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How BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular) addresses the Inductive and Deductive Approaches regarding the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

The analysis carried out in this work aims to compare the main characteristics as well as some differences between the deductive and inductive approaches and some of their advantages and disadvantages regarding the teaching and learning of the grammar of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It also analises the premises stated by the BNCC to the teaching and learning of English throughout the grades that this language is mandatory in Basic Education in Brazil. Moreover, this work intends to be a tool to help teachers regarding how to present grammar contents to their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. In addition, the theoretical framework of this paper is based on discussions by authors such as Thornbury (1999) and Nunan (2015) regarding the main characteristics, the pros and cons of the deductive and inductive approaches; Brown (2000) and Richards (2002) concerning some teaching methods that are based on those approaches; Rod Ellis (2002) in relation to the place of grammar teaching in foreign language curriculum; Adamson (2004) to better understand the definition of approach; and Anjos, Torres and Silva (2022) concerning some objectives presented at BNCC. Furthermore, it analyzes how the BNCC addresses the teaching of grammar contents in order to support students in the development of their communicative competence in the English language and whether this document suggests an inductive or deductive teaching of English at schools. The main question that conducts this work is how should English teachers effectively present grammar contents according to BNCC following the inductive or deductive approach to help students overcome struggles in the development of their communicative competence? Finally, the most important findings are that there is no approach more effective than the other and that the BNCC states which approach English teachers should follow, the inductive one.

Keywords: Deductive approach; Inductive approach; Grammar teaching; English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Resumo

A análise realizada neste trabalho tem como objetivo comparar as principais características, bem como algumas diferenças entre as abordagens dedutiva e indutiva e algumas de suas vantagens e desvantagens em relação ao ensino e aprendizagem da gramática do inglês como língua estrangeira (EFL). Analisa também as premissas enunciadas pela BNCC para o ensino e aprendizagem do inglês ao longo das séries que esta língua é obrigatória na Educação Básica no Brasil. Ademais, este trabalho pretende ser uma ferramenta para ajudar os professores a apresentar conteúdos gramaticais aos seus alunos de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira (EFL). Além disso, o referencial teórico deste trabalho é baseado

em discussões de autores como Thornbury (1999) e Nunan (2015) sobre as principais características, os prós e contras das abordagens dedutiva e indutiva; Brown (2000) e Richards (2002) sobre alguns métodos de ensino que se baseiam nessas abordagens; Rod Ellis (2002) em relação ao lugar do ensino de gramática no currículo de língua estrangeira; Adamson (2004) para entender melhor a definição de abordagem; e Anjos, Torres e Silva (2022) sobre alguns objetivos apresentados na BNCC. Outrossim, analisa como a BNCC aborda o ensino de conteúdos gramaticais, a fim de apoiar os alunos no desenvolvimento de sua competência comunicativa na língua inglesa e se este documento sugere um ensino indutivo ou dedutivo de inglês nas escolas. A principal questão que conduz este trabalho é como os professores de inglês devem efetivamente apresentar conteúdos gramaticais de acordo com a BNCC seguindo a abordagem indutiva ou dedutiva para ajudar os alunos a superar as dificuldades no desenvolvimento de sua competência comunicativa? Por fim, as conclusões mais importantes são que não há abordagem mais eficaz do que a outra e que a BNCC afirma qual abordagem os professores de inglês devem seguir, a indutiva.

Palavras chave: Abordagem dedutiva; Abordagem indutiva; Ensino de gramática; Inglês como língua estrangeira.

1. Introduction

There are different opinions expressed, for instance, by educators and theorists that encompass language teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (Thornbury, 1999; Brown, 2000; Hinkel; Fotos; Ellis, 2002). Moreover, those opinions usually refer to arguments on the one hand in favor of grammar teaching, but on the other, against it. As examples of those discussions, there are various methods such as the Directed Method, Grammar Translation, and Audiolingualism that give different relevance to grammar teaching.

Besides, there are arguments in favor of the teaching of grammar to students taking into account that it is necessary to learn or to have at least an instruction about it in order to be able to generate new sentences, to express themselves clearly through the use of that target language, and to improve their linguistic competence. However, there are arguments in which the teaching of the system of rules, grammar, is not considered that much necessary in language classrooms or that foreign language learning is defined as a natural process similar to first language acquisition.

Furthermore, as Thornbury (1999) points out both approaches the deductive and inductive present advantages and disadvantages. For this reason, it is important to consider that deductive lessons, for example, start with the presentation of grammar rules that can provoke teacher-centered lessons, which may lead students to monotony once they will not have much time to interact with their classmates or because they do not possess the necessary knowledge concerning grammar terminology to understand the explanation. On the contrary, the advantages of this deductive approach are, for instance, that it might save time during the lesson because the teacher can explain several rules rapidly. It may also provide students more time to interact with one another and practice what they have just seen.

In addition, when learners perceive rules from examples, those rules become more meaningful for them because there is mental effort involved in this process, which is different from when the rules are explained and students have just to store that information in their memory, it represents an advantage that the inductive approach offers. Another one is that students are able to practice their autonomy once they are actively engaged in the learning process. Nevertheless, it also presents disadvantages such as the time that both teachers and students might spend when working with an inductive method. Hence, the former might spend excessive time planning the lesson while the latter may spend too much time noticing patterns and rules.

The analysis that will be carried out in this work will compare the main characteristics as well as some differences between the deductive and inductive approaches (Nunan, 2015). Moreover, it will serve as a tool to help teachers to make a decision regarding how to present grammar contents to their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Lastly, it will be analyzed whether it is more profitable to teach those contents inductively or deductively in order to support students in the development of their communicative competence.

Taking it into account, the present work aims to answer the following question: How should English teachers effectively present grammar contents according to BNCC following the inductive or deductive approaches to help students to overcome struggles in the development of their communicative competence?

Moreover, the general objective is to investigate how the BNCC addresses both approaches regarding the teaching and learning of grammar contents of English as a foreign language (EFL). As specific objectives, in parallel, to examine the

discussion regarding the main features of deductive and inductive approaches to the teaching of EFL as well as to identify the elements of each approach that contribute to students' development considering that learners can achieve their purposes in learning the language effectively depending on the approach chosen by the teacher.

2. Deductive approach in EFL classrooms

Firstly, it is necessary to understand the definition of the term approach, which according to (Adamson, 2004 p. 605) "refers to the underpinning theory of language and of language learning". Moreover, a lesson taught with the deductive approach first presents a rule and it is followed by examples that apply the rule; while the inductive approach begins with some examples from which the rule is perceived. (Thornbury, 1999). Additionally, some students learn more and develop their communicative competence through a deductive approach, while others learn better through the inductive one. At the same time, many teachers also present their preferences with regard to adopting one approach or the other, mainly due to their experience, their academic formation, the age and level of the students, among other aspects.

There are many different ways of applying the deductive approach in a language classroom; however, this approach is, most of the time, associated with Grammar Translation, even though it is not dependent on translations because there is the possibility to adopt the deductive approach using the target language. The Grammar Translation Method in foreign language classrooms focuses on grammatical rules to serve as the foundation for translating activities from the foreign language to the first language. It also demands from the teacher a few specialized skills and facilitates the elaboration of grammar tests that can be easily scored. (Brown, 2000).

Moreover, a lesson using this method usually starts with the presentation of a grammar point, followed by activities of translating sentences to put into practice the content just seen. In conformity with Nunan (2015), in the deductive approach the teacher first explains the rule and then asks students to answer some exercises to practice and consolidate the rule. Nevertheless, one of the biggest problems of this method is that it is not feasible in multilingual classrooms. Another one is that it is

generally taught in the students' mother tongue. For this reason, they have a short time to practice the target language.

In addition, taking into account that the deductive or rule-driven approach gives priority to rules and explanations, it is important to consider the quality and appropriateness in a classroom of those rules' explanations. As a consequence, there is a distinction between descriptive and pedagogic rules, in which the former refers to a linguist's version of a rule created to describe an aspect of the grammar that might not be worth or appropriate to teach in a classroom. While the latter, the pedagogic rule, is defined as the teacher's version of a rule that might be created for students to apply (Thornbury, 1999).

Furthermore, the deductive approach presents advantages and disadvantages, for instance, it saves class time because it gets straight to the point when it comes to grammar explanation. Besides, this approach also attends the expectations of students in several learning environments, due to the fact that many of them go to foreign language lessons expecting to be told how the language works. In other words, many learners go to classrooms assuming that they will be told language rules and patterns, among other things, once there is a belief that learning a language is merely getting to know the rules of that language. On the contrary, if the lesson is completely focused on grammatical terminology, then younger students may not learn properly due to the lack of knowledge on this subject yet. At last, there are many more issues in terms of deductive approach, however, for the sake of the size of this approach, shall we move on to the next approach.

3. Inductive approach in EFL classrooms

Another possible way for students to learn a rule is by the inductive approach or rule-discovery, that is, the class starts with the presentation of examples, and from those examples, students perceive, and understand the rule. In other words, learners study and notice a specific grammatical rule from samples of language that contain that rule (Nunan, 2015). This approach, as a consequence, is considered similar to first language acquisition, characterized by the exposure to a great amount of input in which the patterns become clear with no need for explicit study or explanation of the rule. In addition, teachers applying this way of presenting grammar, the inductive

approach, present students with language data in form, for instance, of texts and sentences that were previously selected in order to stimulate them to figure out the rules for themselves.

Additionally, this learning through experience is related to, for example, the Direct Method that although is a second language instruction method is often associated with the first language acquisition. Furthermore, the Direct Method was created as an attempt to simulate the way children learn their first language because there is a belief that they learn it through connections between language and the world. In classes following this method, as a result, there is the acquisition of language rules by the comprehension and repetition of the examples presented within a context; therefore, it was created as a challenge to the Grammar Translation.

It is important to mention that the Inductive approach was also compared to the Audiolingual Method in which students learn by using several examples of a structure until its use becomes automatic. Language learning in line with this method was viewed as a process of habit development (Richards, 2002 p.20). Finally, this method presents characteristics such as the dependence on mimicry and memorization of sentences, and the necessity for students to avoid errors, that is, to put great effort into producing correct sentences. Other features of it are, for example, limited vocabulary learned in context and little grammatical explanation. For this reason, the Inductive approach was equated with it.

Meanwhile, the inductive approach also presents pros and cons. Its advantages refer to the active development of students' learning process, once it demands more independent learning skills from students and, as a result, provides a more meaningful and memorable learning for them. By contrast, this active language knowledge construction takes more time and effort from both students and teachers. For the students because they may expect to be told how the target language works and for the teachers because an inductive lesson is less teacher centered. Moreover, even though there are other issues concerning this approach, it is necessary to move forward to the next section due to the length of this paper.

4. The place of grammar in foreign language teaching and learning according to BNCC

Research in Brazil shows that students do not present an effective and real development in reading and writing activities at the end of their school years (Anjos, Torres and Silva, 2022). This situation may be associated with several factors, such as the focus of language lessons merely on the teaching of grammar patterns and rules through the use of sentences out of context with the objective to teach just grammatical terminology. This focus on grammar might be due to the great value given to a systematization of language considered more correct. However, students, mainly adults, may not achieve high levels of grammatical competence even if they have the opportunity to learn a foreign language naturally. This failure may happen due to many factors, for example, the student's age, communicative sufficiency, that is, the capacity to communicate in the target language without acquiring its rules.

Nevertheless, one could think that this problem would be solved through grammar teaching, concentrating learners' attention on grammatical forms and their meanings. This solution may be effective to some students' development, however, "there is now clear evidence to suggest that having learners produce sentences that model the target structure is not sufficient to guarantee its acquisition as implicit knowledge" (Ellis, 2008, p.19). In other words, just the teaching of grammar in an EFL classroom does not guarantee the improvement of learners' communicative competence.

Grammar instruction also has an important role in foreign language curriculum to some students that, as previously mentioned, expect to go foreign language classrooms to be told the patterns and rules of the target language. This type of learner values the teaching of grammar, they normally make efforts to understand the patterns of the language that they notice because they consider grammar a key element in their learning process. In contrast, there are also students who do not benefit that much from grammar instruction because they tend to view the language as an instrument used to communicate. After all, how should grammar be taught in EFL classrooms? What does the BNCC recommend?

Before answering these questions, it is important to mention that the time allocated to grammar instruction in a lesson should not be considered a time used to prevent mistakes while learning a foreign language, once it is something that would

happen anyways, that is natural throughout the learning process. Moving on to what the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) states, it is imperative to understand what is this document, its objectives, among other things.

The BNCC arises in a context of inequalities regarding not only the access but also the permanence of students at schools, which as a consequence damage the quality of their learning and it could be seen mainly in the results of large-scale achievement tests. For these reasons, in few words, the BNCC is a document that states what must be taught in schools all over Brazil, whether public or private, seeking to assure equality in education. It presents, also, learning objectives to be reached in each phase of basic education that are established according to different competencies and abilities defined in the curriculum of each educational system in the country. As Anjos, Torres and Silva (2022) state that:

> It is in this sense that BNCC seeks to ensure equality and equity in education and the integral development of the student, by standardizing the essential learning that must be developed by students at all stages of Basic Education, in order to ensure their learning rights and their integral development through the 10 general skills listed in the document. (Anjos, Torres and Silva, 2022, p. 7582- Our translation)[1]

Taking into account the BNCC premises to the teaching and learning of English, it states that the text is the key component of the language teaching instead of grammar. Besides, as the main objective with this focus on different textual genres, it aims to develop learners' communicative competence in order to enable their active participation in a wide range of fields of society, due to the fact that English is viewed in the document as a language used all over the world, with a broad variety of users and functions in the current time. In addition, the teaching of English throughout the phases that it is mandatory in the Basic Education in Brazil, i.e. from the 6th grade of Elementary School to the High School, is planned to provide students the knowledge to use the language in many different contexts.

With this characteristic, English is taught in the elementary school taking into account its position as a lingua franca[2]. Furthermore, in high school, it is taught

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[1] Original quotation in Portuguese: "É nesse sentido que a BNCC busca garantir a igualdade e a equidade na educação e o pleno desenvolvimento do educando, ao normatizar as aprendizagens essenciais que devem ser desenvolvidas pelos alunos em todas as etapas da Educação Básica, de modo a assegurar-lhes os direitos de aprendizagem e seu desenvolvimento integral por meio das 10 competências gerais listadas no documento.

[2] Cf. Crystal, 2003.

through the contextualization of several uses of the language providing students with abilities to use it in many fields and interact with multicultural groups to broaden their linguistic repertoire. Finally, the teaching and learning of EFL according to BNCC provide students with language knowledge that allows them to better understand information and explore new perspectives, for example.

Besides, within the language area, more specifically English, this document is divided into five organizing axes: writing, reading, orality, intercultural dimension and linguistic knowledge. The writing axis deals with the aspects of moments of planning, production and revision of texts that can be done individually or in groups and also intends to function as moments of creative writing. The reading axis refers to the interaction between the reader and the text, with the objective to prepare students to comprehend the text through meaning construction working with multimodal genres. Moreover, the orality axis encompasses situations of oral use of the language, as a result, it emphasizes the listening and speaking skills as well as meaning negotiation between the participants in the conversation.

Moving forward to the intercultural dimension axis, it involves the comprehension that different people are interacting with each other and, as a consequence, sharing and learning a wide range of cultural aspects not only of language, by the way. In what concerns the last but not least axis present in the BNCC, the linguistic knowledge one, it is possible to notice that it valorizes the study and analysis of the language not just to know what is right or wrong. Instead, it focuses on the teaching and learning of grammar articulated to writing, reading and orality practices incorporating, for instance, verb tenses and linking words in order to "inductively lead students to discover the systemic functioning of English." (Brasil, 2018, p.245- Our translation)[3]

5. Methodology

This article is a bibliographical research that has analyzed the possible similarities and differences between the deductive and inductive approaches, predominantly according to the discussion about their advantages and disadvantages

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[3]Original quotation in Portuguese: "[...] levar os alunos, de modo indutivo, a descobrir o funcionamento sistêmico do inglês."

that Thornbury promotes in his book *How to teach grammar,* 1999. In addition, other theorists' works were analyzed, for example, Nunan (2015) that compares both approaches in relation to the teaching of grammar. Brown (2000) and Richards (2002), in turn, present some characteristics of teaching methods, for instance, Direct Method, Grammar Translation, and Audiolingualism that are based on the mentioned approaches. Furthermore, Rod Ellis (2002) explains the relevance of grammar instruction in foreign language curriculum.

The differences between the approaches were analyzed in terms of how English as a Foreign Language is presented to students throughout Basic Education in Brazil according to BNCC. Taking it into consideration, it was examined if this document addresses the teaching of English grammar at schools and whether it recommends teachers to implement an inductive or deductive approach.

6. Analysis and Discussions

Taking into account everything presented throughout this work, it can be concluded that the efficacy of learning a foreign language is not only related to the way the language is taught and learned, but instead to many different aspects, including, for instance, the context of the student, their previous knowledge and intrinsic motivation. It is also important to notice that, the authors seeked to base this work do not affirm that there exists an approach better than the other. On the contrary, many issues must be taken into account, once the learning of a foreign language may vary according to the students' age, learning style, interests, among other things.

The BNCC allocates a place for the teaching of grammar in English lessons, but it is not the main focus of the classes, due to the fact that the focus of language teaching and learning in the document is the text and the variety of genres it has. As a result, the main objective of the BNCC concerning the teaching of English as a Foreign Language is to develop students' literacy to apply those genres in different contexts. Besides, it explicitly suggests that the teacher must apply the inductive approach during grammar lessons, as the main concern of language teaching according to BNCC is the text and grammar within a context.

Moreover, this objective present in BNCC of developing learners' literacy in a wide range of texts will enable them to explore new points of view; to better understand the world in which they live; to expose their opinions; to access information critically; among other possibilities regarding their linguistic and social cultural development (Brasil, 2018). In addition, considering not only how EFL is addressed in classrooms; whether its grammar is taught deductively or inductively, but also the aspects mentioned before, for instance, the context and previous knowledge of students as well as their learning style and interests, "it is necessary that the process of teaching and learning the English language offers the student a purpose, so that he can learn how to communicate with people from other cultures; how to obtain and share information; participate actively in discussions and much more" (Oliveira and Dering, 2018, p.10- Our translation).[4]

7. Concluding remarks

Exploring the literature related to the deductive and inductive approaches towards the teaching and learning of English as Foreign Language, we could notice that there exists many different opinions about the teaching of grammar. Based on authors such as Thornbury (1999) and Nunan (2015), it was possible to get to know the main characteristics of each approach and also to realize that both of them present advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, we could perceive that the main features of the deductive approach are, for instance, the explicit and direct presentation of grammar rules followed by activities to practice and consolidate the content that students have just got in contact with.

As this rule-driven approach emphasizes rules' explanations it was important to consider the appropriateness of those rules in EFL classrooms and the distinction between descriptive and pedagogic rules. Moreover, there is an association between the deductive approach and the Grammar Translation method maybe due to the emphasis that both give on grammatical rules. For this reason, many teachers also present their preferences to adopting this approach inasmuch as it requires from

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[4]Original quotation in Portuguese:"É preciso que o processo de ensino e aprendizagem da língua inglesa ofereça ao aluno um propósito, para que ele possa aprender a se comunicar, obter informação, etc."

them few specialized teaching skills and contributes to the implementation of exams focused on grammar that are faster to score in big groups of EFL.

Moving forward to the pros and cons of the deductive approach, throughout this work it was possible to see its advantages such as more opportunities for students to interact with one another, due to the fact that in a lesson taught deductively the teacher might explain several rules quickly. On the contrary, as disadvantages of this approach there is the risk of lessons becoming teacher-centered, for example. This disadvantage may also provoke learners' monotony, because they might not possess enough linguistic knowledge to understand the grammar explanation.

Secondly, as the main characteristics of the inductive approach, it is possible to observe lessons that start with the presentation of samples of language, from which students have to notice the grammatical rule. Besides, when implementing this approach teachers use a considerable amount of sentences or texts so that the patterns of the target language become clear for students, which may dismiss a formal explanation of that grammar content.

Considering these characteristics of the inductive approach, throughout this paper it was possible to see the relationship among the and Audiolingualism with this approach. There is this comparison between the Direct Method and this approach because both of them are considered similar to first language acquisition. Furthermore, the comparison between Audiolingalism and this approach happens due to the use of several samples of the target language with the objective of automatizing its use.

This approach, however, contains pros and cons as well. As an example of the advantages of the inductive approach, we can perceive that when learners perceive a given rule from samples, they put mental effort in this process. That rule, as a consequence, becomes more meaningful for them once they did not learn it in a passive way, as it happens in the deductive approach. Another advantage of this approach – that is connected to one mentioned above – is the autonomy students put into practice while learning through induction because they are actively engaged in their own learning process. On the other hand, as an example among the disadvantages already mentioned of this approach, there is the time students may spend to notice the target language patterns and rules.

In addition, the analysis of theorists' discussions regarding the main features about the approaches served to better understand each one of them before examining whether the BNCC allocates a place for grammar in its premises about EFL lessons and whether this document advises teachers to implement one approach or the other.

After briefly contextualizing relevant aspects about the BNCC, in other words, why it was planned; its main objectives to education in Brazil and more specifically to the teaching of the English language in our country, we could perceive that this document was thought to prevent inequalities regarding not only the access, but also the permanence of students at schools and to assure equality in education between private and public schools. It was also observed how and with which objectives English is taught along the Elementary and High schools. With respect to the teaching and learning of English, it was possible to see that the text and its broad variety of genres are the key elements of the language teaching instead of grammar contents. Besides, it aims to prepare students to use English in many different contexts once in the document this language is viewed as a lingua franca used in multicultural groups.

To sum up, in the light of all those aspects analyzed in this work, it was verified that the authors named above affirm, and we agree with them, that the efficacy of learning a foreign language depends on many factors such as the student's previous knowledge and intrinsic motivation. As a result, we can conclude that there is no approach more effective than the other. What will vary with regards to the effectiveness of this learning process is the students' age, once adults may prefer the deductive approach, while younger learners may prefer the inductive approach because they might not possess the necessary linguistic knowledge to comprehend grammar terminology. Other important factors are, for instance, their learning style and personal interests.

Finally, considering the findings about what is the place of grammar in English lessons according to the BNCC, it was possible to notice that in one of the axes that this document divides the teaching and learning of English, it allocates a place for the teaching of grammar in English lessons in the axis linguistic knowledge and suggests that this grammar teaching should be done inductively. This suggestion, therefore, for an inductive teaching is because it focuses on the development of learners' literacy in diverse textual genres instead of grammar rules.

The present work brought a brief overview on the main characteristics of the deductive and inductive approaches as well as the BNCC premises to the teaching and learning of grammar in EFL contexts.

The content presented in this work may help the development of future studies on related topics, such as the inductive approach related to the teaching of English grammar or the development of students' communicative competence through inductive teaching.

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