



MAIS INGLÊS MT PROGRAM – INITIAL REFLECTIONS

PROGRAMA MAIS INGLÊS MT – REFLEXÕES INICIAIS

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ABSTRACT: The More English MT Program was launched by the State Department of Education of Mato Grosso in 2022, aiming to boost the proficiency of teachers and students and make the state bilingual. The article aims to describe how the program works in public schools, analyzing student performance data and comparing it with English language teaching regulations. As a theoretical contribution, we used the National Common Curricular Base – BNCC and the Curricular Reference Document for Mato Grosso (Foreign Language Pedagogical Notebook). Authors who discuss continuing teacher training (FREIRE, 2010), (NÓVOA, 2002), (PERRENOUD, 1997) (TARDIF, 2014) will also be used, as well as theorists who deal with English language teaching in a public context (LIMA, 2011). The methodology will include document analysis, observation and collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The results are expected to highlight the impact of the program on student performance, providing insights for future educational policies and language teaching practices in public contexts.

KEYWORDS: English Language; Mais Inglês MT; Diagnosis.

RESUMO: O Programa Mais Inglês MT foi lançado pela Secretaria de Estado de Educação de Mato Grosso em 2022, visando alavancar a proficiência de professores e estudantes e tornar o estado bilíngue. O artigo objetiva relatar o funcionamento do programa nas escolas públicas, analisando dados de desempenho dos alunos e comparando-o com as normativas de ensino de língua inglesa. Como aporte teórico utilizamos a Base Nacional Comum Curricular – BNCC e o Documento de Referência Curricular para Mato Grosso (Caderno Pedagógico de Língua Estrangeira). Também serão usados os autores que dialogam sobre a formação continuada docente (FREIRE, 2010), (NÓVOA, 2002), (PERRENOUD, 1997) (TARDIF, 2014) bem como teóricos que versam o ensino de língua inglesa em contexto público (LIMA, 2011). A metodologia incluirá análise documental, observação e coleta de dados quantitativos e qualitativos. Espera-se que os resultados evidenciem o impacto do programa no desempenho dos alunos, fornecendo insights para futuras políticas educacionais e práticas de ensino de línguas em contextos públicos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Língua Inglesa; Mais Inglês MT; Diagnóstico.

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Introduction

In a recent survey carried out by “*The Dialogue – Leadership for the Americas*” (PEREIRA; STANTON, 2023) on Teaching English in Brazil, in which teachers from the states of Mato Grosso (818 responses) and Minas Gerais (579 responses) were surveyed, two major obstacles were raised: low proficiency in the language and little specific training in the English Language area and the belief that English is not learned in public schools. Professional development constitutes a necessary process for the development, improvement or qualification of any professional, especially the teaching professional, whether the Initial Training is considered deficient or not.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard used to describe language skills. In the proficiency ranking of 112 countries, Brazil ranks 60th, behind Argentina (30th) and Chile (47th), and far behind Portugal (7th), a country that also speaks Portuguese. This directly reflects on the teaching of English in schools, where teachers, for the most part, do not have good proficiency or even training in the area.

"There is still a belief that English is not learned in public schools, but rather in private language courses. This is a recurring statement from various voices: parents, students, and society in general (Dias; Assis-Peterson, 2006).

In the work organized by Lima (2011): “Is English not working in public schools? One question, multiple perspectives”, the author of chapter 6, Roberval Araújo de Oliveira, when dealing with possible solutions for language policy in Brazil, indicates the need for a change on three fronts: the governmental initiative; the popularization of language issues in society; and the commitment to this demand for improvements in FL teaching and appreciation of language education.

The main motivation that sustains this research article lies in the relevance that the theme has – the English language teaching-learning process, considering that the main challenges are the high social vulnerability, excess of students in the classrooms, uneven classes, lack of didactic and technological resources, students with gaps in reading and

writing and the existence of teachers with low proficiency in the language or even without training in the area. Added to this is the lack of specific continuing education for the English language.

Such problems have already been exposed by several studies, including here in the state of Mato Grosso (ASSIS-PETERSON, 2002) and is also exposed in PCNs. The Mais Inglês program appears as a hope for better days, as the government of Mato Grosso invests millions in the training of students and teachers. With this, the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação* (Guidelines and Bases of Education Law - LDB), in Article 62, sole paragraph, is fulfilled, which concerns the right to continuing training of teachers. Tardif (2014) would call “disciplinary knowledge”, the more specific knowledge, related to the various fields of knowledge, as found in universities and in the form of disciplines.

This action includes the general competences of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), mainly with regard to Digital Culture, Communication and the Cultural Repertoire. It also converges with the words of Freire (2010) who postulate about the students' autonomy in learning alone and without pressure. Thus, the justification for developing such a theme comprises investigating whether the applicability of the Mais Inglês MT program has been able to fulfill its initial objective: to promote the teaching-learning process by fostering bilingual practices.

As a methodological basis, this article is anchored in the qualitative method of exploratory and interpretative character. As a data collection instrument, there will be observation (graphic analysis) and analysis of the reports of the English Language trainers of the *Diretorias Regionais de Educação* (Regional Education Departments - DREs), in order to verify the English language teaching and learning process through the Mais Inglês MT program.

1 – Mais Inglês MT Program

With the justification of making the state of Mato Grosso a bilingual state, the State Department of Education (Seduc/MT) instituted the More English Program. This

program has several actions that aim to leverage the proficiency rates of teachers and students in the state.

In 2022, the Program had four major actions: offering the English language in the early years of Elementary School (with teaching materials from *Pearson*, a company specialized in this sector), acquisition of more than 130,000 teaching titles for all Basic Education and offering a fully digital English Language Platform for English Language teachers and high school students. Furthermore, in addition to the management allocated at Seduc's headquarters, 15 (fifteen) English language trainers were selected to work in each of the Regional Education Departments of Mato Grosso - DREs.

As this is the first time that English is offered in the early years of Elementary School, in addition to didactic and paradidactic material, training was contracted for teachers at this stage. These trainings took place in all DREs in the state, and teachers received per diems and tickets as needed in order to participate in training actions. It is noteworthy that this same training, with the necessary adaptations, was offered to teachers in indigenous schools.

For the use of the *Mais Inglês* platform, funds were made available for school units to hire internet and chromebooks were purchased for use in the classroom. On October 10, 2022, the state governor published Decree 1,497 which provides for the *EducAção 10 anos* Program, “which aims to align strategic issues with projects and actions developed to improve quality, equity and educational rates in Mato Grosso by 2032.” ((Decreto nº 1.497/MT).

In 2023, Seduc/MT acquired, in addition to materials for the early years of Elementary School from *Pearson*, didactic materials for Elementary School 2 and again provided training for teachers at this stage.

The *Mais Inglês* Platform, which was previously only for high school students, is now available to 8th and 9th grade students and to all teachers in the Network, not just those who teach English classes.

The Decree presents 30 policies that aim to improve public education in the state. With regard to the English language, the Foreign Languages Policy was launched, which comprises the More English and More Spanish programs. In this sense, in addition to the aforementioned actions, three language schools were inaugurated – one in Cuiabá, one in Várzea Grande and another in Tangará da Serra – offering a very extended workload of English and Spanish.

At the moment, there is an ongoing process of resizing the school units, since the Program activities of the initial years will be, little by little, transferred to the municipal schools. Due to this, still in 2022, there was a collaboration regime between the state and the municipalities, and the state government acquired all the same English material for the municipalities that adhered to this regime.

1.1 - Management at the Department of Education

The Secretariat of Education has the Superintendence of Basic Education (SUEB) which is composed of the Coordination of Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Youth and Adult Education and Assessment. Each one of them is responsible for ensuring that education is of good quality in the teaching stage it represents.

With the implementation of the Mais Inglês Program, a general leader and a manager were appointed in the Elementary Education Coordination and another in the Secondary Education Coordination, and they are responsible for managing the entire Program in the State.

From the establishment of this language center, various actions were undertaken. These included live sessions providing guidance to teachers, meetings with supplier companies, development of guidelines, adjustments to the system for releases (as English was not included in Elementary School - early years until then), training planning, and widespread promotion of the program.

1.2 - The trainers

Bearing in mind that the state of Mato Grosso has a large geographical area and, for the better progress of the Program, a selection was carried out in each DRE in order to select the 15 English Language trainers who would be responsible for managing the Program in their respective pole. These teacher trainers have the role of guiding teachers and students in their region in the use of materials and any other language-related demands. Their role has been fundamental in the smooth running of the Program.

1.3 - Teachers assigned with English Language classes

Why isn't the subtitle: English Language Teachers? Because in the state there is a shortage of teachers trained in Literature/English. Due to this, some school units are forced to assign teachers from other areas who have some knowledge of the language. This reality ends up weakening teaching and negatively impacts the teaching-learning process of the English language. Let's not talk about that now.

All teachers assigned with English classes had access to a Platform that, in addition to reading, listening, speaking and writing classes, provides unlimited live classes in groups with a maximum of 08 students from around the world, organized by level of proficiency and taught by native teachers from different countries and cultures. A goal of at least 24 live classes and one and a half levels per year (36 lessons) was established, which can be monitored by the Program management. As adherence by teachers was very low, Seduc's people management department prepared a registration term in which the teacher declares knowledge that:

Non-compliance with the participation and level elevation goals in the course, or non-completion, will generate the public servant the duty to reimburse the public treasury for all expenses arising from participation in the course, considering the estimated amount invested of BRL 2,400.00 per year per year. server, pursuant to art. 66 of the Statute of Civil Public Servants of the State, except for the hypothesis of justified reason.

At first there was a lot of resistance to the term, but those who already used the platform were showing that its use brought excellent results and these reports aroused the interest of the others involved.

In 2022, several Lives were made through Seduc's YouTube channel in order to guide teachers in the use of the materials available. In addition, the Pearson company held training in each of the 15 DREs to guide the use of its textbooks, paradidactics and platforms. These trainings took place in the cities where the DREs are located and teachers from other municipalities went there with tickets and per diem paid by Seduc.

1.4 - The students

The same platform was made available to high school students, with the difference that they did not have access to live classes. As of the 2nd quarter, the use of the platform was integrated into the curriculum for all high school students. For them, access to the platform is self-instructional, following the guidance and monitoring of their teachers. In the year 2023, students in the eighth and ninth years of elementary school also gained access to the Platform.

Furthermore, as planned, 100 (one hundred) students will have the opportunity to travel to London in August 2023, upon invitation from the Department of Education. Fifty were invited for obtaining excellent grades in the formative exit assessment in 2022, and another fifty were awarded for having a high rate of access and completion of lessons on the Mais Inglês Platform.

2. Theoretical conceptions

The teaching of English in schools is foreseen by the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC. The language was chosen by the BNCC for its character of international communication. The English language has the most influence and relevance, as a foreign language, in terms of the labor market and foreign trade relations within the state of Mato



Grosso. Regarding the learning of the English language, it was defined by the BNCC that the teaching of the language is mandatory from the Final Years of Elementary School. However, the school does not necessarily need to start introducing this language only at that moment. Ideally, from the early years of elementary school, your curriculum should include reflections and

access to the linguistic knowledge necessary for engagement and participation, contributing to the critical agency of students and to the exercise of active citizenship, in addition to expanding the possibilities for interaction and mobility, opening new paths for building knowledge and continuing studies. It is this formative character that inscribes English learning in a linguistic education perspective, conscious and critical, in which the pedagogical and political dimensions are intrinsically linked (BNCC, 2018).

In High School, it is possible to explore the English language through digital culture, as well as broaden your perspectives in relation to your personal and professional life. In addition, because it is a lingua franca, these students have the possibility of integrating with different cultures, opening up a range of “students’ linguistic, multisemiotic and cultural repertoires, enabling the development of greater awareness and critical reflection of the functions and uses of language”. English in contemporary society” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 485).

Learning the English language facilitates the creation of new forms of student engagement and participation in an increasingly globalized and plural social world, in which the borders between countries and personal, local, regional, national and transnational interests are increasingly blurred and contradictory. Thus, the study of the English language can provide everyone with access to the linguistic knowledge necessary for engagement and participation, contributing to the critical agency of students and to the exercise of active citizenship, in addition to expanding the possibilities of interaction and mobility, opening up new paths construction of knowledge and continuity in studies. It is this formative character that inscribes English learning in a linguistic education perspective, conscious and critical, in which the pedagogical and political dimensions are intrinsically linked (BRASIL, 2018).

The 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB) triggered important normative, organizational and pedagogical innovations, largely influenced by commitments to the Education for All agenda. The new law strengthened the decentralization of educational policy, attributing a high degree of autonomy to education systems. It made the

organization of basic education more flexible, admitting alternatives to the serial model, stimulating innovative pedagogical proposals, that is, the acceleration of learning and continued progression (MARCILIO, 2014, p. 345).

The need to learn a foreign language was recognized and established in the LDB since its original text, however, with the latest amendments, the need for English as a mandatory language from the 6th year of Elementary Education was admitted, while Law 13,415 (BRASIL, 2017) cites the mandatory use of this language in high school.

Jimenez and Cristóvão (2004) point out that it is necessary to expand the look beyond the classroom when teaching English, that is, teaching in public schools must be expanded beyond its walls, while we observe the language as a mediator of relationships between people of different cultures.

Teaching practice should seek to sharpen students' curiosity mainly through research in the exchange of knowledge. In teaching/learning through recreational activities, the content interacts with the objectives to be worked on at the right time. In the exchange of knowledge between the teacher and the students, they build and rebuild their knowledge, developing their autonomy. Thus, “[...] in the conditions of true learning”, Freire (2010) states that “the students are becoming real subjects of the construction and reconstruction of the knowledge taught, alongside the educator, who is also the subject of the process” (FREIRE, 2010, p. 26).

Although there has been a significant revolution in the field in recent decades, teacher training, pointed out by some education specialists as one of the main factors responsible for the problems in this area according to Nóvoa (2002), has not lived up to expectations. There is a certain difficulty in putting innovative concepts and models into practice. This is because institutions are closed in on themselves, sometimes due to excessive academicism, sometimes due to traditional empiricism, both deviations can be criticized. Hence, for the aforementioned author (2002, p.14): “Continuous learning is [being] essential in our profession. It must focus on two pillars: the teacher himself, as an agent, and the school, as a place of permanent professional growth.”

Perrenoud (1997) elucidates the importance of continuing education at the service of the development of professional skills. It is a capacity to mobilize resources - knowledge, evaluation and action schemes, tools - in order to effectively face complex and unprecedented situations. It is insufficient, therefore, to enrich the teacher's range of resources so that skills are automatically increased, as their development involves the integration and synergistic application of these resources in situations, and this must be learned.

3. Methodological Conceptions

As a methodological basis, this research is anchored in the qualitative method of exploratory and interpretative character. Denzin and Lincoln (2006, p.17) define this type of method as “an activity that locates the observer in the world”. For Gil (2008), this type of research has the basic purpose of developing, clarifying, and modifying concepts and ideas for the formulation of approaches, providing the researcher with greater familiarity with the problem, with a view to making it more explicit or building a hypothesis.

As a data collection instrument, we made use of observation (graph analysis) made available by the Platform, as well as talking to trainers from the Regional Directorates of Mato Grosso in order to ascertain their perceptions about the process of teaching and learning the English language through the More English MT program. Marconi and Lakatos (2003, p. 190) define observation as a “data collection technique to obtain information and use the senses to obtain certain aspects of reality. It does not consist only in seeing and hearing, but also in examining facts or phenomena that one wishes to study”.

The questionnaire, according to Gil (1999, p.128), can be defined “as the investigation technique composed of a more or less high number of questions presented in writing to people, with the objective of knowing opinions, beliefs, feelings, interests, expectations, situations experienced, etc.”

4. Initial analyzes

As part of the management of the Program at the Secretary of Education, we have access to all relevant data and information. Based on data collected by teachers and trainers, it is clear that students who are truly dedicating themselves to studying on the platform are achieving impressive results. They demonstrate proficiency in communicating with trainers fluently and accurately.

In order to measure this proficiency, in addition to the level tests available on the Platform, students will be submitted to the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) before leaving for London and upon returning from their trip. This English for International Communication test will be an additional tool to assess students' linguistic progress.

We believe this approach will be valuable as the TOEIC is internationally recognized and will provide an objective measure of students' English ability level. In this way, we will be able to identify the impact of the Program on your language skills over time.

Final Considerations

From our initial observations, we realized that the Mais Inglês MT Program has the potential to significantly contribute to the continuous improvement of students, preparing them not only in the English language, but also promoting training and global human development. Our goal is to enable them to build a more just, ethical, democratic, responsible, inclusive, sustainable and solidary society.

This program is based on a concept of Comprehensive Education, which goes beyond the student's permanence time in the school space or a specific teaching modality, since Comprehensive Education means promoting the development of children and young people in all its dimensions: intellectual, physical, emotional, social and cultural.



In this way, in addition to the academic aspects, we understand the importance of expanding students' ability to deal with their bodies and well-being, understand and manage their emotions and relationships, prepare themselves to act professionally and as responsible citizens, and value their identity. and cultural repertoire.

With the dedicated support of teachers, trainers and everyone involved, we understand that the Program can continue to provide positive and impactful results in the educational development of students. We are committed to creating an enriching experience that will prepare them to meet the challenges of the future with confidence and comprehensive skills. Together, we look forward to building a path to success for students and society at large.

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Recebido em: 31/07/2023 | Aprovado em: 18/07/2024
Publicado em: 05/07/2025
