teaching digital literacy must be about using technology in favor of our students, with responsibility and, most importantly, with purpose. The digital era has been modifying the ways in which we read, write, and interact with texts, in both L1 and L2, as a result, the term literacy had to be expanded along the way.

Considering the rapid worldwide transformation in communication, the meaning attributed to the term literacy has become deictic, once that the literacies we learned yesterday, might not be sufficient to perform in today's society. The arrival of

new technologies has directly impacted our social organization; consequently, one may encounter difficulties in performing certain activities which once were primarily based on static technologies. Our contexts have changed, and new literacies are constantly required from us (LEU, 1997).

In 1996, a group of American, English and Australian researchers gathered in the city of New London in the United States of America to discuss the changing social environment of teachers and students and a new approach to literacy pedagogy. Among the scholars present in the meeting there were names such as Mary Kalantzis, Bill Cope, Allan Luke, James Cook, Gunther Kress, Norman Fairclough and others. All of them shared the interest in language and linguistics and the desire to reshape the singular status of literacy. This encounter resulted in the manifest of The New London Group about *multiliteracies.*

According to The New London Group (1996), 'mere literacy' is primarily focused on language and its specifications, it is conceived as a stable and singular system of teaching based on rules, prioritizing the correct usage of language. In contrast to that literacy as a singular noun, they propose the *pedagogy of multiliteracies*, which considers different modes of meaning beyond language itself.

The term multiliteracies was used for two main reasons, the first one is related to the "[...] increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on" (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996, p. 64). Considering the rapid and constant reshaping of language caused by the new communication media, having only one set of standards and skills to constitute literacy is insufficient (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996). Although the manifesto was written in 1996, the authors already perceived the necessity to discuss literacy with a plural approach. They acknowledged the multimodality of texts and the various meaning-making resources available besides words in a written or printed text.

The second reason for choosing the term 'multiliteracies' is concerned with the "realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness. Dealing with linguistic differences and cultural differences has now become central to the pragmatics of our working, civic, and private lives" (THE NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996, p.64). With the advances in our global society, we are now more connected than ever before; consequently, we are closer to other cultures and realities, which reshaped the very nature of language learning. As The New London Group (1996)

claims, literacy educators and students must be active designers of the future, acknowledging their importance and responsibility in causing effective social change. Therefore, the prefix 'multi' is related to the multiplicity of languages and media found in the most varied texts and the reality of culture multiplicity and diversity in which we live.

Reading and writing are necessary skills for all citizens, and the reading of multimodal texts can improve one's critical comprehension of the world. According to Rojo and Moura (2019, p.11, my translation): "When dealing with texts - written, printed or digital - we no longer have only written signs. All the modalities of language or semiosis invade them and mix with them without the slightest ceremony." Nowadays, most texts are composed of videos, images, charts, in addition to words, which requires from the reader the ability to read different aspects of the text, activating their previous knowledge in order to comprehend the text as a unity.

Therefore, multiliteracy is necessary to understand and value the most varied reading practices introduced by contemporary society. Those practices occur both inside and outside the classroom through a vast array of platforms, whether analog or digital, that is, in a multi-semiotic form (ROJO, 2009). As an example of the variety of these practices, the Web 2.0 invites their users to be more than passive readers, offering the opportunity to engage as active participants and collaborators, through the creation of contents for blogs, forums and websites. It means that this contemporary scenario demands from our students a considerably developed set of skills.

> At the heart of this complex of skills is an ability to engage with digital technologies, which requires a command of the digital literacies necessary to use these technologies effectively to locate resources, communicate ideas, and build collaborations across personal, social, economic, political and cultural boundaries. In order to engage fully in social networks, gain employment in post-industrial knowledge economies, and assume roles as global citizens who are comfortable with negotiating intercultural differences, our students need a full suite of digital literacies at their disposal (DUDENEY, HOCKLY, PEGRUM, 2013, p. 2).

As stated in the quotation above, digital literacies are at the core of the abilities required from our students in the 21st century, as well as many other skills that scholars, governments and employers consider essential to succeed in our actual society. Among those abilities are creativity, flexibility, collaboration, autonomy and critical thinking. We believe that promoting literacy as a social practice is the starting

point for the development of those skills, along with the promotion of multiliteracy so that our students can be competent to consume and produce content in both analog and digital contexts. Furthermore, with the appropriation of digital literacies our students will be much more prepared to act and interact in the digital era, summing their skills as multiliterate individuals to effectively read and write on digital platforms.

Besides mastering technological tools and the purposes they can fulfill; educators must be aware of the transformation these tools will provoke in their classrooms. As Jenkins (2009) reminds us, the computer needs a user in order to function, it does nothing by itself. Most children and adolescents already know how to operate a computer, a tablet or a smartphone. The reality of remote learning classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, has evidenced students' technological abilities. Moreover, the majority of them are engaged with digital media, such as social media, online games and applications. Consequently, implanting "[...] digital technologies into the classroom necessarily affects our relationship with every other communications technology, changing how we feel about what can or should be done with pencils and paper, chalk and blackboard, books, [and] films [...]" (JENKINS, 2009, p. 8). Thus, technology will impact the design and conduction of classes and management of analog artefacts as well, especially when considering that the students of the 21st century have a different cognitive and social profile if compared to previous generations, which demands new resources and teaching strategies to ensure effective learning.

Our nature as human beings is social, we are supposed to socialize with one another and our learning process is enhanced in the presence of others. Having said that, Jenkins (2009) introduces the concept of *participatory culture*, which is defined as one:

1.With relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement;

2.With strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others;

3.With some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices;

4.Where members believe that their contributions matter;

5.Where members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created) (JENKINS, 2009, p. 7).

The concept of participatory culture shifts the perception of literacy as an individual process to a collaborative one. The participation of all members of the community is not mandatory, but all of them must feel encouraged to do so, believing that their productions will be valued and respected by that community (JENKINS, 2009). Those communities are formed within different online realities, such as classrooms, online gaming platforms, social media, and they provide a sense of security and acceptance, once the participants relate to one another at a certain level. The concept of participatory culture demonstrates that digital artefacts can be extremely collective and collaborative, as portrayed by the global pandemic of COVID-19, for instance. In spite of the physical distance, a sense of togetherness was created among many school communities and families during these difficult times. A reality that was only possible because of the usage of several technological artefacts, and, most importantly, how they were incorporated in the lessons once that interactivity belongs to technology, while participation is a cultural act (JENKINS, 2006), and the combination of both can result in marvelous achievements.

More than promoting activities to develop digital literacies which are frequently associated with multiliteracies, it is essential to create possibilities for students to work collaboratively, since collaboration is one of the most important competencies to be developed in the 21st century citizens. We see literacy as a social act, thereby, our students need to live it as a collective process as well. According to Jenkins (2009), participation intersects with educational practices, community life and citizenship. "Our goals should be to encourage youth to develop the skills, knowledge, ethical frameworks, and self-confidence needed to be full participants in contemporary culture" (JENKINS, 2009, p.8). This statement corroborates with the fact that our classes must be different from the ones we had in the very recent past.

The remote learning context caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has challenged us (educators) to reappraise the objectives of our classes and the way in which we incorporate digital artefacts into our pedagogical proposals. More than ever, we could see the importance of using technology with purpose while seeking

strategies of collaboration to approximate students and teachers who were physically distant.

Having said that, the new literacies discussed so far, alongside with the concept of participatory culture, must be accompanied by one skill in particular: criticality. In the era of social media and fake news, simply being capable of seeking and consuming content is insufficient, students must be conscious of the necessity to critically analyze and question the information at their disposal. Given that, the next subheading is dedicated to the discussion of critical literacy.

2.3 Critical literacy

Observing the rapid social, technological, and economical changes our society has been exposed to in the past few decades, added to a global pandemic caused by COVID-19 as the latest, the future being constructed for children and young adults seems more unclear than ever before. According to Dudeney, Hockly and Pegrum (2013, p. 2): "We are preparing students for a future whose outlines are, at best, hazy. We do not know what new jobs will exist. We do not know what new social political problems will emerge." Thereupon, more than interacting with multimodal texts and using technology wisely, we want our students to become critical citizens, capable of being agents of change within their communities, pursuing social justice and equity in their deeds, regardless of the scenario they might find.

However, this task is extremely complex. Janks (2013) asks some of the questions we as educators should ask ourselves daily:

> How can education contribute to a world in which our students at all levels of education become agents for change? How can we produce students who can contribute to greater equity, who can respect differences and live in harmony with others, and who can play a part in protecting the environment? (JANKS, 2013, p. 227)

A critical approach to education can be an effective path towards the questions previously asked. Critical literacy enables students to read not only the word but also the world (FREIRE; MACEDO, 2005), identifying relations of power, identity, access to knowledge and resources. It is about reshaping the world through reading and writing (JANKS, 2013).

Critical literacy implies real interaction between the texts we read and write, and our social contexts, it empowers students so they can see the interconnectivity among words, actions and effective changes. According to Luke (2004, p.5): "The term critical literacy refers to the use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life." The school must prepare students to be critical readers of the world, understanding their role as agents of transformation; respecting diversity of cultures and opinions, and constantly shaping and reshaping their personal beliefs.

The table created by Janks (2013), shows the interdependence of factors regarding critical literacy:

Table 1- The interdependent model of critical literacy

Power without access	This maintains the exclusionary force of powerful discourses and powerful practices.
Power without diversity	Power without diversity loses the ruptures that produce contestation and change.
Power without design or redesign	The deconstruction of powerful texts and practices, without reconstruction or redesign, removes human agency.
Access without power	Access without a theory of power leads to the naturalisation of powerful discourses without an understanding of how these powerful forms came to be powerful.
Access without diversity	This fails to recognise that difference fundamentally affects who gets access to what and who can benefit from this access. History, identity and value are implicated in access.
Access without design or redesign	This maintains and reifies dominant forms without considering how they can be transformed.
Diversity without power	This leads to a celebration of diversity without any recognition that difference is structured in dominance and that not all discourses/genres/languages/literacies are equally powerful.
Diversity without access	Diversity without access to powerful forms of language ghettoises students.
Diversity without design or redesign	Diversity provides the means, the ideas, the alternative perspectives for reconstruction and transformation. Without design, the potential that diversity offers is not realised.
Design/redesign without power	Designs or redesigns that lack power are unable to effect change.
Design/redesign without access	This runs the risk of whatever is designed remaining on the margins.
Design/redesign without diversity	This privileges dominant forms and fails to use the design resources provided by difference.

Source: Janks (2013, p. 226)

The table organized by Janks (2013) invites us to reflect upon the various facets of critical literacy and their interconnectivity. Power, access, diversity, and design/redesign are at the center of discussion when analyzing the principles of critical literacy. The relation of language and power must be discussed with students who need to have access to as many and most diversified sources of information available, in order to understand different points of view. Once they have access to different contents, they have the chance to design/redesign discourses according to their own identities and knowledge of the world. Finally, throughout this process, diversity must be respected and celebrated, once that critical literacy is about authentic thinking and construction of one's perception of the world. The attribution of meaning to the world must happen without the imposition of perspectives provided by powerful institutions with the purpose of controlling and dominating minority populations.

Thus, to develop critical literacy with the students is to show them the power of language and the ideologies intrinsic in all discourses. It is about power, identity, designing and redesigning the world (JANKS, 2013). For this reason, critical literacy must be present in L2 classes as well, improving students' abilities to read beyond the words, identifying the voices behind the contents in their textbooks, in the websites they access in the target language, in the songs they listen to. This is especially relevant when we perceive the teaching of L2 as being directly connected to the cultural aspects embedded in those languages, and not simply as grammar rules and vocabulary assembled in a textbook.

Although the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire did not use the term critical literacy per se, he advocated for a dialogical and critical approach to education, subsequently many of his claims are seen as foundations for critical literacy. Freire, who spoke from a poststructuralist perspective, grounded his approach to education in Marxist philosophies. According to Freire (1987), traditional schools were based on a *banking model of education*, in which the subjects have the consciousness of the world, but do not have the world inside of them. Thus, from this perspective, the teachers are the ones responsible for filling the students' minds through deposits of knowledge. Educators perceive the students as passive subjects expecting to receive content about the world, ignoring students' previous knowledge, realities, opinions, and identities.

The work of Freire criticized binary relationships of power, such as educator and learner, oppressor and oppressed. Freire (1987) claimed that the more adapted to the banking model of education, the more educated students are for a world dominated by the oppressors, who discourages authentic thinking for the sake of maintaining control over the oppressed ones. For this reason, the author defended the authentic liberation of people, through a humanitarian education instead of making deposits of contents in one's mind. This process could be possible by the "[...] praxis, which implies in the action and reflection of men about the world in order to transform it" (FREIRE, 1987, p.93, my translation). In this sense, both learner and teacher are learning with each other in a dialogical relation, mediated by the world around them.

Reading and writing cannot be seen as simply technical mastery of the written language, but rather as a means to propitiate and expand human agency upon society (FREIRE, 1987). As educators, we must constantly question ourselves whether we are simply depositing content in our students' minds, or indeed nurturing an environment that embraces their identities and their realities, fostering criticality and inquiry in their educational path. In critical pedagogies, learning serves the purpose of promoting significant change in the world, with students being the agents of this change. Thus, Freire's legacy echoes in our modern society, considering that:

> One of the most important tasks of critical educational practice is to make possible the conditions in which the learners, in their interaction with one another and with their teachers, engage in the experience of assuming themselves as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons; dreamers of possible utopias, capable of being angry because of a capacity to love. Capable of assuming themselves as subjects because of the capacity to recognize themselves as objects. All this, while bearing in mind that the assumption of oneself does not signify the exclusion of others. Because it is the otherness of the not-I or the you that makes me assume the radicality of the I (FREIRE, 1998, p.45-46).

This view of education requires from educators a distinctive philosophy of teaching, completely different from the traditional banking model of education described by Freire (1987) and previously discussed. In order to change the methodology of the classes, teachers need to experience this transformation which comes from within. A critical approach to education happens beyond the contents established by the curriculum, it involves seeing students as active agents in their learning process, embracing the fact that education must be dialogical, which means

that teachers learn with their students as much as the students learn with their teachers.

When it comes to critical literacy, the role of the educator is to encourage learners to interpret a given text according to their identities and experiences, respecting and fostering their findings and opinions. The teacher must provide moments of collective negotiation and renegotiation of meanings through language. Students must be challenged to constantly revisit their assumptions, respecting and embracing different points of view. In order to develop and nurture a critical classroom, educators must give voice to their students, inviting them to see the implications their opinions can cause in the world outside school. Thereby:

> Critical literacy has an explicit aim of the critique and transformation of dominant ideologies, cultures and economies, and institutions and political systems. As a practical approach to curriculum, it melds social, political, and cultural debate and discussion with the analysis of how texts and discourses work, where, with what consequences, and in whose interests (LUKE, 2012, p.5).

Teaching our students with the lenses of critical literacy pedagogies empowers them to see beyond the written words, it makes them question what they read and write, perceiving the power within discourses and the actions they enable. To consider language as discourse implies in the understanding of language practices as responsible for assigning meanings to the world. It signifies the things we see and the ones we do not see. It assigns meaning to what happens around us and in the world. It means that a simple modification in the discourse practice can reconfigure the way we read the world and consequently build our identities (GEE, 1986).

Schools have the crucial role of educating the citizens of tomorrow, in spite of the uncertainty of the future. Undoubtedly, reading and writing are essential abilities in the formation of those citizens, ensuring their integral participation in society. However, as stated by Luke (2012), it is not only about mastering reading and writing, but also about being able to critically analyze discourses and the dominant ideologies they carry. Besides that, it is expected from them to produce texts that can establish a meaningful dialogue with the reality outside the school walls with social purposes, causing real impact in their community.

2.4 Critical literacy in L2: teaching English as a second language in bilingual curriculums

The dynamic, technological and fast-paced society in which we live today requires our children and adolescents to have skills different from those required in past decades. Aligned with this context, bilingual schools have gained space globally and especially in the Brazilian scenario, offering students a different perspective of the teaching-learning process.

A possible proposal for bilingual education consists of adding one more language to the students' repertoire. For instance, in Brazil, where the majority of the population speaks Portuguese as a first language, a bilingual education means that the student will be instructed also in a second language, such as English or German. Thus, it configures a bilingual education of choice (CAVALCANTI, 1999), enrichment (HORNBERGER, 1991) or elite (DE MEJÍA, 2002). These terms refer to a specific type of bilingual education that promotes the use of two or more languages of international prestige.

Furthermore, bilingual education can be defined as any school educational system in which, at a given time and period, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and delivered in at least two languages (HAMERS; BLANC, 2000). This context, according to Megale (2018), propitiates the development not only of the students' language skills in the second language, but also their academic vocabulary, and formal content learning stipulated by the curriculum of the school. The L2 is used as a tool to teach the most diverse contents from different school subjects.

In addition to academic skills, bilingual education propitiates the broadening of the students' worldview, since its learning process incites contact with other languages, cultures and realities. Contemporary society in its dynamism requires apprentices to be resilient, flexible to adaptations and critical when selecting contents, considering the vast array of information at their disposal. Thus, learning a second language can increase students' possibilities of access to information, culture and entertainment.

In Brazil, since 2020, the teaching of English is compulsory from the 6th year of elementary school, as proposed by the National Common Curriculum Framework (2017) document, the official national curriculum with the mandatory subjects to be

offered by all schools. The selection of the English language is justified by the document as being the current *language of knowledge*, considering its international and global character. Moreover, the English language is seen as necessary to prepare students for the job market while facilitating the access to information, culture and entertainment outside Brazilian borders.

In spite of the recognized importance of the English language, its teaching frequently does not reflect its status in public schools. The reality of English teaching in public institutions in Brazil is far from ideal and it faces multiple challenges, such as the disparity of English proficiency among students within the same classroom, the low English proficiency level of most teachers, and the lack of continuing education for English teachers. Consequently, it is frequent to see teachers proposing repetitive tasks focusing on grammatical aspects of the language only, resulting in the rare promotion of activities that develop listening and speaking abilities. As a result, students often feel demotivated in English classes, which directly impacts their learning process of the target language.

The teaching of English in most Brazilian public schools is still devoted to the form of the language, the classes are mostly concerned with grammar and vocabulary exercises, being completely disconnected from the reality of the students and the possibilities of access the English language could offer them. The teaching of a L2 should not be distant from the methods used in L1 classes, the promotion of debates, analysis of texts and discourses, exploration of movies, videos, and journalistic articles can and should be present in English classes, attributing real meaning and relevance to those classes. The level of proficiency of the students is indeed an issue, but an issue that can be overcome. For authors like Jordão and Fogaça (2012), the L1 has a fundamental role in promoting meaning to L2 classes, and it can be used to express deeper opinions that require a higher level of proficiency. The use of Portuguese at specific times can help students understand English classes as a social practice of construction and reconstruction of meanings. The first language can be a helpful ally in developing a second language, using what students already know to make associations in order to learn the yet unknown.

Thus, regardless of the level of English proficiency of the students, the promotion of activities that involve critical literacy is of great importance, so that, according to Freire (1987), students are able to identify the intrinsic ideologies in a text as well as being aware of how these ideologies formulate the author's concepts

and their choices of words. To this end, English language classes can be an opportunity for the development not only of the L2 and its specifications, but also of the critical literacy of students. In this perspective, according to Jordão and Fogaça (2012), critical literacy in L2 can teach students much more than the meaning of new words, but also legitimize and value new ways of interpreting the reality in which they live, a reality that can be collectively accepted and reproduced, or questioned and modified.

Since English is considered a prestige language in Brazil, with the belief that English as a second language speakers will have more opportunities in their future, especially regarding the job market, many families have opted to enroll their children in bilingual schools. The market of bilingual schools has significantly increased in Brazil in the last decade. Despite the fact that bilingual schools with Portuguese-English curriculums are still the majority in Brazil, German and Spanish also appear as target languages in bilingual institutions. However, most of those schools belong to the private market, whereas public bilingual schools are still represented by a discrete number. Therefore, the actual bilingual education concept adopted in Brazil is the elite bilingualism (DE MEJÍA, 2002), benefiting a small fraction of the population. This scenario reinforces the importance of the development of critical literacy in privileged contexts, once it can raise awareness to the world's diversity and inequalities, inspiring students to question and intervene in this reality.

Considering the exponential growth of bilingual schools in Brazil, the National Council of Education has developed in 2020 the National Curricular Guidelines for Bilingual Education with the purpose of regulating bilingual education in the country. It is important to reinforce that although approved, by the time this research was being written, the guidelines were not yet homologated by the Ministry of Education, which is expected to happen soon. This document is extremely necessary considering it standardizes the requirements for bilingual curriculums, once that many institutions have been offering different proposals in their syllabus and labeling themselves as bilingual institutions.

The National Curricular Guidelines for Bilingual Education address issues such as the mandatory academic education of the teachers who work with bilingual curriculums, the amount of time that must be dedicated to the L2, and the appropriate nomenclature to be used. The document also suggests methodologies to be adopted in the development of bilingual classes, such as the Content and Language

Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, which aims at teaching different subjects such as Mathematics, History, and Science while teaching the target language (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE EDUCAÇÃO (CNE), [2020?]). By this perspective, students learn new contents through the L2 while learning the specifications of the language, such as grammar and vocabulary. The school where this research was conducted, adopts the CLIL methodology in their bilingual curriculum. In addition to the time reserved for the English language classes students learn Science, Global Perspectives, Financial Education and Programming in English.

In a world that has been experiencing the effects of globalization in a daily basis, it is understandable the increased interest in bilingual education. Moreover, there are studies (BIALYSTOK, 2001, 2011; CARMEL et al., 2013; IANCO-WORRALL, 1972) showing the cognitive, social and economic benefits of learning a second language from an early age. Among those benefits are the ability to comprehend abstraction more easily; higher development of the metalinguistic conscience; higher capacity to develop critical thinking and creativity. Besides that, bilingual students are exposed to different cultural aspects, assimilating different values and developing higher tolerance and acceptance to differences.

The reality of bilingual schools favors activities that develop critical literacy in English, both because of the extended number of classes dedicated to the English language per se and because of the subjects taught in English. However, regardless of the context of the school, bilingual or not, the development of critical literacy relies on the beliefs and strategies of the educator. In order to develop a critical classroom in second language classes, the teacher must be aware of the implications of this approach. The first thing to consider is the material selected to lay the foundation of these classes, according to Crookes and Lehner (1998, p. 320), in a critical L2 pedagogy, materials must serve a 'join goal', which means materials must simultaneously develop students' language abilities and make them aware of the social structures of the world. Consequently, those will be the two major outcomes of the classes with a critical pedagogy in L2: for learners to develop language and social skills.

For the deconstruction of texts and discourses to also happen in the L2, Jiménez and Gutiérrez (2019) claim that the agenda of those classes need to adopt authentic materials that are part of the students' daily lives. In this way, the materials can be used as analytical tools, proposing authentic reflections and debates in the

English language classroom, incorporating real meaning to the tasks, in agreement with Freire (1987), who claimed that motivation is promoted by tying the content of the lesson to the learners' life experiences.

In this perspective, English classes become a space to teach much more than grammatical rules and vocabulary. Teaching from the perspective of the new literacies requires a "redefined academic culture, that [is] less about acquiring, remembering and repeating subject content per se, and more about active participation in scholarly ways of doing and being" (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2008, p.11). Through critical literacy pedagogical proposals, students are challenged to reflect about the language they are learning and, as users of that language, they learn how to relate to it. The English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom can

> [...] raise students' perception of their role in the transformation of society, once it might provide them with a space where they are able to challenge their own views, to question where different perspectives (including those allegedly present in the texts) come from and where they lead to. By questioning their assumptions and those perceived in the texts, and in doing so also broadening their views, we claim students will be able to see themselves as critical subjects, capable of acting upon the world (JORDÃO; FOGAÇA, 2012, p.76).

Therefore, we believe that developing critical literacy in the ESL classes is not only possible, but necessary. Evidently that some scenarios facilitate and propitiate the engagement in critical literacy proposals, which is the case of bilingual curriculums that adopt English as an L2, offering an extended number of hours dedicated to English language classes and subject content classes in English. However, as previously discussed, in realities where the English proficiency level of students is lower, the first language, in our case being Portuguese, can be a helpful asset in developing students' criticality, broadening the perspective that English classes can only teach grammar and vocabulary. In this way, students will perceive the classes as more meaningful and relatable. Critical literacy in ESL classes can enhance students' critical view of the world, raising awareness of the ideologies intrinsic in texts and discourses, preparing them to act in their society, respecting and embracing diversity within it.

2.5 Critical media literacy

Nowadays, information is not only printed in books, offering a single point of view of facts and concepts, neither is the teacher considered the detainer of all knowledge, expected to deposit content in their students' minds, following the banking system of education as proposed by Freire (1987). In our contemporary society, students can seek information for themselves, considering different perspectives in order to construct their own, therefore reshaping the relation between students and knowledge.

In addition to critical literacy, it is necessary to consider the development of criticality when it comes to the production and consumption of contents in the digital sphere. In a reality in which information is easily accessed by many, critical media literacy (CML) presents itself not as a choice, but as an obligation, as pointed out by Kellner and Share (2007). Critical media literacy becomes essential for a participatory democracy, since the new technologies, the media-based market and several other factors have reshaped the world as we know it. Having said that, it is considered the definition of Kellner and Share (2007) of critical media literacy as a deepening of critical literacy that allows to critically analyze texts from the most varied media and their relations with the audience, information and power.

In order to begin our discussion on CML, we have to address the triad present since the beginning of the studies on the topic: media, ideologies and power. From 1930 to 1960, a group of researchers from the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Habermas, Horkheimer, Benjamin and Marcuse), associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, who applied Marxism to an interdisciplinary social theory, analyzed how popular culture and the new communication technologies were used to maintain certain ideologies and control society. In 1934, the Frankfurt group emigrated to the United States of America, escaping from German fascism, where they could see how the Nazis used the media available at the time, such as radio and film, to transmit their beliefs. The researchers could also conclude that the United States media transmitted capitalist ideologies and the perception of America as a dominant country (KELLNER, 1995).

From their studies, the Frankfurt theorists presumed that the audience is characterized as passive, regarding the reception of media messages. This view of the audience as passive was confronted by a group of scholars from the Centre for

Contemporary Cultural Studies from the University of Birmingham (Williams, Hoggart and Hall). The British scholars defended the role of the audiences as active, stating that they consume media rather than simply receive it. Later, in the 1980's, as women and scholars of color joined the group, they urged the expansion of the concept of ideology to include matters of race, gender and sexuality, once that the media included those representations in their narratives, spreading patriarchal, racist and heterosexist messages (KELLNER, 1995).

This short historical contextualization evidences the immense power of media in our lives since its arrival, playing an important role in global historical events that impacted our societies forever. After the rise of audience theory studies that perceived the audiences as active consumers of media, some scholars (BUCKINGHAM, 1993; GAUNTLETT; HILL, 1999) criticized the disregard of the heterogeneous nature of media consumption. For them, readers/viewers/users consume media in different ways according to their prior life experiences and realities. Thus: "Context is highly important and always influences messages, regardless of whether listeners/readers/viewers are aware of it" (FUNK; KELLNER; SHARE, 2016, p.5). The authors, (FUNK; KELLNER; SHARE, 2016), continue stating that it is vital to prepare our students to question the context in which texts are inserted in and their construction, in order to identify bias in news, for instance, and check the veracity of Internet postings. A message without context damages the ability one has to communicate with it.

The analysis of context in online contents is extremely important, especially considering the frequent and rapid dissemination of fake news currently occurring in social media. Generally, fake news can be defined as news without a factual basis, but which are presented as such (ALLCOTT; AGENTZKOW, 2017). More specifically, Brennen (2017) defines fake news as manufactured news that is manipulated so that it looks like credible news, but actually, it is produced with the intention of deceiving the interlocutor. Social media like Facebook, Twitter and instant messaging apps like WhatsApp help spread this news, as the veracity of the contents is often unconfirmed by the recipients previously to its dissemination.

Digital texts have introduced themselves with new potential, expanding the features of analog texts, once they can be *multimodal* (combining more than one format), *hyperlinked* (making a connection with other media outside the text itself), and *interactive* (allowing participation, remixing and sharing) (BEACH, 2009). The

new possibilities introduced by digital texts, make the creation of contents more sophisticated, consequently changing the relations with their audiences, and for many times increasing the difficulty to distinguish what is true from what is fake. Critical media literacy practices can help students distinguish fact, fiction and opinion. It can provide the necessary tools to empower learners to make their own critical analysis of multimodal texts, demystifying fake news and basing their discoveries in scientific proven facts.

Since texts have changed, broadening their possibilities, the questions one must ask in order to interpret both superficial and more profound meanings in texts must differ as well. In order to guide teachers and learners towards a critical path of inquiry, enabling the interrogation of any type of text, its medium, and the context surrounding it, Funk, Kellner and Share (2016) adapted six concepts and questions inspired on cultural studies and critical pedagogies. The authors based themselves in the work of numerous media educators summarized by the Center of Media Literacy in the United States of America (USA). With the objective of compiling those questions and concepts, figure below was created:

Figure 1- Critical media literacy questions' guide
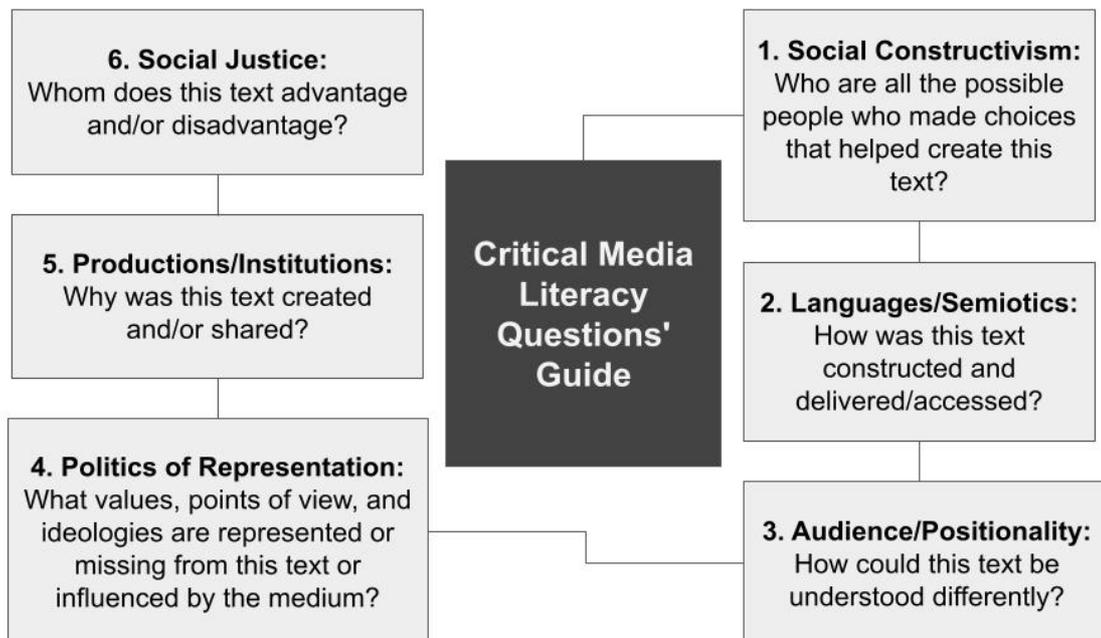
Source: Created by the author, adapted from Funk, Kellner and Share (2016, p.7)

The critical media literacy questions presented in Figure 1 reinforce the importance of analyzing texts from the most varied perspectives, trespassing the

language issues and moving towards a social and contextual analysis. As pointed out by Funk, Kellner and Share (2016, p.9): "CML pedagogy embraces education as a political act and connects education with democracy and social justice." Students must be aware that there is always an ideology intrinsic in any discourse, whether obvious or not. Neutrality is an extremely difficult concept to be achieved, if not impossible:

> The myth of the neutrality of education -- which leads to the negation of the political nature of the educational process, regarding it only as a task we do in the service of humanity in the abstract sense -- is the point of departure for our understanding of the fundamental differences between a naive practice, an astute practice, and a truly critical practice (FREIRE; MACEDO, 2005, p.38).

Students must be granted skills that allow them to identify the real intentions in media texts, and one of the only paths to accomplish this is through critical practices. It is the role of L1 and L2 teachers to develop students' CML using language as a tool. Nonetheless, criticality ought to intersect all subject content classes since the beginning of one's educational life. When promoting activities that develop critical literacy in both L1 and L2, the importance of providing and analyzing authentic materials (JIMÉNEZ; GUTIÉRREZ, 2019) is evident. It is also necessary to consider the diversity of these materials, expanding the genres and sources. Using authentic materials for analysis is feasible, especially when the L2 is English, since there is a wide array of journalistic websites, magazines, videos and movies easily available in the language. Those materials can enrich the classes, making students reflect about the real issues of the world, inspiring them to act towards a more equitable society. Critical media literacy is not only an academic skill, but a competence for life:

> As educators we have to make clear to students that they are being conditioned by media culture and that there are layers to this culture that involve tailored advertising platforms, predatory websites and search engines. This requires a multiliteracy pedagogy that promotes equity and access that hosts and heals (KERSCH; LESLEY, 2019, p.40).

In the digital era, where there are many opinionated people constantly sharing their thoughts in social media or trying to convince people to buy products they do not actually need, critically consuming online content is empowering. When students perceive the great role that media plays in our lives, making the powerful more powerful, and disseminating ideologies through discourses, they will be capable of

formulating their own opinions and beliefs, creating their own discourses based on their identities and personal experiences. Part of the responsibility in achieving this objective belongs to schools and, thereby, educators. Once we achieve that, we will be one step closer to social equity and justice.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This session is intended to present the methodology used for the development of this research, the context in which the research was conducted, in addition to the description of the way in which the data was collected and analyzed. In this section, it is detailed the process that both teacher and students experienced when analyzing information from a website fabricated only with false information, the interventions proposed by the teacher, and the final moment of creation of the students' collective websites.

Furthermore, the interventions performed by the teacher-researcher in order to collect data are thoroughly described, including the study carried out by Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018), whose methodology was partially replicated in our research. Moreover, in this section, the format of analysis of the final products of this research, the websites collectively created by the students are presented. One webpage from each collective website was randomly chosen for analysis. For ethical reasons, students' names were omitted, as specified in the TALE (Termo de Assentimento Livre e Esclarecido) and TCLE (Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido) documents. Since the beginning of the research, a field journal was kept in order to detail the data collection process and to record information about the research and its participants.

3.1 Research method

The selection of the research method employed says a lot about the research itself and also about the researcher who develops it. Thus, it is believed that action research is the most appropriate methodological support for this qualitative research, related to interventions made by the teacher in order to develop critical media literacy in English as a second language classes. In addition, the classes designed with the purpose of collecting data were conducted by the teacher, who is also the researcher in this study. This fact corroborates with one of the most characteristic factors of action research, which is to reflect about the pedagogical practice in a given context in order to make an intervention in it.

Action research presents itself as a possibility to rethink teaching practices. The teacher, first of all, needs to be an observer, not only of the context in which they

are inserted, but also of their students and their own teaching practice. By being an observer, the teacher can identify the problems that need to be addressed in their classroom, implying in their agency in order to address them. Therefore, McNiff (2017) states that action research refers to the awareness of the principles that move the teacher's work; it needs to be clear not only what you are doing, but why you are doing it.

In order to register the intentionality of our practice both as teachers and as researchers, Tripp (2005) proposes the following diagram:

Figure 2 - The 4-phase representation of the basic action inquiry cycle
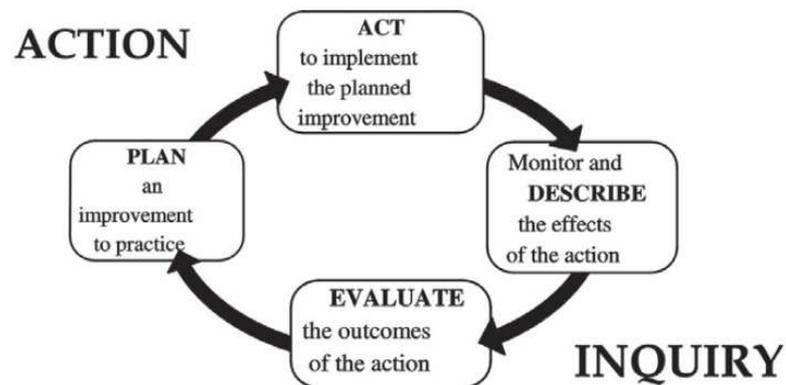
Source: Tripp (2005)

For the author, action research is a *continuum,* which starts by identifying the problem so that action can be taken, followed by the monitoring and description of its effects so that finally the results of the first implemented action can be evaluated. This cycle is inconclusive, since there will always be another action to be implemented, aiming at improving the students' learning process.

Action research provides teachers with an assessment of their practice through the researcher's lens, with the benefit of knowing their students, understanding their difficulties and desires, making it possible to plan strategies that enhance their learning process. More than observing, the teacher can promote interventions in their practice, causing effective changes in the singular individuals that compose their classroom. About those possibilities:

> If someone chooses to work with action research, they are certainly convinced that research and action can and should go together when the transformation of practice is intended. However, the direction, the sense and the intentionality of this transformation will be the axis of the characterization of the action research approach (FRANCO, 2005, p.485, my translation).

Thus, action research causes changes in the educator's teaching dynamics and consequently in the students' learning process. Research is essential for understanding how the action can be conducted, causing profound modifications in the teaching praxis and especially in the teacher who is willing to combine action and reflection.

Considering the statements made so far, the conviction about adopting the method for this research is also based on Freire (1987), who reflects on the importance of the teacher as a researcher, an inquirer, who seeks answers and improvements. The educator is essentially a researcher and they need to see themselves under this bias, because without inquiry there is no change. Then, it is understood that the engagement of the teacher-researcher and the students involved in the search for the resolution of a common problem should be the target of analysis from the perspective of action research.

For these reasons, it is believed that the development of the research here described, concerning critical media literacy in English language classes is a continuous process, which generates changes in both students and teacher. First, there was the observation of the students' perceptions upon a hoax website, secondly, the necessity to plan an intervention, followed by the development of this planning in practice (action) to finally analyze the transformation that the students and the teacher-researcher have been through during the process. Therefore, this study is framed in the conceptions of action research.

3.2 The context of the research

The scenario chosen for the research was a private bilingual education school, Portuguese and English, in Vale dos Sinos, Rio Grande do Sul. The bilingual curriculum of the school starts at level 2 (two-year-old children) of early childhood education and it ends in the 9th year of elementary school. The bilingual curriculum is not extended to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of high school.

From the 7th to the 9th year of elementary school, the school curriculum has 5 periods (50 minutes each) of English classes (Language Arts) per week, which are classes dedicated to the development of writing, speaking, listening, reading and the specifications of the English language per se. In addition to the English classes, there are other subjects in which the English language becomes an instructional tool for teaching contents, such as: Financial Education, Science, Global Perspectives, Applied English and Programming. A weekly period of 50 minutes is reserved for each of these components. Thus, in total, within the curriculum there are 10 weekly periods of subjects taught in and about English. The classes described above are conducted in English, as well as the materials used and the assessments. Students are encouraged to communicate in the target language during these moments, which, for many of them, happens naturally, since a majority of the students is familiarized with both the English language and the dynamics of the classes. The proficiency of the students in English is around B1 and B2 according to the Common European Framework when they arrive in the 7th year of elementary education, considering that most of them have studied in the institution's bilingual curriculum since their early childhood education. However, in some moments, the intervention of teachers is necessary, encouraging students to use the English language during classes.

Two groups of 7th year elementary schoolchildren were chosen to participate in this research. The decision was made once the teacher-researcher responsible for this thesis works as an English language teacher in both these groups, henceforth Class 1 and Class 2, in addition to being the approximate age (between 11 and 12 years old) of the participants described in the original study whose present research was partly replicated from. Class 1 was composed of 24 students, 10 boys and 14 girls. Class 2 consisted of 20 students, 12 boys and 8 girls. Despite the total number of participants being 44 students, only 40 of them were authorized to be participants in this research, as explained in the Ethical Procedures section. Thus, the productions of only 40 participants are going to be considered, respecting ethical procedures. In Class 1, only two students were not members of the school's bilingual curriculum since the beginning of elementary school, joining the class in the 2020 school year. In Class 2, all students have studied at the institution's bilingual curriculum since the beginning of their formal educational trajectories. The level of

proficiency in English of students in both classes is between A2 and B1, according to the Common European Framework.

The teacher-researcher had four weeks of in-person classes with both groups in the academic year of 2020, after that period, remote education was established at the institution due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the data collection period, the groups had a weekly period (50 minutes) of synchronous meetings with the English teacher through the Google Meet platform. The remaining four periods consisted of asynchronous activities posted in the Google Classroom online platform. From class 5, which will be described in detail in the next subsection, Class 1 and Class 2 had 2 weekly periods (50 minutes each) of synchronous classes. The synchronous periods were reserved for explaining new contents, corrections of activities, assessments and organization of group tasks. The activities designed to be carried out asynchronously were based on readings, performance of evaluative works, grammatical activities, group works, individual authentic productions, among others. The data was collected during the remote teaching period, mostly during synchronous classes; however, part of the data generation was also done asynchronously. Class 1 and Class 2 performed the activities proposed for data collection during their weekly period/s, with the teacher accompanying them and monitoring the activities that should be done asynchronously.

Class 1 had a more participatory and engaged profile, communicating in English more frequently and naturally during synchronous meetings. On the other hand, Class 2 was less participatory and needed more incentives and requests to communicate using the English language. The context of remote education has brought new challenges for English language classes, since the turns in video calls are constituted in another way, hindering a more effective communication of the students with the teacher and among themselves.

3.3 "Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction": The previous study that inspired the data collection

The research partially replicated an empirical study from 2007 in the United States and later, in 2017, in the Netherlands, conducted by Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018). The original study consisted of analyzing the ability of perception and assessment of credibility of information displayed on a website, composed only of

false and fabricated information. The website is entitled: Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction[3].

In the United States, in 2007, the participants were 13 years old, meanwhile, in the Netherlands (2017), the participants' age range varied from 11 to 12 years old. The website analyzed by the students contains fabricated information about a rare species of octopus that lives in trees. Although it is not on the official list of endangered animals, according to the website, it is extremely important to alert the population about the decreasing number of octopuses still alive. The website presents physiological information about the octopus, its location on the globe (natural habitat), physical characteristics, history of the animal's appearance, as well as photos of it. The website also provides links that can be accessed redirecting the reader to several other online pages containing more information about the endangered octopus species (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018).

In the original study, conducted in the United States, students received a fictitious message as being from another class, asking them to assess the credibility of a website: Help Save The Northwest Pacific Tree Octopus from Extinction. They were supposed to provide three reasons why they believed the website was reliable or not, summarizing important information they found in two or three sentences. Then, they were invited to send their answers via email, or in the form of a blog post, to the fictional class that proposed the task in the first place (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018).

In the first replica of the study, carried out in the Netherlands in 2017, there were changes in the research methodology. The authors Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018) explain that the class teacher conducted with the students what would be a reading and comprehension activity based on the website Help Save The Northwest Pacific Tree Octopus from Extinction. The activity would not be assessed and students could explore the website as much as they wanted. The teacher-researcher of this study then asked the students to answer the same questions from the 2017 study conducted with Dutch children proposed by Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018):

Q1. This website presents an octopus living in trees. What country does this animal live in?

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[3] https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/

Q2. According to the website, this particular octopus is an endangered species. For what reason?

Q3. If Greenpeace were to ask you to save this octopus, would you support this and sign? YES, because [. . .] NO, because [. . .] (choose one).

Q4. Were there parts of the website you did not understand? If so, please explain.

Q5. Are there any other comments about this website you would like to make?

Finally, the researchers analyzed the students' answers to the questions (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018). The present study partially followed the methodology adopted in the first replica of the original study, carried out in the Netherlands in 2017. Since the 2017 study compared its results with the original research from 2007, we aimed at comparing the results of 2017 with the ones obtained in this study, considering its time proximity and the fact that the original study had already been replicated. Moreover, the participants of the Dutch research were the same age as the students participating in the present study. Our research also differs from the previous ones regarding the language of the participants. In the USA study, the participants interpret the website in English classes, having English as their first language. In the Netherlands replica, the website was automatically translated to Dutch, also the students first language. In our study, students are being challenged to interpret the website during English classes, having English as their second language. Furthermore, our study is characterized as a qualitative action research, different from the American and Dutch ones which were conducted as qualitative research only, not having the researchers as the participants' teachers. Therefore, the choice to partially follow the methodology adopted in the Dutch study described above is justified.

Another important factor to be addressed in the methodology design of this research is the partial replication of the study previously described. The development of critical pedagogies is crucial in the most varied educational contexts around the globe, the relevance of replication studies relies on the importance of observing the same phenomenon through different lenses. As claimed by Makel (2014, p.10): "If education research is to be relied upon to develop sound policy and practice, then conducting replications on important findings is essential to moving toward a more reliable and trustworthy understanding of educational environments." Replication

studies are necessary in order to understand the reality of other contexts and elaborate possible plans of actions accordingly.

3.4 The sequence of activities designed for data collection

Firstly, it is important to clarify that the activities described below were the same for Class 1 and Class 2. Each class was designed with specific objectives in order to introduce the theme of *endangered animals*, starting by the discussion of animal abuse and the positive and negative aspects of the existence of zoos. The sequence of activities was important to contextualize both groups of the topic and familiarize them with the vocabulary and grammar tenses used when referring to the theme in question, instead of simply applying the activity for data collection, considering the action-research nature of this study. In addition, it is reiterated that all the activities proposed were conducted in English by the teacher. The students used both English and Portuguese to communicate during the classes, however engaging in the activities mainly in English. The relevance of the sequence of activities for data collection is found initially in the contextualization of the theme in Class 1 and Class 2, and later for the consolidation of the action research in which "One plans, implements, describes, and evaluates an improving change to one's practice, learning more about both the practice and action inquiry in the process" (TRIPP, 2005, p.446).

Therefore, the data collection was divided in two parts: 1) Analysis of the fake website Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction, in which students responded to one online form (through the digital tool Google Forms) with interpretive questions about the endangered tree octopus and the website in general. Later, the participants answered to a second form, which revealed the lack of veracity of the website. The second form also presented questions regarding the aspects of the website that made students believe or disbelieve in the information being displayed. 2) Creation of webpages for collective websites with information about endangered/extinct animal species in their state (Rio Grande do Sul), extending the topic *endangered animal species* presented by the fake website.

To better understand the objectives and the pedagogical interventions developed in each class, the following table was organized:

Table 2 - Description of activities developed for data collection

Class/ Duration	Objective/s	Methodology
1 (50 minutes)	Check students' understanding and awareness of animal cruelty. Ponder the positive and negative aspects of zoos. Propose a presentation activity in the Padlet tool about different types of animal cruelty, based on articles from the PETA website.	In the first synchronous class focused on data generation, the teacher initiated a conversation with students about animals abandoned during the Covid-19 pandemic. Then, through the Mentimeter platform, with the word cloud tool, students wrote words related to animal cruelty. After a brief discussion about the word cloud, a video was shown addressing the positive and negative points of zoos for animals. The students registered a positive and a negative point on the Jamboard online tool, based on the video entitled "Should zoos exist?" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DlBJlahU1g) After that, the students were divided into trios, pre-established by the teacher, to choose an article from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) website (https://www.peta.org/) concerning different forms of cruelty to animals. They had to summarize the main points addressed in the article through the Padlet platform. It was established asynchronous (2 periods, 100 minutes) time to prepare the presentation in the format of Padlets.
2 (50 minutes)	Present in trios, through the Padlet platform, a summary of the different articles available at the website of the institution PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).	Presentation of the Padlets elaborated in trios about the different articles available at the PETA website.

| 3 (50 minutes) | Problematize the theme of endangered animals and the reason why we should care about it.

Check the students' ability to perceive the non-veracity of the information provided by the Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus website. | The class started by resuming the presentations of the Padlets from the previous week, recalling the different atrocities committed against animals. From that resumption, a discussion was started on the importance of preserving endangered animal species.

From this provocation, students were shown a video from the same YouTube channel of the video in class 1. The video entitled "Endangered Species: Worth Saving from Extinction?" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5eTqjzQZDY) talks about the importance of balance between ecosystems and the fundamental role that each plant and animal play in the well-being of the planet as a whole. Before watching the video, students were asked to type in the chat of the Meet meeting, while watching the video, the reasons why we should be concerned about endangered animal species. A brief discussion of the comments made in the video call chat took place after the video was shown.

Then, the students were told they would explore a website about an endangered species of octopus. The Help Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction website link was made available through the Google Meet meeting platform, giving students 6 minutes to explore, view the photos, open the tabs related to questions and description of the octopus. After the analysis, the teacher briefly asked students about their first impressions on the website.

After the initial exploration of the website, the teacher sent to the students, also via Google Meet chat, the link to complete a form made with the Google Forms tool with interpretive questions about the website previously seen. They had around 20 minutes to answer the questionnaire. If they did not finish until the end of the synchronous period, students could do it by the end of the week, in the asynchronous time reserved for English lessons. The following interpretive questions about the website were asked on the form:

a) This website presents an octopus living in trees. What country does this animal live in?
b) According to the website, this particular octopus is an endangered species. For what reason? |

		c) If Greenpeace were to ask you to save this octopus, would you support this and sign? Yes, or No *d) According to the answer you marked on question 3, why would you support saving the octopus? Or, why wouldn't you support saving the octopus?* *e) Were there parts of the website you did not understand? If so, please explain.* *f) Are there any other comments about this website you would like to make?* (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018).
4 (50 minutes)	Provoke students to reflect on the checking of information available on the internet by answering questionnaire II regarding the Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus website, which reveals the non-veracity of the information available on it.	It was questioned whether students remembered the website they had analyzed in the previous class (Class 3). Another online questionnaire, in the format of a Google Forms, about the same website (Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus) was sent through the Google Meet chat, so that students could answer it in about 20 minutes. In this form, the lack of veracity of the website analyzed by the students in the previous week was revealed. The first section of the form consisted of the following description and questions: *Go back to the website and answer some more questions about it:* *https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/help.html* The questionnaire was entitled "Fact or Fake" and portrayed the description below: *Did you know that ALL the information on the website "Save The Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus" is FAKE? There is no such thing as an octopus that lives in trees. It was all invented by someone. Now that you know that, answer the questions below.* Followed by the questions: *Q1: Which elements on the website made you think it was real?* *Q2: Did you research other sources, maybe on Google, about the information presented on the*

		website? Yes / No *Q3: If you answered "NO" to the question above, why didn't you check the information on other websites?* *Q4: Are there any other comments you would like to make about the fake website and how you feel now that you have discovered it?* After the form completion by most students, the impressions caused by it were orally discussed.
5 (100 minutes)	Understand the various reasons why a species of animal can become extinct and the human contribution to these reasons. Reflect on what makes a source reliable and what devices can be mobilized for its verification.	Conversation with two research biologists from UNISINOS University about different types of animal extinction, causes of extinction and endangered/extinct animal species in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. After the speech of the biologists, the teacher started a conversation asking students if they could trust the information brought by the research biologists in their speeches and what evidence made their answers affirmative or negative. In addition, the website Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus was shared on the screen by the teacher, through the Google Meet video call, who pointed out some questions that indicated the lack of veracity of the website, such as the author of the content, the photos presented and the university claimed as responsible for the author's education. The information on the website of the university referred to in the fake website was compared to the ones available at UNISINOS' website, so that students could spot the differences. Finally, the students played, through the Kahoot game platform, a game about concepts related to fake news. Among the questions were the ones as follows: *What is the meaning of the term fake news?* *What is the concept of fake news?* *How are opinions different from facts?* After the poll questions, the game showed a video formally explaining what fake news is in an accessible language, considering that the video was shown in English and without subtitles in Portuguese. After the screening, the following questions were asked also through the Kahoot platform: *What are some tips the video gives us to avoid fake news?*

		Why is it important to check before sharing?
6 (100 minutes)	Develop webpages to compose collective websites about endangered or extinct animal species in Rio Grande do Sul.	As a final proposal, in trios of free choice, students were challenged to choose an endangered/extinct animal species from Rio Grande do Sul using the official list provided by the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources, made available by the teacher through the Google Classroom platform. Each trio was responsible for researching information about one of these animals and, based on the research, they developed an online webpage for the collective website created by the two groups. The importance of evaluating the sources that would be used to carry out the research was stressed, since the content would be provided to the school community. The teacher created the website using the Google Sites platform and wrote an introductory text presenting the project. Students were separated into other video calls on Google Meet so they could use synchronous class time to start developing their webpages. Two weeks were made available to complete the project and present the virtual pages to the large group. Class 1 created one collaborative website and Class 2 another.

Source: Created by the author (2021)

See below the guidelines for structuring the webpages made available to the students through the Google Classroom platform:

Figure 3 - Guidelines for webpage creation

ENDANGERED ANIMALS IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL
WEBSITE GUIDELINES -

In the same trios you have created a Padlet talking about different types of cruelty against animals, you are going to research about an endangered species of animal here in RS. After the research, you will show your results in the format of an article in our group's website.

We are going to create a website talking about some of those species. Attached to the activity you will find a PDF with a list of endangered animals in RS.

First, you must do your text in a google document and then put it in the website. *I will correct your texts in the shared document. The documents have the names of the groups, look for your group's document.*

The website belongs to all of our class, and each group will be responsible for **ONE PAGE of the website.**

- **Information should you research about the animal:**
1. What is its scientific name?
2. Where does it live?
3. Characteristics of the species (is it a mammal, amphibian, reptile…? What does it eat? What does it look like?)
4. Why is it endangered?
5. What can we do to help?
6. Your text should have at least 250 words.
7. Mention the sources you have researched.

- **Do not forget to add pictures, videos and any other resources you find interesting about the animal.**

- **You will be evaluated for:**
1. The information you have written about the animal;
2. Writing: is your text clear? Is it grammatically correct?;
3. Pictures and resources: have you added pictures, videos and other features to your website?
4. Layout: is it well organized? Is it creative?
  Due date: **September 8th.**

Source: Created by the author

3.5 Analysis of webpages through the transpositional grammar for multimodality framework

Digital media and resources have opened a new scope of possibilities for the creation and consumption of content and materials, for both teachers and students. Pen and paper can now be expanded by digital files and the posters on colored cardboards were upgraded with sound, image and movement in the format of videos and digital graphics. This scenario demands different methods for analysis of digital productions, embracing their multimodal nature.

For the analysis of the webpages in the collective websites, final productions of the students in this action research, it was chosen a multimodal model of analysis proposed by Kalantzis and Cope (2021) in the book *Multimodal Literacies Across Digital Learning Contexts*, edited by Maria Grazia Sindoni and Ilaria Moschini. In their chapter entitled *Pedagogies for Digital Learning: From Transpositional Grammar to the Literacies of Education,* Kalantzis and Cope (2021) defend the need that present times demand to consider grammar in a transpositional way. The authors claim that multimodal meanings exceed the limits of academic literacy as we know it, reaching the various forms of creation offered by digital devices. Currently, students have opportunities to create multimodal artifacts in the process of building their knowledge, in addition to analog texts or oral responses given to the teacher.

The authors, Kalantzis and Cope (2021), contemplate ways of analyzing meanings in multimodal representations in their framework, since the same meanings can be expressed in different ways. In order to align the metalanguage for the analysis of multimodal productions in the digital age, the authors propose five functions to analyze the meaning of students' learning through their multimodal productions, they are: 1) reference; 2) agency; 3) structure; 4) context; 5) interest. Figure 3 portrays the framework with the guiding questions for each of the functions for multimodal productions:

Figure 4 - Framework for multimodal productions
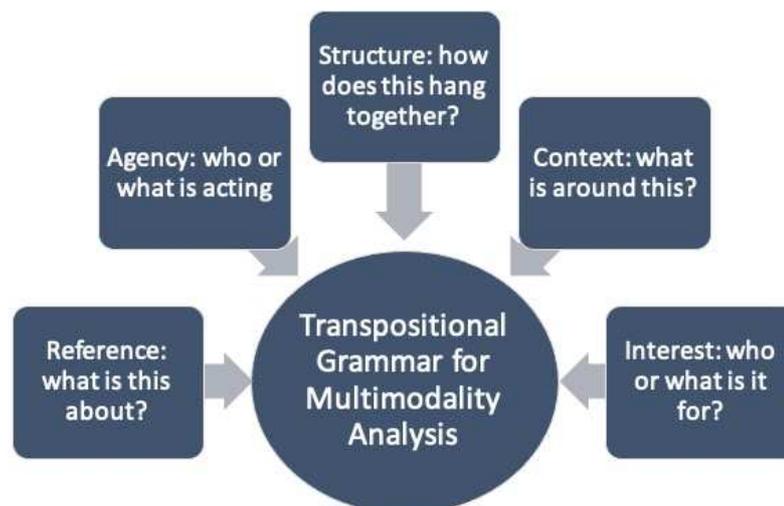
Source: Created by the author based on Kalantzis and Cope (2021)

Considering that the webpages created by the learners are multimodal productions, as they include text, video and image in the construction of meaning, it is believed that the transpositional grammar for multimodality analysis framework developed by Kalantzis and Cope (2021) is the most suitable option to interpret the knowledge artifacts developed by the students. Thus, the students' final productions were analyzed in terms of reference, agency, structure, context and interest.

The justification for the separation of the data analysis in two different moments relies on the fact that the first part of the data collection, which is the analysis of the *Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus* website, is intended to verify how 7th year schoolchildren detect (or fail to detect) the veracity of the information on the website. This objective is accomplished through the analysis of the students' responses to the website interpretation questionnaires. The second part of data collection concerns the analysis of the webpages about endangered animal species in Rio Grande do Sul created in trios compounding the collective websites of both groups. We decided to analyze the students' webpage productions in order to verify which multimodal resources were employed and how these resources can mediate their interpretation of the theme *endangered animals.* In addition, we aimed at observing if the students considered the necessary precautions regarding the dissemination of false information in the elaboration of their own webpages. Therefore, the Transpositional Grammar for Multimodality Analysis Framework by Kalantzis and Cope (2021) was elected.

3.6 Ethical procedures

The research project was submitted to the ethics committee from the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS) and approved on July 9, 2020. After its approval, the parents/legal guardians of the students from both Class 1 and Class 2 received by e-mail the Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TCLE) in which they were informed about the importance of the document along with information about the research to be conducted with their children, its procedures and risks. Forty parents/legal guardians from the total of 44 students digitally signed the document authorizing their children to participate in the research. The 4 families who did not sign the document, simply did not reply to the teacher/researcher. For this reason, their children's results were not considered.

After that, the teacher explained to the students the specifications of the study and the purpose and importance of the Termo de Assentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TALE), which ensures that they would be also aware of their participation in the study and all the necessary information about it. All the 40 students, whose parents have authorized their participation in the study, signed a paper version of the TALE document in the last weeks of November, 2020, when the students returned gradually to school.

Therefore, regarding data collection, 40 students in total, as previously mentioned, have contributed as participants to this research which seeks to develop critical media literacy in L2 (English) classes through a pedagogical intervention conducted by the teacher-researcher who speaks to you in this paper. The 40 participants engaged in all the activities which composed the data collection. The other 4 students whose data was not considered for the sake of this study have also participated in all the activities proposed during the English classes.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, the analysis of the data collected in this research is made. The data collection of this study was divided in two parts, as explained in the methodology section: 1) Analysis of the fake website Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction, in which participants responded to interpretative questionnaires regarding the website; 2) Creation of webpages for collective websites informing about endangered/extinct animal species in Rio Grande do Sul. Concerning the first questionnaire, the answers from Q4 and Q5 were selected for analysis, since both of them are related to the identification (or not) of the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus website as a hoax. Meanwhile, in the second questionnaire, the answers from Q1 to Q4 were analyzed, once they explored the reasons why the respondents considered the website trustworthy or not. In addition to the forms' answers, one webpage from each of the collective websites created by Class 1 and Class 2 were randomly selected to be analyzed by the light of the Transpositional Grammar for Multimodality Analysis Framework based on Kalantzis and Cope (2021).

4.1 "Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction" website analysis

Initially, the students were presented to the website Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction. They were given time to explore the website and identify its main purpose, which was to raise awareness for an endangered species of octopus. After that, they answered the following questions that were disposed in an online form through the digital resource Google Forms:

Q1. This website presents an octopus living in trees. What country does this animal live in?

Q2. According to the website, this particular octopus is an endangered species. For what reason?

Q3. If Greenpeace were to ask you to save this octopus, would you support this and sign? YES, because [. . .] NO, because [. . .] (choose one).

Q4. Were there parts of the website you did not understand? If so, please explain.

Q5. Are here any other comments about this website you would like to make? (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018).

The responses for question 4 are displayed in the chart below:

Chart 1 - Answers for question 4 from the first form
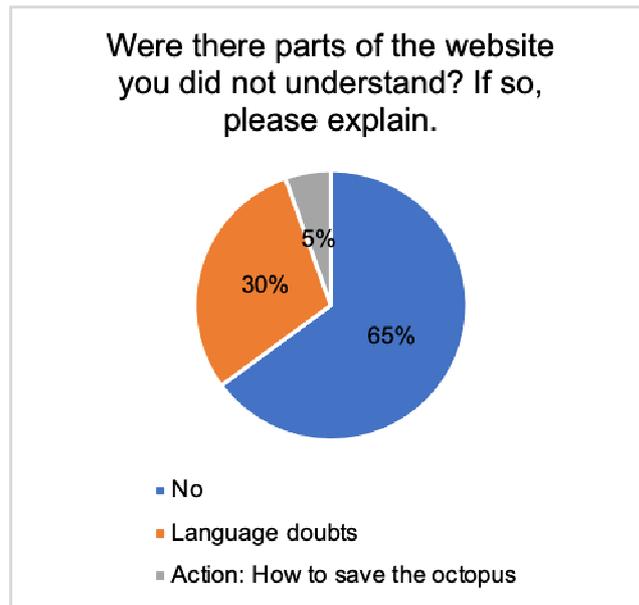
Source: Created by the author (2021)

From the answers shown in Chart 1, we observed that students did not have many difficulties in comprehending the information available in the website. The majority (65%) claimed they did not have any doubts in interpreting the website, meanwhile 30% of the participants had difficulties in understanding certain aspects related to language. In order to exemplify the categories in the chart, we selected samples of original excerpts from the first form answered by the students to justify the organization of Chart 1. The excerpts written by the students were not modified with the intention of preserving the essence of their comments. Neither the spelling and grammar mistakes were corrected nor the words in Portuguese were translated. Some participants were specific in their language doubts, as shown by the excerpts:

I: I didn't understand the second phrase of the second paragraph, because it has many new words and it was very confusing.

II: I only don't understand some words: eyesight: visão branch:ramo etc…

III: I did not understand clear the writing in left side on the website.

IV: the words: nuisance, sasquatch. and misunderstanding. And why they live on trees kkkk.

Excerpt IV shows that the student had doubts about the meaning of some words, moreover, the student claims they did not understand why the octopus species lived in trees. Despite the uncertainty, the student did not question the veracity of the website. They used the popular internet laugh in Brazil expressed by "kkk" at the end of the answer to show humor and perhaps confusion, but they did not mention the possibility of the information to be false. A small percentage of participants (5%) stated they did not understand how they could help the endangered species:

I: I don't understand the help of the site because need to go there to save the octopus.

By the name of the website, it is implied that it will provide alternatives on how to save the animal. For some students, the section dedicated to the suggestion of actions to be taken in order to save the animal is insufficient unless you are in the region where the octopus is encountered. Moreover, Chart 2 displays the responses for question 5 of the first form:

Chart 2 - Answers for question 5 from the first form
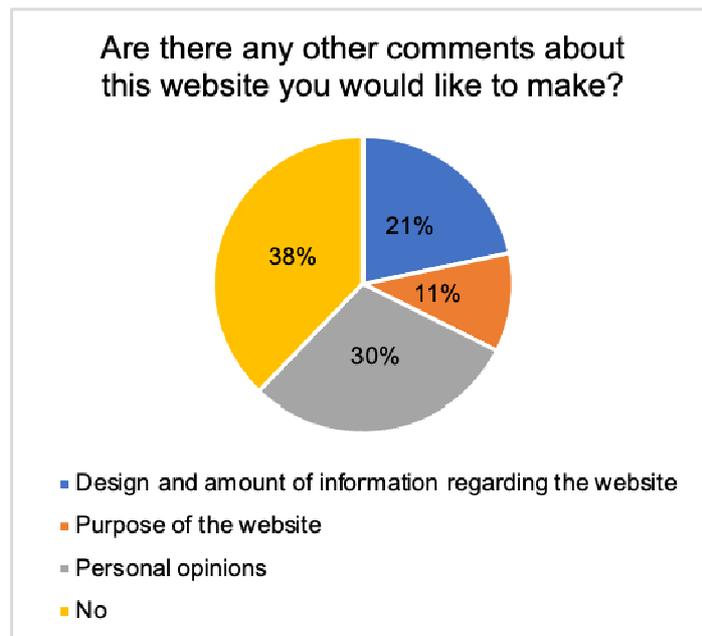
Source: Created by the author (2021)

The initial questions (Q1, Q2, Q3) from the form 1 were intended to have students analyze general aspects of the octopus species that live in trees along with basic interpretative and opinionated questions regarding the website. However, questions 4 and 5 aimed at specifically observing the ability of the students to identify the lack of veracity of the information disposed by the website. Once more, the majority (38%) of students claimed they had no comments about the website; 21% of the participants added commentaries regarding the design of the website and the quality of the information being presented, as shown by the excerpts:

I: I really liked this site, I think it explains it very well, and it has very good illustrative images.

II: I think that this website informate a lot and the format is good

III: I like it but I think have many texts it will be better with less

IV: I liked the intention of the site, but some more information is poorly organized.

By the answers of some students, it is possible to notice the organic presence of multimodality in their realities. Question 5 did not specify the type of comment they were supposed to write, but some participants analyzed the website by its structure. One of them suggests diminishing the amount of text, while others compliment the illustrations and the layout of the website. Thus, as claimed by the New London Group (1996), multiliteracy considers different modes in order to create meaning, embracing language, sound and images. Some students analyzed the website from a multimodal perspective, considering the portrayed amount of information and other elements such as image and the organization of the text. Multimodality is present not only in online texts but also in analog ones. Nowadays, for many students, a multimodal text is just a regular text, since multimodality is intrinsic daily in their productions. This observation becomes evident when we see the comments regarding the meaning-making elements adopted in the website.

A smaller portion of students (11%) made comments regarding the purpose of the website:

I: Yes, I think it's nice to have websites like this because they help some people to realize how much they can be cruel with an animal. And because this helps people to see this and help.

II: That i think we need to stop to distroy the habitat, because we can't let them disapier.

It is evident that the students were engaged in the cause defended by the website to protect the octopus from becoming an extinct species. In the excerpt I, it is noticeable that the student remembers the previous discussions held in class about animal cruelty and the causes of extinction of some animal species. According to Janks (2013), teaching through the lenses of critical literacy means to show students the ideologies behind discourses and how powerful they can be. Also, it is about identity and the chance of redesigning the world. When students are exposed to texts that speak to their beliefs it encourages them to act upon the world, as shown in excerpt II in which the student claims and it is quoted: "we can't let them disappear", including themselves in the fight for the cause. As Freire (1987) advocated, the critical praxis approach implies reflecting about the world to later transform it. When we motivate students to think about important causes, such as the endangerment of animals, we may incite them to be agents of change, causing real impacts in their lives and within their communities.

Finally, 30% of the students wrote their personal opinions regarding the website: "I just want to say that I thought the site was really cool"; "I liked very much, because i like animals and read news about this"; "yes, the animal are so different"; "I liked this website, because I didn't know that the tree octopus existed"; "I think this animals are really nice, and I have no idea they existed."

Many of the comments used adjectives such as "cool" and "nice" to describe the website. Meanwhile, some participants expressed their surprise with the existence of the tree octopus. Students claimed they appreciated the chance to learn more about the exquisite animal; however, they did not question the real existence of the species. The most interesting observation to be made is that although the students realized the strangeness of the animal and most of them confirmed they were unaware of its existence, none of them seem to have checked the veracity of the information displayed in the website or researched other sources about the topic. Consequently, none of the 40 students identified the website as being a hoax.

The second questionnaire was entitled "Fact or Fake" and portrayed the following description: Did you know that ALL the information on the website "Save The Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus" is FAKE? There is no such thing as an octopus that lives in trees. It was all invented by someone. Now that you know that, answer the questions below. Followed by the questions:

Q1. Which elements on the website made you think it was real?

Q2. Did you research other sources, maybe on Google, about the information presented on the website? Yes/No

Q3. If you answered "NO" to the question above, why didn't you check the information on other websites?

Q4. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the fake website and how you feel now that you have discovered it?

Trying to understand which factors influence in the students' decision of considering a website trustworthy or not, the second questionnaire (Fact or Fake) was created. The majority of the participants responded to the first question (Q1. Which elements on the website made you think it was real?) alleging that the pictures made them believe in the website: "*The photographs and explanations*", "*The pictures and the fact that it was so organized*", "*The sightings*". The quality of the pictures displayed in the website is unprofessional as if they were taken by random people. The sources described below the pictures are inconclusive, showing that most likely, students did not analyze them closely.

When asked if they had researched in other websites the information being presented to them, 25 (62,5%) students responded they did not research and 15 (37,5%) affirmed they had researched. As for their justification for not researching, some of the most frequent answers were related to the trust they have in their teacher: "*Because if my teacher send the link for the site probably it is real*", "*Because I trust in my teacher*", "*Because apparently when a teacher gives us a website to research I think we trust the website*". Other answers claimed they did not find any information about the website being fake: "*I just searched on Google, and there was nothing about it being fake*", "*I searched images, but I didn't find them*", "*Actually I checked information from the other site, but I didn't pay attention*".

Finally, students responded the last question, Q4 (Are there any other comments you would like to make about the fake website and how you feel now that you have discovered it?), with surprise, disappointment and embarrassment: "*I don't know, I just stayed surprised, because of all that they said on the website made me think it was true*", "*I really believed it, I was a little disappointed*", "*I'm very surprised and I noticed that I'm very dumb*", "*I feel tricked and fooled*". Some students seemed to notice how damaging fake news can be: "*that this fake information is not funny*", "*I think it is wrong to make a fake website because people can believe it*", "*I felt very mad because they were playing with one serious thing, that is the extinction of*

animals", "I think that the person could be in jail because this is not funny". Through some comments, it is possible to see that some students have realized the importance of source checking in online environments and the dangers of considering information from one single source: "*Because that is the only website that I found it, if it was real it was going to have other websites talking about it, but there is not any other*", "*I feel stupid for having trusted so much in one source*", "*I can't believe on everything I see, even if it looks real, I need to search more about it.*"

After the conclusion of the questionnaires, students expressed surprise during the open discussion. From the 40 students, only 4 of them claimed they had researched other websites, despite the fact that 15 answered in the questionnaire they had conducted further research on the tree octopus. Considering the context of remote learning, some students do not participate as actively in the classes, which may justify only 4 of them opening their microphones and engaging in the conversation. Those 4 students stated they briefly searched for it on Google and found the tree octopus website as a result. During the conversation, those 4 students realized they should have found more information in different URLs about the octopus in order to consider it trustworthy. One of the students affirmed he had talked to his mother about the activity conducted in class, explaining the details about the tree octopus. The student reported that his mother had been surprised when hearing about the tree octopus, but did not question the information deriving from school.

Therefore, the open discussion supported the data confirming that none of the 40 participants identified the website as a hoax. The results have shown that students lack the ability of using mechanisms to check facts online, such as the URL extension ".net", which indicates that the source of the content is not recognized and needs verification, the name of the fictitious university representing the alleged creator of the content, and the simple act of searching and actually finding other sources which discuss the same topic. Furthermore, the quality of the pictures and the sources the website claimed to have used were inconclusive, however a majority of the students responded that the pictures were a determinant factor in their choice of considering the information in the website as trustworthy.

Digital texts have new potentials, once they can be multimodal, hyperlinked and interactive (BEACH, 2009), which is the case of the tree octopus' website. Those features facilitate the fabrication of online texts with false information, once there are many resources to be applied in order to try to convince the readers of its veracity.

Thereby, as claimed by Kellner and Share (2007), more than ever, it is understood that critical media literacy has become imperative since the beginning of the students' academic journeys. Being a digital native does not mean that the students are prepared to identify fake news and untrustworthiness in online environments. The only path to be followed in the fight against fake news is through education.

When comparing the initial results to the ones from the study conducted in the Netherlands by Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018) in 2017, our results were slightly worse, since in the Dutch study, 2 out of 27 students (7%) recognized the website as being fake, in opposition to ours in which none of 40 students recognized the website as a hoax. Regarding the possible reasons to justify these results, we agree with the authors of the original study. Some of the possible factors that complicated the identification of the website as a hoax are as follows: "(...) the setting of the task (the school environment), the trust in their teacher and the emotional involvement (the topic was an animal in danger)" (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018, p.10). Those aspects have likely contributed to the fact that none of the students identified the lack of veracity of the website.

Our approach to education in classrooms must be critical, as our results have shown ("Because if my teacher send the link for the site probably it is real"; "Because I trust in my teacher"), students tend to blindly believe in their teachers, note that we are not implying they should not, however, as suggested by Luke (2012), students must be aware of the ideologies intrinsic in discourses and they must be prepared to question them instead of simply accepting them as the absolute truth. Students are discouraged to doubt their teachers who are still seen by many as the knowledgeable ones, and the institution of the school, as seen by the participant's mother who opted for believing in the school, disregarding the strangeness of the tree octopus.

From the perspective of critical literacy, as stated by Freire and Macedo (2005) and already mentioned in this study, students are challenged to read the world first to later read the word. Fake news is part of our realities, although there are technological artefacts to fight them, Waldrop (2017) reminds us that the critical analysis of the reader will always be required, once machines are unable to compete with freedom of speech. In bilingual curriculums, the necessity of critical literacy and critical media literacy is twice as important, considering students have access to many different types of materials in at least two languages, in the case of this study being Portuguese and English.

Considering that the students were misled by the information displayed on the website and none of them has either checked the veracity of the website or the real existence of such an odd animal as a tree octopus, more than ever, it is clear that critical media literacy has become imperative since the beginning of the students' academic journeys (KELLNER; SHARE, 2007). Students must develop critical skills since a very early stage of their educational lives, increasing the chances of developing into critical citizens capable of making well-informed decisions.

4.2 Analysis of the classes after the revealing of the hoax website

After the classes dedicated to the analysis of the Help Save the Endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction hoax website, students from both classes were constantly talking about the activity. In the end of class 4, the class in which the untrustworthiness of the octopus' website was revealed, while the students from Class 1 finished the online questionnaire some opened their microphones and expressed the most varied reactions. Class 1 was mostly perplexed with the discovery, since their reaction was urgent and filled with emotion, most of them used Portuguese to express their feelings. Some of the comments included "*Teacher, I'm feeling really stupid, how could I believe that?"; "Last class I Googled the animal and I saw many links talking about it, but I did not read the description on the links"*. They constantly repeated they could not understand how they had believed the information on the website. Most of the students also questioned how the teacher could have done something like that.

Class 2 had a different profile from Class 1, they were less participative and a few students were the ones who participated the most. Many students expressed their perplexity in the chat of the video call, stating *"I can't believe that"; "Teacher, how could you do that?"; "I got scared, seriously, it was all fake?"* One of the students opened the microphone in the midst of all the surprise stating that *"I know why the teacher did that, she wanted us to see that we cannot trust in all the websites we access."* The student apparently realized the main objective of the proposal, which made them think about their own process of analyzing websites for school research, especially when considering the comments that followed: "*I will never trust a website again."; "I will have to check 10 times before taking information to make sure it is not*

fooling me." Another oral comment made by a student from Class 2 corroborates with the analysis made in the previous section regarding their unconditional trust in their teacher was: "*If the website was in a presentation from a classmate, I would have researched, because an octopus that lives in tree is super weird, but since it was the teacher who gave us the link I did not suspected not even for a minute.*" It shows the sense of security they have in the figure of the teacher, as if the teacher was seen as a being that cannot be wrong, a source of trustworthiness.

Students are not used to questioning their teachers when it comes to contents being developed in the classroom, which could still be an inheritance of the most traditional pedagogies, or as named by Freire (1987) the banking model of education. In this format the role assigned to teachers and students was clear, the former being the knowledgeable one, with the duty to deposit content in their students minds and the latter being the passive receiver of this content, without further questionings. However, society has changed, numerous historical events have reshaped the way we dress, purchase goods, communicate, and so it is expected the school to accompany those changes:

> In the most general of senses, education is always about creating 'kinds of people'. The old basics were about people who learned rules and obeyed them; people who passively accepted the answers to the world that had been provided to them by 'authorities', rather than regarding the world as many problems to be solved; and people who carried supposed correct information and rules in their heads. The new basics enable new 'kinds of people': people better adapted to the kind of world we live in now and the world of the near future. These people will be flexible and collaborative learners. They will be problem-solvers, broadly knowledgeable and capable of applying divergent ways of thinking. They will be more discerning in the context of much more and ever-changing complexity. They will be innovative, creative risk-takers (KALANTZIS; COPE, p.21, 2012).

The necessities of our students are different from the ones they had 50 years ago. We are preparing them for an uncertain future, which will require resilience, flexibility and, especially, critical thinking. Therefore, the dialogical pedagogy of Freire (1987) has never been more updated. Students and teachers should learn with one another in a position of equality and respect. Clearly the students in the scenario of this research are not used to doubting their teachers, most likely because they have not been encouraged to do so. It is necessary that our students see us, teachers, as human beings, with feelings, desires, flaws and opinions. It would be presumptuous

of us to affirm that our classes are neutral in opinions and beliefs, we are biased creatures by nature, all of us. We are constantly making statements, through the way we dress, speak, and interact with one another, consequently, it is necessary to realize that in a critical classroom, students must have space to be critical, even towards their teachers.

Evidently, we are not supporting an educational riot against educators, but students should feel encouraged to question their teachers' sources and speeches in order to construct a relationship of mutual learning. For this to happen, teachers must be open to share the spotlight as the detainers of knowledge and the students must feel entitled to claim the position of agent in their learning process in order to take some action, which was proposed to the students as a final step in the data collection process.

In the beginning of class 5, students from Class 1 were still agitated about the octopus' website. As soon as I (the teacher-researcher) joined the video call one student asked "*Can we trust you today? Do you have another fake website for us?*", they made other jokes proving that the activity had indeed provoked them to rethink their trusting relationship with their teacher. In class 5, both groups (Class 1 and Class 2) were together to listen to the speech of two invited biologists from Unisinos University about endangered animal species in Rio Grande do Sul. The lecture was very interesting, especially because the biologist communicated in English with the students. In around 50 minutes, the biologists talked to the students in English, defining the term endangered, giving reasons for the endangerment and extinction of animal species, while providing examples of endangered animals in Brazil and in our state (Rio Grande do Sul). The students from both groups asked questions, some of them used the chat to communicate with the guests and others opened their microphones to speak. It was a very interesting moment, once they used the English language to communicate, using the vocabulary they had seen in previous classes.

After the conversation with the biologists, the groups were separated to have one more period (50 minutes) of synchronous encounters and continue with the proposals of the English class. The first question that I asked in both groups after the lecture was if we could trust the information Uwe and Larissa (the guest biologists) had brought to us. Students answered affirmatively, when I questioned them why we could trust them the following justification was uttered by a student from Class 1: *"Yes, because they are specialists, they are biologists, they work with that and*

research about that." After a brief discussion about the main points mentioned in the lecture, I asked students if the biologists were affiliated to any university. They answered Unisinos. I asked them if we could trust in this institution, once more the students answered affirmatively. A girl from Class 1 commented: "*It is a famous institution, we know it for a long time, so we can trust people from there.*"; while a boy from Class 2 affirmed: "*We can trust it, both my parents studied there, I've been there before*", using his personal experience to prove the reliability of the university.

I shared with the students the website from Unisinos University[4] and asked them to explore the information they could see disposed of in the website. After some minutes, I shared my screen with the students and accessed the hoax octopus' website. I clicked on the *About* section and showed students that the creator of the content was affiliated to Kelvinic University[5]. The link redirected the reader to the website of the university and I asked students to compare Unisinos website to the Kelvinic university one. Most of the students from Class 1 answered there was no comparison, once Unisinos website had much more information and the quality of the images was better. A boy from Class 2 said that "*Judging by its website, Kelvinic University is such a bad university, thank God it is fake."* When talking about the pictures disposed in the octopus' website and the ones in the Kelvinic University, a girl from Class 1 concluded: "*We did not even realize to check who was the author of the content and if he was associated with any universities, because you cannot be anyone when you are studying an endangered animal, you need to be a biologist at least.*" Students from both groups could see the differences between the websites of both universities and how the quality of the information available can be one of the factors to help us distinguish fact from fake information. In conclusion, Class 1 and Class 2 said they did not access the website of the Kelvinic University when exploring the hoax website and now it was clear that the information had been fabricated.

It was required from the students a variety of skills in order to reach the conclusions they have drawn. They had to observe the characteristics that compose a website from a recognized institution, compare them to the Kelvinic University website in order to understand that this was a factor they should have observed when verifying the trustworthiness of the information about the tree octopus. The

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[4] http://www.unisinos.br/
[5] https://zapatopi.net/kelvin/ku/

necessity to analyze discourses with multimodal lenses is discussed by Kersch and Lesley (2019) in their critical media literacy framework. The authors claim that students must be prepared and encouraged to question the context in which discourses are inserted in and the voices being uttered in between the lines, once there are political, social, business, and personal agendas to be fulfilled in all utterances.

Finally, students were invited to play a quiz game on the platform Kahoot about key concepts of fake news and how to avoid them. The game promoted strategic moments to stop and discuss some issues. The first inquiry open to discussion was: "*Have you ever heard of fake news? Can you give any examples?*" Students from Class 1 mentioned the scams against elderlies with the aim of stealing their money. A few students shared personal stories from relatives that were victims of those fake promotions and ended up giving money to criminals. Class 2 mentioned videos about COVID-19 spread on the instant message application WhatsApp portraying homemade recipes to fight the virus. Other questions to be answered with multiple choices included: a) *What is the concept of fake news? b) How are opinions different from facts?* After that, students watched a short video with tips on how to identify and avoid fake news. Two questions were asked about the video: 1) *What are some tips the video gives us to avoid fake news? 2) Why is it important to check before sharing?*

Most of the students answered the questions correctly and after the conclusion of the game I asked students how they selected their sources for school papers. Most of them answered saying they used Brasil Escola, a famous Brazilian educational portal with information about the most varied topics presented in a didactic way. Students from both classes mentioned Wikipedia, but they added it was important to be careful, since other teachers had mentioned the fragilities of the website. A conversation followed from those inquiries, in which I told students that the consequences of fake news can be real and devastating. A student from Class 1 opened the microphone and said: "*We could feel how it is to be tricked with the website experience, it is not very nice.*" I complemented saying that they could be advocating for a nonexistent animal, which could imply serious consequences, once that more people could join the cause for something unreal. Another student from Class 1 stated: "*It is important to be careful with our grandparents, sometimes they believe things they see on TV or receive on WhatsApp and they believe it is true.*" I

used this moment to emphasize the social role they had in their families and communities, once they should talk to their relatives and friends about the serious consequences of fake news and the mechanisms we could use to identify them.

In the Critical Literacy section of this research, table 1 shows The Interdependent Model of Critical Literacy developed by Janks (2013), according to the author, in the passage *Power without design or redesign*: "The deconstruction of powerful texts and practices, without reconstruction or redesign, removes human agency" (JANKS, 2013, p.226). The analysis of the website Save the Northwest Tree Octopus through the online questionnaires and the interventions proposed by the teacher caused the deconstruction of the fake website. Through students' answers and reactions, it was observed that they could see how easy it can be to be misled by fake information establishing which factors can be decisive when recognizing fake content. However, simply deconstructing the fake website would not result in the students' agency against fake information, therefore the proposal of the collective website about endangered species of animals in Rio Grande do Sul was made. Considering the pillars of critical media literacy, students must take some action in their learning process and this was one of the main goals in the creation of websites of their own. Starting in class 6, students gathered in trios and initiated their own research to be presented in the format of a collective website to be made available to the school community and beyond. In the next section, 2 webpages from the collective websites developed by Class 1 and Class 2 are analyzed.

4.3 Analysis of the students' webpages

As a final task developed with Class 1 and Class 2 for data collection, in trios, students produced an online page to compose the groups' collective websites about endangered species of animals in Rio Grande do Sul. Class 1 and Class 2 elaborated two different websites with the pages created by the groups' respective trios. Two pages, one from each class, were randomly selected for analysis. Figure 5 shows a webpage created by a trio from Class 1 and Figure 6 is a webpage created by a different trio from Class 2.

Figure 5 – Wepage Guará Wolf

Where do they live?

Their habitat is located in South America, more specifically, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

They live in open regions, such as fields and scrub forests. It occurs in some regions of transition to the Caatinga and Atlantic Forest, being found mainly in the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Paraná.

Scientific name: Chrysocyon brachyurus

Why is it endangered?

The Guara Wolf specie is endangered because of pedestrian accidents, hunting and diseases caused by domestic dogs and the destruction of their habitat to expand agriculture.

ICUN doesn't consider this specie as endangered, but the people think that the Guara Wolf are taking some risks of extinction. There are approximately 21 thousand adults left, and this number may have dropped. In Rio Grande do Sul it is believed that they are already extinct.

Characteristics

It is a mammal that likes to eat animals and small fruits. It has an orange fur and black eyes. They're the biggest canine in South America, reaching 20 to 30kg. The puppies have a different color up to approximately 6 months. They are born black, with the white tail, and acquire brown color in the first month of life. Males and females can pair and divide a territory, however they do not usually share their activities, such as hunting.

How can we help them?

The zoos may take care of this species. Because then they will have food and water, a new habitat and it can be safe. There is a group called "Amigo do Lobo" that is trying to preserve the species. So, help them if you want!

Here is their website if you want to have more information: amigodolobo.org/

Projeto Sou Amigo do Lobo

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https://www.todamateria.com.br/lobo-guara/#:~:text=O%20lobo%2Dguar%C3%A1%20%C3%A9%20um,de%20mau%2C%20nem%20%C3%A9%20agressivo.

https://www.infoescola.com/animais/lobo-guara/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCjjblBKczI

Source: https://sites.google.com/ienh.com.br/7i-endangered-species-in-rs/guara-wolf

Figure 6 - Webpage Gavião Real

Introduction:

The Gavião Real is an accipitriformes bird of the family Accipitridae its scientific name is *Harpia harpyja* . It is more common in Amazon Region and in stretches of Atlantic forest. It is endangered in South America more specifically in Brazil and it is considered extinct in Rio Grande do Sul, but the biologist Dante Meller saw one bird in 2015 in the Parque Estadual do Turvo in Derrubadas, RS.

You can read about it in this link g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2015/03/considerada-rara-maior-aguia-brasileira-e-avistada-em-parque-no-rs.html

Characteristics:

The Gavião Real measures about 90 to 105 centimeters, it is considered the biggest bird of America and one of the biggest of the world. It has wide and rounded wings that can reach up to 2 m in wingspan. The adult has a dark gray, almost black back, with a white chest and abdomen, a neck with a black collar, and a gray head with a split plume. The young man has light plumage, ranging from white to light gray. It takes 4 to 5 years to reach adult plumage.

Its feed is constituted mainly of tree mammals like sloths and primates. It also catches birds, like seriemas.Thanks to the well-developed tarsi and claws, with a halibut nail of up to 7 cm, it is able to capture prey over 6 kg.

ASSIM É A ÁGUI

Why is it endangered:

The Gavião Real is endangered here in Brazil because of the deforestation of forests and the extinction of individuals of nature, caused by hunting and killing. We can help them by avoiding deforestation as these birds make their nests in emergent trees, very high and throw their tops above the average level of the rest of the vegetation.

Sources:

www.avesderapinabrasil.com/harpia_harpyja.htm

g1.globo.com/am/amazonas/noticia/2012/09/em-risco-de-extincao-gaviao-real-e-foco-de-projeto-de-preservacao-no-am.html#:~:text=Entre%20os%20maiores%20riscos%20para,uma%20amea%C3%A7a%20aos%20animais%20dom%C3%A9sticos.

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Source: https://sites.google.com/ienh.com.br/7hendangeredspeciesinrs/in%C3%ADci

The webpages were analyzed according to the Transpositional Grammar for Multimodality Analysis Framework elaborated by Kalantzis and Cope (2021). The five functions proposed by the authors to analyze students' learning through multimodal productions are as follows: 1) reference; 2) agency; 3) structure; 4) context; 5) interest.

The first function created by Kalantzis and Cope (2021) in their multimodal framework is reference. In this study, the reference function will be the same for both webpages created by the students, since the proposal was the same for all trios. The task consisted in first choosing one endangered animal from the official list of the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources. Secondly, the trios had to research some aspects of the animal they had selected to finally portray their findings in the format of a webpage. Figure 6 displays the webpage created by one trio from Class 2, Gavião Real. According to the field journal developed throughout data collection, the group maintained the name of the bird in Portuguese because they did not find its translation, alongside with the fact that they wanted to guarantee that the Brazilian readers would recognize the species. It demonstrates that the students were concerned with the veracity of the information they were providing to the audience.

Regarding the second function, agency, Kalantzis and Cope (2021, p. 8) affirm that in the multiliteracy pedagogy "[...] we focus on students as agents of learning, as meaning-makers and as knowledge producers." In the construction of their webpages, the students were the agents of their learning process, considering their prior experiences and knowledge about endangered species to produce their contributions to the collective websites. They were responsible for researching information in trustworthy sources, once they were told that the website would be public and it was of their responsibility to provide quality and reliable information to their readers.

The third function described by Kalantzis and Cope (2021) is structure, referring to the global organization of the multimodal text. As observed in Figure 5, the trio from Class 1 has organized their text in subsections, with most of them being questions (*Where do they live? Why is it endangered? How can we help them?*). In the Characteristics section, the students have chosen an interesting picture of the wolf, according to the field journal of this research, one of the students from the trio stated during the website presentation and it is quoted: "We chose that specific

picture because the wolf looked very cute and relaxed and it will be hard for people to say no to that pretty face." The statement shows that they traced strategies when developing their webpages, adding elements that could be more appealing and attractive to convince their audiences to engage in the fight against the extinction of the animal they had chosen. The trio added a link in to the last subsection redirecting the reader to the website of a project which aims at the preservation of the Guará Wolf. The students invited the reader to help by stating: "*So, help them if you want*!" and added the link to the website of the project so the reader can access it if they wish to engage in the cause. Complementing their statement, they also added a video about the project, which briefly explains how the project works and how we can help. The trio used different sources to collect their information and they adopted a straightforward approach when presenting their research on the Guará Wolf.

Meanwhile, as seen in Figure 6, the trio from Class 2 used multimodal resources since their introduction. They have also organized their text through subsections. The first one being the introduction, in which they write about the scientific name of the bird, its location and they conclude the section by mentioning a rare apparition of the Gavião Real in Rio Grande do Sul. The first multimodal aspect of the text appears in the introduction. The students provided a link which redirects the reader to the full journalistic article thoroughly explaining the rare sighting of the bird. The strategy adopted by the students is effective, since the focus of the webpage was to describe the species, they opted for leaving the decision to the reader to access or not the link available about the rare sighting of the bird. The trio also inserted the image of a map pointing out the regions where the Gavião Real is found, corroborating to the understanding of the reader concerning the localization of the bird.

In the characteristics section, the students added a video which shows the bird in all its majesty. The selection of the video was extremely appropriate to the section, once they wrote the physical characteristics of the species and provided a video so the reader can visualize their explanation. Besides that, the students inserted pictures of the Gavião Real in different angles, showing the bird in its completion. For the last section, the trio explained why the bird is endangered and they invited the reader to take some action by avoiding deforestation. Besides that, they selected a photo of the bird as if it was looking closely at the reader, asking for their help. In the pictures seen in prior sections, the bird is portrayed as imponent and flying as a

hunter; however, the last picture causes a different impression on the one reading the text. The picture creates a certain impact on the section, considering the bird is facing the reader. Students selected a photo of the bird in this position exactly in the section that explains the endangerment of the bird and asks for help.

According to Kalantzis and Cope (2021), in their transpositional grammar framework, students need to know how to structure their knowledge through multimodal representations. When the learners insert videos, datasets, hyperlinks as meaning makers in their productions, new strategies are necessary to ensure the cohesion and coherence of the multimodal piece. It could be observed the employment of strategies to ensure the comprehension of the webpages as a whole, and not as isolated pictures, videos, and chunks of information. The images complemented the text and the videos exemplified the written descriptions. Hence, language and multimodal elements were synchronized and complementing each other in both webpages.

The fourth function described by Kalantzis and Cope (2021) is context. To understand a piece of news, books or a conversation, it is necessary to know more than the meaning of words. Context is fundamental to comprehend the *depths* of an artifact (KALANTZIS; COPE, 2021). The context of creation of the webpage does not refer only to the performance of the task itself, proposed during English classes in the remote learning format. It is believed that all the experiences students had had prior to the elaboration of the final task contextualized their productions. The articles they read about animal cruelty and the importance of zoos, the conversation both groups had with biologists about endangered species, the analysis of a fake website about the tree octopus, and the debates fostered by those topics during English classes were essential to give students a prior background and language knowledge on the subject to later develop their own webpages. Still regarding context, Kellner and Share (2016) claim that students need to learn how to read the context as well, to identify bias and check the veracity of information available online. Furthermore, Freire and Macedo (2005) claim that we must read the world first in order to read the world, which is exactly what the students have performed, once the analysis of the fake octopus' website has given them the chance of experiencing the importance of checking and questioning information, using those strategies later in their research for the creation of the webpages.

Finally, the last function described in Kalantzis and Cope's (2021) framework is interest. All the webpages have as their main purpose to inform the population of an endangered animal species in our state, Rio Grande do Sul. Regarding the audience, the websites were designed with the intention to be shared with the school community in which Class 1 and Class 2 belong to. Moreover, Kalantzis and Cope (2021, p.11) explain in their framework that: "When learners have immediate access to any and every multimodal meaning in the world, the question of interest becomes a crucial one for learners to ask all the time." The authors continue stating that students must contest their online findings, questioning the legitimacy of contents, and verifying if the knowledge is grounded in scientific evidence. The websites of the groups were published in the school's official website and were also sent to other teachers who could use them as a material in their pedagogical proposals.

The activities promoted in order to collect data were conducted in August 2020, during the remote learning classes and almost a year later, in the midst of July 2021, the teacher-researcher of this study was informed that the websites were being used by 3rd grade elementary school groups in the same school in a project being developed during the English classes about endangered animal species. The students were told that their productions were being used as a research source by younger students, which made them feel proud of their work. In this way, it is seen the social function of writing, causing impact outside the classroom and fulfilling the purposes of the activity.

Moreover, it is possible to associate this piece of news with one of the aspects from the interdependent model of critical literacy table developed by Janks (2013). The author claims that the "Design/redesign without access (...) runs the risk of whatever is designed remaining on the margins" (JANKS, 2013, p.226). Since students had surprising reactions to the revelation of the untrustworthiness of the octopus' website, it was important for them to feel responsible for the content they were making available in their websites, by carefully selecting the sources and organizing their findings in the clearest design possible. Producing the websites simply for the sake of the proposal would not be enough. It would contradict the basis of a critical literacy pedagogy in which the students are expected to be agents in their learning process, using their discoveries beyond the classroom walls. Besides researching endangered species in Rio Grande do Sul, the fact that the websites

circulated in the school community and were later incorporated in other classroom projects gave the students productions visibility and a wider purpose.

Having said that, we noticed that after the experience with the fake website and the strategies employed in class to develop critical media literacy, as detailed in the previous section of this study, they opted for trustworthy websites specialized in their research topic. The first trio from Class 1 (Figure 5) selected recognized Brazilian websites specialized in school contents: Info Escola[6] and Toda Matéria[7]. They also consulted WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) which is a worldwide non-governmental organization that investigates issues related to the environment and fights against the destruction of the world's fauna and flora. The trio from Class 2 (Figure 6) consulted Aves de Rapina Brasil[8], which is a national website dedicated to one specific type of bird. They also mention G1 as a source, which is a renowned news portal in Brazil. As the final source, they mentioned Conexão Planeta[9] which is another Brazilian website created by journalists, biologists and other professionals dedicated to journalism and the preservation of the environment.

Considering the analysis of the webpages, an evolution regarding the critical media literacy competencies of the students is noticed, as shown by the selection of sources to conduct their research. Furthermore, the multimodal strategies employed in the design of the webpages were successful, creating coherent and fluid texts, blending language, video, pictures and the possibility to redirect the reader to different websites providing further information on the topic. During the construction of the websites, the teacher-researcher constantly reminded the students of their enormous responsibility as content creators. As they could experience, it is easy to upload any type of information on the Internet, but it is vital to check the veracity of these contents and, more importantly, be aware of the serious repercussions of not only sharing, but also creating fake news.

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[6] https://www.infoescola.com/animais/lobo-guara/
[7] https://www.todamateria.com.br/loboguara/#:~:text=O%20lobo%2Dguar%C3%A1%20%C3%A9%20um,de%20mau%2C%20nem%20%C3%A9%20agressivo
[8] www.avesderapinabrasil.com/harpia_harpyja.htm
[9] https://conexaoplaneta.com.br/blog/ha-mais-de-20-anos-projeto-harpia-trabalha-para-salvar-da-extincao-a-maior-ave-de-rapina-do-brasil/

5 INCORPORATING CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY IN L2 CLASSES FRAMEWORK

The results of my data collection have shown many important things about my students and the presence of critical media literacy in English classes. The fact that none of the 40 students noticed the untrustworthiness in the octopus website emphasized the extent to which students believe in their teachers, as they should, once they are supposed to be trustworthy sources. However, as stated before, to reach neutrality in classes is extremely difficult, once we, educators, are human beings with feelings, opinions and beliefs. As stated by Funk, Kellner and Share (2016, p.11): "CML pedagogy is rooted in the premise that no text or medium can be free of bias or completely neutral because communication is a subjective and social process." Therefore, the ability to question and analyze discourses needs to be encouraged.

With the constant presence of the internet in the most diverse segments of our lives, it is imperative for our students to be able to select and critically analyze the contents they consume, inside and outside school. Having said that, considering the analysis of the data previously presented, I believed that it was necessary to elaborate a framework in order to understand the elements in my sequence of activities which helped me achieve the development of critical media literacy in my English classes. Consequently, the framework may also help other teachers in the quest for incorporating CML to their classes. Furthermore, for many there is still a stigma that L2 classes are reserved for the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, while the L1 classes are left with the deeper discussions and development of critical thinking. Nonetheless, when it comes to bilingual curriculums, this context cannot be a reality and neither can it be for schools with monolingual curriculums, which offer a decreased number of periods dedicated to the teaching of a second, third or fourth language. The framework is illustrated in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Framework for Incorporating CML in L2 Classes
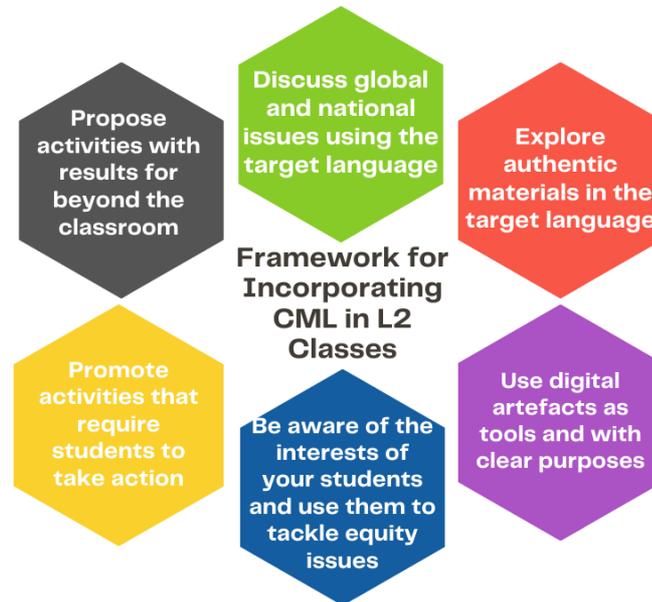
SOURCE: created by the author (2021)

To develop critically is no easy task and to do it in a different language can increase the challenges faced by teachers inside their classrooms. With that in mind, the framework is proposed to help second language teachers - which can also be applied to third language (L3), fourth language (L4) classes along with other content subject teachers as well - incorporate CML in their class planning. The framework is focused on adolescent students in the final years of elementary school and high school, which does not exclude the possibility of adaptation for younger learners. The main objective of the framework is to provide a starting point with key elements considered essential for the development of CML in second language classes, based on the development of the series of activities elaborated to collect data for this research. In this sense, the framework does not offer a coursebook to be followed with actual activity proposals, but it intends to provide guidance on which elements ought to be considered in order to implement CML in L2 classes in the most varied L2 teaching contexts, once it can be adapted to different realities.

5.1 Discuss global and national issues using the target language

A current evidence of the necessity for the development of critical media literacy is the COVID-19 pandemic. In a recent policy brief organized by the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Posetti and Bontcheva (2020) coined the term *disinfodemic*. The authors affirm that disinformation about COVID-19 "creates confusion about medical science with immediate impact on every person on the planet, and upon whole societies. It is more toxic and more deadly than disinformation about other subjects". Therefore, we are facing the pandemic of disinformation (henceforth, a disinfodemic).

The disinfodemic can result in real life damage and, more than ever, students must be aware that they are constantly being conditioned by media, through convincing advertisements, online research engines and social media. Kersch and Lesley (2019) claim that educators have to clarify to their students that the media is filled with several different voices. Discussing global and national issues in our classrooms is essential for students to understand different points of view on the same matter and the origins and purposes of the voices being uttered on the topic in question. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a clear example on the importance of discussing issues on a global and national scale, analyzing the measures being taken in other countries and the possible reasons for anti vaccine movements around the globe.

Regarding the language being used to nurture those discussions, as previously stated in the Literature Review section of this paper, Jordão and Fogaça (2012) claim that L1 has a fundamental role in L2 classes, once L1 can help in the promotion of more significant L2 classes. The authors affirm that at specific moments the L1 should be used for discussing more complex subjects, especially if the students present a lower proficiency level in the target language. Using L1 in certain moments and with pre-established objectives can be highly beneficial for the development of criticality, and, afterwards, teachers have the chance to propose activities to help students acquire the vocabulary necessary for those moments of discussions, constructing proficiency in oral genders through real life issues. In the globalized world we live in, students must be aware of the impacts global issues can have on national and local levels, preparing them to analyze and understand global connectivity along with its pros and cons.

Furthermore, it is important to nurture an environment that favors discussions between peers, in which students have the chance to share their thoughts and opinions with their classmates as well and not only with the teacher, adopting a dialogical approach to education (FREIRE, 1987). The teacher ought not to be at the

center of the discussions as the detainer of knowledge being the only one able to ask questions expecting for preexisting answers. Students must be encouraged to discuss with their peers, learning how to speak and listen respectfully, challenging their own points of view, developing knowledge in a democratic way. Students ought to have space to raise their voices and also to be heard, using the classroom as a place to practice for the development of a more democratic and equitable society.

5.2 Explore authentic materials in the target language

One of the keys to explore global and national issues in L2 classes relies on the selection of the material. Most schools opt to use second language textbooks and those usually provide several different topics, focusing on vocabulary and grammar acquisition of the target language, however, in order to bring real life subjects into our classrooms we must rely on authentic materials as support. Notice that the abandonment of textbooks is not being suggested, once they can be of great help when it comes to the organization and sequentially of contents in L2 classes. Nonetheless, textbooks should not be the only source being used.

When promoting activities that develop critical literacy (and consequently critical media literacy), the importance of providing and analyzing authentic materials is evident (JIMÉNEZ; GUTIÉRREZ, 2019), being also necessary to consider the diversity of these materials, expanding genres and sources. Using authentic materials for analysis is feasible, especially when the L2 is English, since there is a wide array of journalistic websites, magazines, videos and movies easily available online in the target language. Those materials can enrich the classes while offering students input to analyze critically and propose innovative solutions for the issues of the world. Textbooks can also be a source of authentic resources. Textbooks that provide quality authentic materials can present themselves with many possibilities to be explored in the process of developing critical media literacy, once teachers can expand the proposals in the books according to the project/theme being developed with the students. Through the usage of different strategies, textbooks can be fruitful allies in the critical classrooms.

We must bear in mind that critical media literacy is not simply an academic skill, but a competence for life. As stated by Lesley (2008, p.178): "In essence,

adolescents should be marinated in multifaceted purposes, perspectives, and settings involving reading a variety of texts." The more variety of texts students have contact with during their academic journey, the more prepared they will be to identify fake news, perceive the voices and ideologies presented in all discourses and the ones that are silenced, differentiate fact from opinion, consequently becoming well aware citizens capable of real changes within their communities.

5.3 Use digital artefacts as tools and with clear purposes

The development of critical media literacy is directly related to the usage of digital artefacts. As discussed in the previous section, authentic materials are essential in L2 classes, especially if the target language is English, once the internet is filled with quality sources to be used. The incorporation of digital resources for the most varied tasks is a reality in many schools. For instance, the quarantine established due to the COVID-19 pandemic has demanded new ways of teaching all, worldwide educators had to adapt themselves to the new reality of remote learning classes, for which most were unprepared. Hopefully, the heritage left by the remote learning classes will be a positive one and teachers will continue to use digital resources as purposeful tools in their in-person classes as well.

However, incorporating digital resources in L2 classes ought not to be simply about the development of the students' proficiency in working with certain digital mechanisms, but rather establishing clear objectives to be achieved with the manipulation of the resource, using it as a tool to produce something meaningful. For instance, in the present research, students were expected to develop collaborative websites about endangered animal species in Rio Grande do Sul in order to raise awareness for the animals and the possible causes leading to their endangerment. While working on the websites, students worked collaboratively with their classmates, evaluated sources for their research, increased their English vocabulary about the topic, set strategies regarding the disposition of the content on their webpage, i.e., they were constantly making choices. The proposal was not simply about using the digital tool Google Sites to develop websites about endangered animals, it had clear and pre-established goals which went far beyond the usage and dominance of the

technology, there were many skills and competencies being summoned while developing the webpages.

Having said that, our proposals involving digital artefacts need to have pre-established objectives and develop much more than the ability of the students to work with the digital tool or even for the sake of doing something different in class. Furthermore, another perspective of the usage of digital tools is regarding social media and its endless possibilities of creation. Critical media literacy can be more than analyzing media critically, it can, and should, be about responsibly producing media:

> "The process of creating media has numerous pedagogical benefits. First, actively creating media, as opposed to merely reading and discussing it, is better constructivist pedagogy. [...] Second, creating alternative media is empowering because it provides students a path for taking action about the problems they see and encounter in the world around them. Students need to know how to use new tools to engage politically in their world in ways to reach countless numbers of people, much as they do socially on their own with gaming, texting, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc" (FUNK, KELLNER, SHARE, 2016, p.13).

The Web 2.0 offers us the possibility of being more than consumers of content, assuming the role of creators. In this sense, students need to be prepared to act in this role with responsibility and safety. As teachers, we can encourage students to engage as media producers, using social media as a space for their voices to be heard by many, however, we also have to ensure our students are aware of the consequences of their online footprint along with their social responsibility as media creators.

5.4 Be aware of the interests of your students and use them to tackle equity issues

As discussed in the subheading 5.3, developing CML in L2 classes implies using technology in our favor with clear purposes and goals, making students handle authentic materials coming from the *real* world. When choosing the digital tools to be incorporated into our planning, the interests of the students must be taken into consideration. Students need to perceive L2 classes as meaningful moments and

that their purposes can go beyond language learning. In order to reach this goal, students need to feel seen and represented in those classes.

Learning about the students' interests can be an important key to enhance their engagement and active participation in their learning process of a L2. As stated by Kalantzis and Cope (2012):

> There are many reasons why a teacher might want to bring popular culture and media into the classroom: to connect with learners' identities; to start with the known before moving on to the new; and because media and popular culture encompass texts of our time that carry enormous emotional affect and social effect. Students bring to learning powerful symbolic resources that are derived to a significant degree from the media and popular culture, so this is a way to start 'where the students are at' (KALANTZIS; COPE, 2012, p.221).

Creating this proximity with our students, and consequently with pop culture, will bring more meaning to L2 classes, which can nurture a more active and significant participation of the students. Social media such as Tik Tok, Twitter and Instagram can be powerful tools to be used inside the classroom, as long as the proposals have clear pre-established objectives and the process is well organized counting with the unconditional guidance of the educator. Bringing some digital tools and social media that students actually use outside the classroom can show them that the school, and more specifically L2 classes, can be an effective part of their academic lives and their personal lives, teaching them valuable learnings for life outside school.

Social media can be used to start a series of debates inside the L2 classroom, they can serve as materials for critical analysis, expansion of vocabulary in the target language and even serve as tools to engage students with social causes. "CML pedagogy encourages students to identify injustice, to analyze its roots and the ways in which it propagates, and to take action to challenge the problem" (FUNK, KELLNER, SHARE, 2016, p.13). In scenarios in which students are from a more privileged context, which is the case for the participants in this research, the discussion of social issues through their own interests has the potential to evidence the responsibility those students have in their hands when it comes to development of a more egalitarian society, using their position to promote social equity, maturing to be conscious that Brazil, along with numerous other countries, is far from achieving social equity and measures must be taken in order to change this reality.

As stated by Janks (2013, p.226): "Access without diversity (...) fails to recognize that difference fundamentally affects who gets access to what and who can benefit from this access. History, identity and value are implicated in access." Using resources such as movies, series, songs and authentic contents retrieved from different online sources, can promote valuable discussions in L2 classrooms, opening students' eyes about what is intrinsic in media discourses and the important role we all have in our society in the fight against inequality and injustice.

5.5 Promote activities that require students to take action

When discussing the importance of using CML in L2 classes to tackle equity issues, it needs to be clear that these proposals will imply the active participation of the students in their learning process. Critical media literacy requires students to think for themselves, reaching their own conclusions and developing their beliefs while listening to their classmates' points of views and learning with their life experiences as well. Therefore, the traditional tasks of reading a text and answering comprehension questions have to be extended to deeper discussions and activities that challenge students to do more on their own.

By developing CML in L2 classes, project-based learning is a promising path to be followed, as shown in this study, once one can establish along with the students a central theme from which many possibilities can originate. Furthermore, "teachers should be cautious not to fall into the common trap of over-valuing the final product at the expense of the creation process. CML emphasizes the application of critical thinking inquiry skills as well as media production that can be used to address genuine concerns" (FUNK, KELLNER, SHARE, 2016, p.13). Critical media literacy is not obtained through the achievement of a final product, it is during the process that the most important discoveries and breakthroughs are achieved, the trajectory needs to be valued more than the destination, the process is at the center of project-based leaning experiences.

It is not being said that we should disregard the more conventional activities proposed in L2 classes, such as grammar and vocabulary exercises, reading and comprehension of different genres, but it is affirmed that the classes cannot be summarized into those activities. According to Lesley: "Critical literacy positions teachers and students into dialogues that create space for broader uses of literacy

beyond what is typically presented in school settings" (LESLEY, 2008, p.178). The more significant activities shall be the ones in which students are challenged to read beyond the texts, summoned to share their thoughts and opinions, analyzing authentic materials, discussing authentic global and national issues, and, in this sense, nurturing an environment of constant growth and inquiry.

5.6 Propose activities with results from beyond the classroom

The six steps presented in the CML for L2 classes framework are deeply connected. Each of them leads to the other and vice-versa. The framework was designed in a way to represent that all of those points are in action at the same time when developing CML in L2 classes, they complement and intersect each other. However, this last one seems to be the result of all the previous steps put in action, which is ensuring that the development of CML is promoting real changes outside the classroom. Prensky (2010) claims that real learning "involves students immediately using what they learn to do something and/or change something in the world. It is crucial that students be made aware that using what they learn to effect positive change in the world, large or small, is one of their important roles in school" (PRENSKY, 2010, p.20). The goals of our proposals have to go beyond the school walls and, nowadays, with the advances in technology, it has been easier to make that happen:

> Even elementary school students can change the world through online writing, supporting and publicizing online causes, making informational and public service videos and machinima, and creating original campaigns of their own design. Anything students create that 'goes viral' on the Web reaches millions of people, and students should be continually striving to make this happen, with output that both does good and supports their learning (PRENSKY, 2010, p.66).

As previously stated, CML is a competence for life, in this sense, when promoting activities that develop CML in our classes the results cannot be measured simply by tests and graded papers, but they need to imply real changes in the real world. Notice, it does not have to cause global impacts, but even the smallest actions can echo and impact our classrooms, our schools, our communities. By doing that,

we can inspire our students to think about global and local issues and their roles as innovative and creative citizens becoming an active part of the solution.

With the great influence of social media, television and newscast channels, CML plays an imperative role in students' lives, preparing them to think critically in order to act within their communities. "A CML approach to teaching reminds educators and students that the questions that need to be asked are often the ones that challenge what some consider to be the most fundamental building blocks of society" (FUNK, KELLNER, SHARE, 2016, p.14). In this sense, we need to raise more questions and provide less answers in our classes, placing students in a position of agency and critical thinking development, promoting activities that do not only teach a second language, but empowers them to build their own beliefs, giving them the choice to choose their lives' influences instead of simply being blindly influenced by several sources surrounding them in a daily basis.

As previously stated, the Framework for Incorporating CML in L2 Classes is not a textbook with activities to be reproduced, but rather a guide to help educators, in the most varied contexts, rethink and review what are their real objectives in their L2 classes and how they can engage students into a more meaningful and critical learning of a second, third, fourth language. For the educators in less privileged contexts, in which the level of proficiency of their students is lower, and so are the resources, the framework can be used by exploring the discussion skills students have in their first language to later build knowledge in the second language. Furthermore, the digital artifacts can be replaced by analog ones, since multimodality is not only present in digital texts. The Framework for Incorporating CML in L2 Classes was created to be the initial guide for the development of CML in L2 classes and each educator ought to adapt its suggestions according to their realities.

6 FINAL REMARKS

Teaching in such fast-paced times requires resilience, flexibility and a sensitive approach with our students. Our current society challenges its citizens daily, with the arrival of new technological breakthroughs, fake news being spread in the most varied scopes with multiple purposes, including merchandising, politics, societal views, among others, it seems unfeasible to be permanently aware and vigilant in this societal vortex. In the midst of this scenario relies education and the important role of educators in preparing our students for a future filled with uneasiness and perspectives that are constantly being reshaped.

Regularly new literacies are required from us, but the ability to think critically ought to be intrinsic to all of the new competences we learn and teach to our students. Considering the current Brazilian scenario, in which few companies have control over media, and many people fiercely believe news spread in social media and instant messaging apps, discrediting scientific discoveries, developing critical media literacy has never been more relevant. The development of critical thinking must be nurtured since the beginning of the students' academic journeys, being a process in constant progress. It is the role of the school to promote opportunities for students to become well informed and conscious citizens, being aware of the reality surrounding them. In this sense, critical literacy and critical media literacy should not be reserved for L1 classes, once L2 classes can be fruitful spaces to raise

awareness on critical media literacy issues. For the realities in which students present a lower proficiency level in the target language, Jordão and Fogaça (2012) claim that using L1 with clear purposes in the moments of complex discussions can enhance the development of critically in L2 classes, encouraging students to participate more actively of these moments. Later, the educator can expand the vocabulary in the L2 language, developing proficiency gradually.

Considering the dangers of our current misinformation scenario, and the close examples of the easiness with which people believe news without checking them, the motivation for this thesis arose. As an English teacher working in a bilingual school (Portuguese/English), with five periods (50 minutes each) of English classes per week, there is much that can be done. Set during the remote learning period of classes, due to the COVID-19 quarantine established at the time, both groups of 7th graders (students with ages between 12 and 13 years old) had two synchronous classes through the videocall platform Google Meet per week added to asynchronous tasks to be performed by themselves. The interventions previously described were proposed during the two periods of synchronous classes with the constant assistance and virtual presence of the teacher-researcher responsible for this study. The main research questions of this study aimed at answering how 7th year elementary school students in a bilingual context identify and check the (lack of) veracity of a hoax website composed of invented information in English, by answering to a questionnaire about the website, and how the interventions made to develop critical media literacy in L2 influence in the productions of their own websites about endangered species. The methodology of the study was partly replicated from a study conducted with Dutch schoolchildren with similar ages by Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018).

In order to answer the research questions, firstly a brief contextualization of the topic *endangered animals* was made through article readings from authentic materials. After that, the students were challenged to analyze the hoax website Help Save the Northwest Tree Octopus and answer to an online questionnaire about their perceptions, following the methodology adopted in the Dutch study of 2017 (LOOS, IVAN; LEU, 2018). Surprisingly, none of the 40 students from both groups of 7th graders were able to identify the Save the Northwest Tree Octopus as a fake website. In the Dutch study conducted by Loos, Ivan and Leu (2018), only 2 out of 27 students could identify the website as being fake. The authors of the study suggested

that the school environment, the trust in their teacher and the emotional attachment to the topic (endangered animals) could justify the results (LOOS; IVAN; LEU, 2018), which could also support the fact that none of the 40 students in this current study identified the non-veracity of the website. One reason in particular may be linked to the results of this current research, which is the trust in their teacher, as proven by the students' excerpts prior presented in this paper: "Because if my teacher send the link for the site probably it is real", "Because I trust in my teacher", "Because apparently when a teacher gives us a website to research I think we trust the website."

Students are discouraged to question their teachers, once it is expected from educators to be trustworthy sources. As mentioned before, it is not being suggested students should not trust their teachers, but when engaging with critical pedagogies it is required from educators to have a different attitude towards their roles inside classrooms, distancing themselves from the banking model of education suggested by Freire (1987), in which educators and pupils are placed in hierarchical positions being the teacher on top of the pyramid. Unlike this model, Freire (1987) suggests a dialogical approach to teaching and learning, with an egalitarian relationship between educators and students, in which students are allowed to think critically and speak for themselves, sharing their thoughts, feelings and opinions while learning *with* the teachers and not *from* them.

Students from both groups expressed great surprised when they discovered the non-veracity of the octopus' website, some of them could address their disappointment, their lack of attention and deep analysis of the content. The experience was brought up several times in the following classes and it was clear that it moved the students to something that perhaps they had not experienced before, experimenting the feeling of being misled by online content and by their teacher. As a teacher-researcher, I could realize that the results that I first considered negative, since none of the students was able to identify the lack of veracity of the website, actually raised students' awareness on the importance of checking online content, even when the source who provides it is considered a trustworthy one, in this case the source being the teacher. By going through the experience, students could understand clearly the real impact of fake news in our lives as citizens, considering they would be advocating for an inexistent animal.

Judging by the students' engagement and their contributions in the following classes, it was noticed that critical media literacy was indeed being developed throughout the interventions. As an example, when the students received the visit of two biologists to talk to them about endangered species of animals in Rio Grande do Sul, the teacher-researcher questioned them about the trustworthiness of those biologists as sources of knowledge and some of their replies expressed the points to be considered when analyzing the veracity of a source (*"Yes, because they are specialists, they are biologists, they work with that and research about that."*).

Conducting action research is a process of constant transformation, it is not simply about observing and implementing interventions to change a certain scenario, it is about the learnings acquired along the way. Having the opportunity to teach and research concomitantly has given me the chance to analyze my own practice as an English teacher and reflect about my goals within the classroom. More than expanding their vocabularies, practicing reading and writing strategies, students developed collaboration skills during the creation of their webpages in pairs, in a novelty scenario for all of us, the remote learning classes. It was possible to see their engagement with the task and their commitment to ensure the delivery of quality information to their readers, selecting the sources in their research and using multimodal strategies appealing for the readers' emotions, convincing them to join the cause of the protection of endangered animal species.

To develop critical media literacy is to use the tools we have at our disposal to make students reflect about their place and their responsibilities within their societies. It means to take action and make students' productions reach spaces and people beyond the classroom walls, engaging with their communities, as it will be when they leave school. Seeing that other students were using their materials as a research source months after the creation of the websites, showed the students their productions went beyond, and, therefore, it justified the necessity to be responsible as online content producers. Furthermore, Janks (2013) reminds us of the dangers of the design/redesign without diversity, stating that the privileges dominant forms ought to encounter diversity so we are not leaving anyone by the margins and forgetting about the inequalities of this world. In the case of this study, the students come from a privileged context, a private bilingual school, and the activities we promote must constantly remind them of what they can do from the privileged position they occupy. Brazil is a socially unequal country, and by developing critical literacy and critical

media literacy privileged students must be made aware of their role in the fight against these inequalities, which were sadly evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a teacher-researcher, I had the chance to observe and analyze my practice and see myself as a guide to these students. During the process of data collection, I could perceive many things that seem previously taken for granted, such as the trust my students have in me, the importance of giving students space to speak up for themselves, insist in the collaborative proposals, which are challenging, however, the only way to develop collaboration is by collaborating with others. At the end of the process, the potential of the students was emphasized through their oral contributions and creations, such as the websites. Furthermore, producing something with real purpose, reaching far beyond the walls of the classroom, physically redefined by the remote learning format, has given my English classes a different meaning, using this space to discuss real life issues and thinking about what could have been done to tackle adversities regarding endangered animal species and the recognition of untrustworthy content.

From those reflections, the Framework for Incorporating CML in L2 Classes was created, with the main objective of helping educators to implement CML in their second language classes. The framework consists in 6 basic steps to be considered when planning L2 classes with a CML perspective: 1) Discuss global and national issues using the target language; 2) Explore authentic material in the target language; 3) Use digital artefact as tools and with clear purposes; 4) Be aware of the interests of your students and use them to tackle equity issues; 5) Promote activities that require students to take action; 6) Propose activities with results for beyond the classroom. In times of uncertainties, the development of critical thinking is essential, considering that information is easily and rapidly made available to students at any place and time. The school cannot be about memorizing grammatical rules and filling in long lists of exercises, more than ever, it is clear the enormous social role of the school and, henceforth, educators. As Kellner and Share (2007) affirm, CML is essential in the construction of a participatory democracy. Students must be skilled with criticality in order not to be fooled by ideological of fake discourses, becoming conscious citizens capable of making well informed decisions. We are preparing the next generations for a world filled with misleading information, challenges and influences that are not always positive, and they must be ready to raise their own voices instead of replicating someone else's speech.

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APPENDIX A - TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO – TCLE

UNISINOS

UNIVERSIDADE DO VALE DO RIO DOS SINOS
Unidade Acadêmica de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação
Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO – TCLE

Seu/sua filho(a) está sendo convidado(a) a participar do estudo "HELP SAVE THE ENDANGERED PACIFIC NORTHWEST TREE OCTOPUS FROM EXTINCTION: Os alunos de 7º ano são suscetíveis às fake news?" realizada pela mestranda Karin Paola Meyrer, do Programa em Pós-Graduação em Linguística Aplicada da Unisinos, e que tem por objetivo verificar como alunos de 7o ano do ensino fundamental de uma escola bilíngue detectam a veracidade dos fatos em um website. Desta forma a pesquisa busca contribuir no processo de letramento crítico midiático dos alunos.

A pesquisa ocorrerá durante as aulas de Language Arts (Língua Inglesa), respeitando o calendário e a organização da escola. A participação requer a realização de uma atividade de leitura e compreensão de um website, através de respostas em um questionário inserido em um Formulário Google. As informações obtidas serão rigorosamente confidenciais. Os nomes reais serão substituídos por outro em qualquer apresentação ou publicação que eu possa vir realizar a fim de divulgar os resultados da pesquisa.

A participação nesta pesquisa é voluntária e você pode interrompê-la a qualquer momento sem nenhuma penalidade. Vocês podem obter informações sobre o andamento da pesquisa sempre que acharem necessário e os resultados estarão à disposição de vocês quando a pesquisa for finalizada.

Os riscos associados ao desenvolvimento deste estudo são mínimos, apenas no que diz respeito à possibilidade de os(as) participantes sentirem algum desconforto durante a realização da atividade. Nesses casos, conversaremos e encontraremos a melhor forma de garantir o bem-estar de seu/sua filho(a) para que não haja nenhum tipo de constrangimento durante a realização da pesquisa.

Se você autorizar a participação de seu/sua filho(a), por favor, assine este documento. Após sua autorização, ele/ela receberá o Termo de Assentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TALE) aceitando participar do estudo. Caso você tenha dúvidas ou queira maiores esclarecimentos, entre em contato comigo, pesquisadora responsável, pelo e-mail paolameyrer@gmail.com ou pelo telefone (51) 997646836. Após a sua autorização, este documento deverá ser assinado em duas vias, ficando uma com você e a outra sob minha responsabilidade.

_____, _____ de _____ de 2020.

_____
Nome do Participante

_____   _____
 Nome do Responsável   Assinatura do Responsável

_____
Karin Paola Meyrer
Pesquisadora

**CEP – UNISINOS
VERSÃO APROVADA
Em: 09/07/2020**

Av. Unisinos, 950   Caixa Postal 275   CEP 93022-000   São Leopoldo   Rio Grande do Sul   Brasil

APPENDIX B - TERMO DE ASSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO – TALE

UNISINOS

UNIVERSIDADE DO VALE DO RIO DOS SINOS
Unidade Acadêmica de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação
Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa

TERMO DE ASSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO – TALE

Pesquisadora responsável: Karin Paola Meyrer
E-mail: paolameyrer@gmail.com
Telefone para contato: (51) 997646836

Título da Pesquisa: estudo "HELP SAVE THE ENDANGERED PACIFIC NORTHWEST TREE OCTOPUS FROM EXTINCTION: Os alunos de 7º ano são suscetíveis às fake news?" Seu responsável autorizou você a fazer uma atividades comigo durante nossas aulas de Language Arts.

Você quer participar?

(   ) SIM   (   ) NÃO

_____, _____ de _____ de 2020.

_____
Nome do Participante

_____
Assinatura do Participante

_____
Karin Paola Meyrer
Pesquisadora

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