

CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS, CRITICAL LITERACY, AND LGBTQIA+ ISSUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN BRAZIL: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Daniel Carlos de Andrade Neto¹, Márcio Aurélio Carvalho de Moraes² and Pedro Miguel de Moraes Tavares³

ABSTRACT

This literature review article proposes an in-depth reflection on the urgency of incorporating the LGBTQIA+ agenda into the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Brazil, grounded in the theoretical assumptions of Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL) and Critical Literacy (CL). The investigation starts from the premise that, although official documents such as the BNCC and Brazil's national curricular guidelines advocate the formation of a critical and participatory citizen, day-to-day pedagogical practice and the school curriculum remain largely conservative, operating under a “pedagogy of silence” that renders issues of gender and sexuality invisible. Through a bibliographic survey that spans from initial teacher education to practices in Integrated Secondary Education and university extension projects, the study analyzes how CAL, as an interdisciplinary and politically engaged social science, makes it possible to problematize the power relations and hegemonic identities present in language. The results of the analysis of four main case studies demonstrate that the application of Critical Literacy, mediated by disruptive textual genres such as LGBT Rap and multimodal materials, not only helps combat homophobia and prejudice but also drives more meaningful and authentic linguistic-discursive development. It is concluded that English teaching must function as a space of “re-existence,” where ethical formation and social justice go hand in hand with linguistic proficiency, requiring a restructuring of teacher education so that the teacher assumes their role as a transformative intellectual in the face of diversity.

Keywords: Critical Applied Linguistics; Critical Literacy; Gender and Sexuality; English Language Teaching; Citizenship.

¹ Prof. Specialist

IFPI

E-mail: daniel.andrade@ifpi.edu.br

² Prof. PhD.

IFPI

E-mail: marcio@ifpi.edu.br

³ Prof. Specialist

Uninovafapi

E-mail: pedromiguel99@gmail.com



INTRODUCTION

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Brazil has been called upon to transcend merely structural teaching and to embrace pedagogical practices aligned with the demands of a plural and just society. The Curricular Guidelines and other guiding documents of Brazilian education (Brazil, 1996, 2000, 2017) propose a reconciliation between linguistic development and civic formation, requiring the teacher to act as an agent of social transformation.

However, research indicates that the Brazilian school curriculum often operates under the aegis of heteronormativity and conservatism (Junqueira, 2009), resulting in the silencing or minimization of crucial topics such as gender and sexuality (Ferraz, 2014; Pereira, 2023). Symbolic violence and exclusion against non-heterosexual subjects (LGBTQIA+) persist in the school environment, demanding an ethical and intentional pedagogical intervention.

In this context, Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL) and Critical Literacy (CL) emerge as theoretical and practical frames to confront invisibility and homophobia in ELT. This extended abstract aims to analyze recent literature that advocates and implements discussion of the LGBTQIA+ agenda in English teaching, showing how criticality can be mobilized to foster reflection and the expansion of perspectives among students and teachers in training.

DEVELOPMENT

This section presents results and the corresponding discussion, based on the appropriate interpretation of data and articulated with the theoretical foundation that underpins the study of Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL). CAL, seen as an engaged social science (Moita Lopes, 2006), requires the teacher to assume the role of a reflective researcher (Pennycook, 2001), one who must question the power relations that manifest in language and in the curriculum. According to Rajagopalan (2003), CAL investigates language in use within its socio-historical-political context, challenging the neutrality of practices that have historically privileged hegemonic identities.

Critical Literacy (CL) constitutes the methodological framework for such action. McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) define it as an expansion of comprehension that leads the reader to go beyond the surface of the text. The works follow Janks (2013, 2014), who proposes an approach more focused on how the “I” produces meaning, which is fundamental for the student to read themself critically, confronting their own prejudices. The studies analyzed demonstrate the impact of this approach in different contexts:

1. **Teacher Education:** Ferraz's (2015) study on addressing homosexuality and homophobia in an Academic Writing course with pre-service English teachers showed that, despite the lack of preparation during their undergraduate training, future teachers engaged in critical debate,

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indicating that the topic is both possible and necessary. The author highlights the problem of a “pedagogy of silence” concerning these themes.

2. **Teaching and Outreach:** The results of action research in extension projects (França & Ifa, 2021) and in Integrated Secondary Education classes (Pereira, 2023) converge. In both cases, the intentional creation of “environments for the development of critical awareness” (França & Ifa, 2021) and the use of multimodal texts with CL (Pereira, 2023) generated reflections, reconstructions, and broadened perspectives on gender and sexuality, confirming the contribution to an education committed to inclusion and egalitarianism.
3. **Analysis of Text Genres:** Trevisan and Cristóvão (2019) point out that the LGBT rap song genre, also called queer rap, can be used as a pedagogical resource in language teaching, fostering discussions about social issues related to LGBTphobia. The authors also emphasize that rap, as a form of resistance, confronts dominant school culture and amplifies the debate on diversity.

These findings reinforce the urgency of confronting the conservative curriculum (Junqueira, 2009) and homophobia (Borillo, 2010), transforming the English language class into a space for effective social action.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this extended abstract indicate that Critical Applied Linguistics and Critical Literacy constitute the most appropriate theoretical and practical path for inserting the LGBTQIA+ agenda into English Language Education in Brazil, thereby meeting the objective of the study. The analyzed works show that such approaches strengthen ethical and civic formation by combating symbolic violence and internalized homophobia in the school environment, while also supporting students’ linguistic-discursive development (França & Ifa, 2021).

The capacity for students to “read themselves” critically, as advocated by CL, is fundamental to the deconstruction of prejudice. For future work, it is recommended that greater focus be placed on continuing teacher education to equip teachers to address sexual diversity in an ethical, intentional manner and without fear of a “pedagogy of silence” in the classroom.



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