

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY – PARANÁ
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OF MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
LANGUAGE ARTS PORTUGUESE/ENGLISH

ROBERTA SOBRAL DE OLIVEIRA

**THE USE OF ICT IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED: A CASE OF
STUDY**

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT

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2015

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Final research project presented to the Language Arts English/Portuguese College of the Academic Department of Modern Foreign Languages – DALEM – and the Academic Department of Language and Communication – DALIC – of the Federal University of Technology – Paraná, as a requirement to obtain the Teaching degree.

Advisor: Prof^ª. Dr^ª. Miriam Sester Retorta

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Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná
Campus Curitiba
Departamento Acadêmico de Linguagem e Comunicação
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TERMO DE APROVAÇÃO

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por

ROBERTA SOBRAL DE OLIVEIRA

Este Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (TCC) foi apresentado(a) em 23 de junho de 2015 como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Licenciado em Letras Português/Inglês. A candidata foi arguida pela Banca Examinadora composta pelos professores abaixo assinados. Após deliberação, a Banca Examinadora considerou o trabalho aprovado.

MIRIAM SESTER RETORTA
Prof.(a) Orientador(a)

EGLANTINE JOCELYNE CHRISTINE GUELY
Membro titular

DIEGO ADDAN GONÇALVES
Membro titular

- O Termo de Aprovação assinado encontra-se na Coordenação do Curso -

To José Roberto and Rosemary, my loving
parents. This achievement is only possible
because you gave me the best education you
could.

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And finally to all the students of English for the Blinds that thought me much more than can even realize.

On His Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more
bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"

I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not
need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His
state

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."

(MILTON, John, s/d)

ABSTRACT

OLIVEIRA, Roberta Sobral de. **The use of ICT in teaching English as an additional language for blind and visually impaired: a case of study.** 2015. 93 pages. Research Project. Curso Superior de Licenciatura em Letras - Português/Inglês, Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná.

This project is inserted in the Applied Linguistics scope and aims at investigating how blind and visually impaired learners use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to communicate and learn English as an additional language. For the development of this topic, a literary approach will be taken, in order to review the literature in teaching English as an additional language for the blind and the visually impaired. Based on Cope and Kalantzis (2012 and 2000), Lankshear and Knobel (2008 and 2005) and Glister (1997), that analyzed the growing field of digital literacies; this article reports to a case study which took place in the project – English for the Blinds – carried out at the Federal University of Technology – Paraná (UTFPR) from February to December 2014. In order to gather data, profiles of the students were collected and analyzed. Also, a questionnaire was applied, classes were observed, and an interview was made. By the end of this brief research, we expect to collaborate with the blind and visually impaired learner's learning process.

Key words: English. Information and Communications Technology. Blind. Visually Impaired.

RESUMO

OLIVEIRA, Roberta Sobral de. **The use of ICT in teaching English as an additional language for blind and visually impaired: a case of study.** 2015. 93 páginas. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso. Curso Superior de Licenciatura em Letras - Português/Inglês, Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná.

Este projeto está inserido no âmbito de Linguística Aplicada e tem como objetivo investigar como os alunos cegos e deficientes visuais usam as Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação (TIC) para se comunicar e aprender Inglês como uma Língua Adicional. Para o desenvolvimento deste tema, será realizada uma revisão de literatura, a fim de revisar a literatura já existente no que diz respeito ao ensino de Inglês como língua adicional para cegos e deficientes visuais. Com base em Cope & Kalantzis (2012 e 2000), Lankshear & Knobel (2008 e 2005) e Glister (1997), que analisaram o crescente campo do letramento digital; este artigo relata a um estudo de caso, que foi acompanhado através do projeto – *English for the Blinds* – realizado na Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (UTFPR) – no período compreendido entre fevereiro e dezembro de 2014. A fim de reunir dados, um perfil dos alunos foi realizado e analisado. Além disso, foi aplicado um questionário, foram observadas aulas, e uma entrevista foi feita. Até o final desta breve pesquisa, espera-se colaborar de alguma maneira com o processo de aprendizagem do aluno cegos e deficientes visuais.

Palavras-chave: English. Information and Communications Technology. Blind. Visually Impaired.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
UTFPR	Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L2	Second Language
ADEVIPAR	Associação dos Deficientes Visuais do Paraná
LDB	Law of Directives and Bases for Education
PNE	National Education Plan
CNE	National Education Council
SEED	Ministry of Education of the State
DEEIN	Special Education Department
DL	Digital Literacy
DLs	Digital Literacies
MON	Oscar Niemeyer Museum
app	application
PDF	Portable Document Format
mp3	MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 Audio Layer III

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INTRODUCTION

“Technology is nothing. What’s important is that you have a faith in people, that they’re basically good and smart, and if you give them tools, they’ll do wonderful things with them.”

Steve Jobs

As noticed, this section started with an epigraph from Steve Jobs – North American inventor, who was the co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Apple Inc –, in which he exposes his perspective, in which technology is only a tool, that can only help people achieve great things.

This point of view, was chosen to demonstrate how technology has been seen and, even more, has yet to be seen for many years to come. In this growing technological world, this new concept is applicable to the educational sphere. Our youngest generation, and even the not so younger ones, according to Klopfer *et al* (2009) are creating things in new ways, learning things in new ways, and communicating in new ways with new people.

Green and Hannon (2007, p. 38) complement Klopfer *et al* (2009), by saying: “Children are establishing a relationship to knowledge gathering which is alien to their parents and teachers”; and, this context can also be used to refer to teenagers and adults, as well. Klopfer *et al* (2009), also reminds us that this transformation has serious implications in the space of education; almost all institutions – business, industry, medicine, science and government – have used aspects of this technology for many years, and that leaves us with the question: why have these tools not been used in education as long as the other institutions have? The focus of this argument is not to say that technology had not been used, but that it has not been used for as long as other institutions have.

Concerning the use of ICT in the teaching of the English language, the first thing that we need to keep in mind, is that the English Language Teaching (ELT) is an area that has gone through changes throughout the past years. Richards (1985) recalls that these advancements moved the perspective from teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered

ones. In other words, these new approaches have to provide the means for the learners to improve their own learning process, as well as, self-evaluation.

Besides that, it is well known that the limited hours in which most – if not all – English courses (even the most communicative approaches) take place, does not provide enough amount of time for interactions in the target language; and, also, that classroom context is far off from the reality in which students will face it. In this sense, ICT can be a great help, not only to assist the teachers, but also to give learners the possibility to practice the target language in its authentic context.

With respect to this argument, we, as a group of undergraduate students, mentored by Professor Miriam Sester Retorta, considered that ICT, meaning the use of various technology both inside the classroom and outside of it, can help learners to practice what they have studied in class.

This work is only possible because of a project created by Professor Miriam Sester Retorta and Allan Martins Mohr – English for the Blinds. Project, in which, initially, twelve undergraduate students majoring in Languages (Portuguese and English) at the Federal University of Technology-Paraná (UTFPR) worked as guides; and twenty four blind and visually impaired learners, from ADEVIPAR (Associação dos Deficientes Visuais do Paraná) and from the Instituto Paranaense de Cegos. Classes are held on Saturday mornings lasting for three (09:00 until 12:00); learners gather in small groups, with the guides – who help in with the activities proposed by the teacher. In order to provide necessary conditions for an effective learning, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are applied.

In this sense, the general objective of this research is to investigate how blind and visually impaired learners of the extension project English for the Blinds use ICT. And the specific aims concentrate on how these learners use ICT to both communicate and learn English.

The purpose of this research is to investigate a field of study which is usually overlooked: the teaching of a foreign language to learners with disabilities; in order to be more specific, teaching English to blind and visually impaired learners. There are many reasons why this field is neglected: the lack of formal instructions that undergraduate students have when the matter is coping with different disabilities – Santos (2014), Vitalino & Manzini (2010), and Moreira (2005) –; teachers that will remember that there are many different

disabilities only when they happen to receive a learner with any kind of impairment – Carvalho (2011), Prieto (2006), and Mendes (2002) –; the fallacy that the only needed thing to be done is to 'integrate' these students in school – Perinni (2013), Silva & Medrado (2011), Silva (2010) –; the ludicrous idea that people with disabilities are not as capable as any other person – Vieira (2006), and Werneck (1997) –; and, finally, the preposterous idea that learning English cannot be seen as an empowerment to blind and visually impaired students – Barbarán & Requejo (2014).

In this sense, it is plausible to asseverate that, after raising all of these assumptions, there is a great amount of work to be done in this area. That is the reason why the Federal University of Technology-Paraná (UTFPR), through Doctor Retorta and Allan Martins Mohr, created a project – English for the Blinds. And, this case study will investigate some of the assumptions made previously, as well as comment others.

Taking into account that in this research we intend to study the relation between the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the learning process of English as an additional language for blind and visually impaired learners¹; the theoretical basis were: 'Literacies (2012) and Multiliteracies (2000)' by Cope & Kalantzis, 'Digital Literacies' by Lankshear & Knobel (2008 and 2005), and Glister (1997).

Cope & Kalantzis (2012 and 2000) coined the term 'Multiliteracies'. This approach tries to evidence what still matters in traditional approaches when it comes to reading and writing; and to sum the 'knowledge of what is new and distinctive about the way in which people make meanings in the contemporary communications environment' (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2012, p. 1).

This terminology also refers to two major aspects of 'meaning-making': the first is social diversity and the second is multimodality. In the contextual part, we have: commentary setting, social role, interpersonal relations, identity, and subject matter, as an example; while on the modal part, there are: written, visual, spatial, tactile, gestural, audio and oral. And, those two aspects of 'meaning-making' need to be considered when Literacies are being analyzed.

¹ At this point, we think it is important to explain why the term English as an additional language (EAL) was chosen and not English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Canadá (s/d) explains that EAL stresses the multilingualism of contemporary societies, and goes against the thought that English is a special language among other foreign languages.

As a last brief concept from Cope & Kalantzis (2012), it is possible to mention the Literacies as a tool for making sense, i.e., meaning, where three main aspects are important: personal enablement, civic-economic participation, and social equity. The first one – personal enablement – refers to the ability of leading a life where one can self-express and have access to cultural resources; the second – civic-economic participation – involves communicative capacities for work, engagement in political processes and community participation; and, the last one – social equity –, includes capacities to access education, social and material resources.

‘Digital Literacies’ will be used in the plural form in this work, because the authors agree with Lankshear e Knobel (2008 and 2005), when they say that this form is more appropriate than Digital Literacy for three main reasons: a) the diversity that there are of specific ‘digital literacy’; b) the improvement that can be seen when dealing with a perspective of literacy as practice; and c) the benefits that can be achieved by adopting and expansive view, especially in the field of educational learning. Also, it is relevant to add that the perspective taken into account, is the view of ‘Digital Literacies’ as sociocultural; in which it has “to make sense of reading, writing and meaning-making as integral elements of social practices” (LANKSHER; KNOBEL, 2006, p. 12), that is not to face the literacies as “simply reading and writing”.

In this regard, Glister (1997) adds that digital literacy is the art of mastering ideas, not keystrokes, in the sense that ‘digital literacies’ need to be more than the use of digital sources effectively. And, when the subject is the use of the Internet, the author defends the idea that the work with this tool differs from other formal tools for several reasons, some of them being: it is not all about text – multimedia computers give teachers and students the possibility to work with videos, audios, photos –; the way the information is disposed differs from other platforms; and, it is multidimensional and interactive.

It is important to add another view of the subject: Eshet-Alkalai’s (2004), when concerning the inconsistency in two particular groups, those that conceive digital literacy as mainly related with technical skills and those that see it as focused on cognitive and socio-emotional aspects of dealing in a digital environment. The approach taken in this investigation is the second one, in which the ‘digital literacies’ are applied in order to be focused on the cognitive and social-emotional aspects of the digital environment.

Bearing that in mind, this is the reason why ICT were chosen to assist the teaching of Distance Learning in order to try to give another stimulus to blind and visually impaired learners in the English as an additional language learning process. In order words

A blind can also see, look, and contemplate, obviously not by sight, but by touching and hearing, which are the means that they use to have contact with the outside world. Therefore the seeing restrictions are compensated by other strategies. Because he/she use more broadly these other senses, a teacher needs to resort to other means, that can be used inside and outside the classroom, so that students can learn and be included in the school's context and that is where the technology comes to support their specific need. (RETORTA; MOHR, 2013, p. 2) [translated by the authors]²

This study will be conducted in an Applied Linguistics view, which means a linguistics field that identifies, investigates, and offer solutions to language-related real-life problems, to deal with the English Language learning process. Also, this work is based on a qualitative approach, that being, a research in which the aim is at gathering a deep understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that rule it.

For the data collection instrument, four measurement will be taken place: first, a profile of the students will be analyzed, which were completed by the learners in the beginning of the course; second, a questionnaire will be applied, which will be made out from questionnaires already applied in this field of study, always making references to the authors; third, classes will be observed, and, to help the researcher to keep all this data, all classes will be recorded in the interest to facilitates the analysis of the data collected; finally, an interview will be made with the assistance of an interview outline, for the sake of directing learners to collaborate with the research questions.

In this introduction, we mentioned the theme, aims, rationale, theoretical references, and methodology used for this study. In Chapter 1, we will comment about the Inclusive Education – an overview of Brazil, Paraná and Curitiba. In the second chapter, we will go back to our theoretical references and make a review of literature of what has been done in this area. Later on, in Chapter 3, we will define the methodological design. In Chapter 4, the

² Um cego também pode ver, olhar, contemplar, não obviamente através da visão, mas através do tato e da audição que são os meios pelos quais eles utilizam para ter contato com o mundo externo. Portanto as restrições do campo visual são compensadas por outras estratégias. Pelo fato dele utilizar mais amplamente esses outros sentidos, um professor necessita lançar mão de outros meios, que possam ser utilizados dentro e fora de sua sala de aula, para que esse aluno consiga aprender e ser incluído no contexto escolar e é aí que a tecnologia vem de encontro à essa necessidade específica. (RETORTA; MOHR, 2013, p. 2)

data will be presented and analyzed. Towards the end of this work, there will be final considerations.

1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In the world which is already upon us, the goal of education must be to develop individuals who are open to change, who are flexible and adaptive, who have learned how to learn, and are thus able to learn continuously. Only such persons can constructively meet the perplexities of a world in which problems spawn much faster than their answers. The goal of education must be to develop a society in which people can live more comfortably with change than with rigidity. In the coming world the capacity to face the new appropriately is more important than the ability to know and repeat the old.
(ROGERS, 1967, p.717)

In this chapter, a brief overview of the Inclusive Education will be presented. We will start with the Inclusive Education in Brazil, Paraná, and in Curitiba – in this last scenario, we will talk about the project English for the Blinds.

1.1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

This section provides an overview of the Inclusive Education in Brazil. In order to present this topic, a few issues will be discussed: legislation and public policies in inclusion, regional profile of Inclusive Education, school trends in Inclusive Education; and some distinctions that need to be clarified: integration/inclusion and from segregation to inclusion.

1.1.1. Legislation and Public Policies in Inclusion

First of all, there is the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, that states that every citizen has the right to public and individual Education, that disabled people have the guarantee of ‘specialized educational services , preferably in the regular teaching system’³ (BRASIL, 1988) – Article 208. In this document, according to Glat & Ferreira (2003), there are three key words/expressions: ‘specialized, disabled people and preferably’; and, the authors highlight that those same words are current in other documents related to Special Education, such as:

³ In the original: ‘atendimento educacional especializado aos portadores de deficiência, preferencialmente na rede regular de ensino’

Law of Directives and Bases for Education (LDB, 1996), National Education Plan (PNE, 2001) and National Directives for Special Education in Basic Education, by the National Education Council (CNE, 2001).

The Ministry of Education states that inclusive education is priority, according to a special education policy adopted. In 2013, according to the Educational Census⁴, this initiative brought the perspective of integration⁵, resulting in an increase of 2.8% – from 820,433 enrollments in 2012 to 842,342 in 2013 – of pupils with special needs enrolled in regular schools.

More specifically, the number of students included in regular classes of regular schools – including adult education – increased by 4.5%. While the exclusive and special school classes, the number of students dropped by 2.6%.

Another data that it is important to evidence, is the one of students enrolled in the public *versus* the private system. In 2007, 62.7% were in public schools and 37.3% in private schools. Whereas, in 2013, the number of students in the public system was 78.8% and in private system was 21.2%.

YEAR	TOTAL	SPECIAL CLASSES AND EXCLUSIVE SCHOOLS						REGULAR CLASSES (INCLUSION STUDENTS)					
		Total	Kindergarten	Elementary School	High School	Education for Young Adults	Professional Education	Total	Kindergarten	Elementary School	High School	Education for Young Adults	Professional Education
2007	654.606	348.470	64.501	224.350	2.806	49.268	7.545	306.136	24.634	239.506	13.306	28.295	395
2008	695.699	319.924	65.694	202.126	2.768	44.384	4.952	375.775	27.603	297.986	17.344	32.296	546
2009	639.718	252.687	47.748	162.644	1.263	39.913	1.119	387.031	27.031	303.383	21.465	34.434	718
2010	702.603	218.271	35.397	142.866	972	38.353	683	484.332	34.044	380.112	27.695	41.385	1.096
2011	752.305	193.882	23.750	131.836	1.140	36.359	797	558.423	39.367	437.132	33.138	47.425	1.361
2012	820.433	199.656	18.652	124.129	1.090	55.048	737	620.777	40.456	485.965	42.499	50.198	1.659
2013	843.342	194.421	16.977	118.321	1.233	57.537	353	648.921	42.982	505.505	47.356	51.074	2.004
Δ% 2012/2013	2,8	-2,6	-9,0	-4,7	13,1	4,5	-52,1	4,5	6,2	4,0	11,4	1,7	20,8

Table 1 - Number of enrollments in Special Education - Brazil (2007 - 2013)

Source: INEP (2013)

4 download.inep.gov.br/educacao_basica/censo_escolar/resumos_tecnicos/resumo_tecnico_censo_educacao_basica_2013.pdf

⁵ In the sequence of this chapter, a table will be inserted in which there is the distinction among integration, inclusion and segregation.

In this section, we mentioned a few documents – Constitution 1988, LDB, PNE, and National Directives for Special Education in Basic Education (CNE) –, and made some comments about the changes that Brazil has been going through in the last decades, with an increasing number of students enrolling in regular classes in regular schools. In the next section, we will bring up a discussion between integration, inclusion, and segregation.

1.1.2. Integration X inclusion X segregation

This section provides a distinction among the terms: integration, inclusion and segregation. This proves necessary because there is a gap between them. The following table is an adaptation of Somerset Inclusion & Dave Walker, by Rieser (2002).

SEGREGATION (Tends to emphasise)	INTEGRATION (Tends to emphasise)	INCLUSION (Tends to emphasise)
Services to Disabled People	Needs of Disabled People	Rights of Disabled People
Categorising Disabled People	Changing Disabled People	Changing schools / colleges / organisations
'Special' / different treatment	Equal treatment	Equality – each receives support they need to thrive & achieve their potential
Disability is a problem to be fixed (in a special place)	Disability is a problem to be fixed	Everyone has gifts to bring
Services available in segregated setting	Benefits to disabled person of being integrated	Benefits to everyone, including all
Professional / experts	Professional / experts	Political struggle, friends & support
'Special' therapies	Technique	Power of ordinary experience
Categorisation & marginalisation	Learning helplessness	Assertiveness
Competition for parts of Disabled Person	Technical interventions	Transforming power of relationship
Stress on inputs	Stress on process	Stress on outcomes; have a dream
Separate curriculum	Curriculum delivery	Curriculum content
Integration 'for some' is not desirable	Integration can be delivered	Inclusion must be struggled for

Table 2 - Segregation to Inclusion

Source: Rieser (2002)

The first term – segregation – tends to emphasize services to disable people, categorize them, offer a different ('special') treatment, see the disability as a problem that needs to be fixed (at a proper place), offer available services only in segregating settings, can only receive help by specialized professionals and/or experts, face 'special' therapies, , aim at competitions of different groups of disabilities, focus on the input, use a separated curriculum, and integrating them into society is not the main goal.

Integration, on the other hand, emphasizes the needs of disable people, the change is concentrated on the disabled, offers equal treatment for those with special needs. Overlapping concepts with the , as segregation paradigm, the disability is a problem that needs to be fixed, offers benefits to the disabled that are integrated, supports – as in segregation – comes from specialized professionals and/or experts, stresses on process.

As an opposition and improvement from the last two paradigms – segregation and integration –, inclusion focuses on the rights of disable people. The change has to occur in institutions that receive these learners (schools, colleges, organizations). The goal to be reached is equality – each individual receives the support that they need to thrive and achieve their potential. Everyone can contribute to the group and bring benefits to all participants – meaning, not only the disabled: the support needed comes from everyone (professionals, family, friends, society) and the stress is on the outcome that each and every one can achieve (designed goals). The curriculum is based on content, and, more important of all: inclusion is something that must be fought for.

This section was created to differentiate three terms that are usually misinterpreted: integration, inclusion and segregation. The highlight point here is that the document from INEP (2013) uses the term integration. In the following section, a few comments will be made on the inclusive education in Paraná.

1.2. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PARANÁ

The aim of this section is to present the legality behind the public policies made in order to attend the students with special needs in the state.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education of the State (SEED), through the Special Education Department (DEEIN), implemented public policies regarding special education. Significant changes were made and regular schools started to be responsible for offering assistance to students of special education. In Articles 1 and 2 – Paraná (2003) we may perceive that:

Article 1 This decision sets standards for special education, mode of Basic Education for the State of Paraná education system for students with special educational needs, here called Special Education.

Sole Paragraph - This mode ensures quality education to all students with special educational needs in all stages of basic education, and support, complement and / or replace the regular educational services and vocational education for entry and progression at work essential training for citizenship.

Article 2 Special Education, constitutional duty of the State and the family will be offered preferentially in the regular school system.

Sole Paragraph - The mandatory provision of special education begins in kindergarten, aged zero to six years. (PARANÁ, 2003, p.1) [translated by the authors]⁶

As presented previously, Paraná educational system – going along with the national educational system – is transforming Special Education Schools in Elementary Schools, according to the inclusive perspective; in which is prioritized that students with special needs attend to regular schools. The document also stated that the access to Special Schools is only possible in cases in which the ordinary school – even with the specialized support – cannot overcome their learning difficulties:

Art. 19 The creation of Special School is the act by which the legal representative of the sponsor expressed the willingness to offer Basic Education in Special Education category, exclusively for pupils with special educational needs, with serious impairments, multiple disabilities or communication

⁶ In the original: ‘**Art. 1º** A presente deliberação fixa normas para a Educação Especial, modalidade da Educação Básica, para o Sistema de Ensino do Estado do Paraná, para alunos com necessidades educacionais especiais, aqui denominada Educação Especial. **Parágrafo único** - Esta modalidade assegura educação de qualidade a todos os alunos com necessidades educacionais especiais, em todas as etapas da educação básica, e apoio, complementação e/ou substituição dos serviços educacionais regulares, bem como a educação profissional para ingresso e progressão no trabalho, formação indispensável para o exercício da cidadania. **Art.2º** A Educação Especial, dever constitucional do Estado e da família, será oferecida, preferencialmente, na rede regular de ensino. **Parágrafo único** - A oferta obrigatória da educação especial tem início na educação infantil, faixa etária de zero a seis anos’. (PARANÁ, 2003, p.1).

conditions and differentiated signal. (PARANÁ, 2003, p. 4)
[translated by the authors]⁷

After mentioning these aspects of the public policy, it is clear that students with special needs enrolled either in the inclusive or special schools need special care, in the sense of offering conditions that promote learning and participation of all.

In section 1.2 – Inclusive Education in Paraná – we mentioned three articles present in the Deliberation #2/3 – Paraná (2003). They all claim that the inclusive schooling is of responsibility of the State in the whole country; and also, that special schools are only an alternative for those learners who are not able to learn in regular classes in the regular school systems. In the following section –Inclusive Education in Curitiba –, we will explain a bit more about the project conceived and developed at UTFPR to teach English to the blind and visually impaired learners.

1.3. EDUCATION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED IN CURITIBA

In this section, we will describe a project conceived and developed in Curitiba in order to teach EAL to the blind and visually impaired learners; and, also, to provide an experience to undergraduate students to work with these learners.

In 2013, Prof^a. Dr^a. Miriam Sester Retorta⁸ and Allan Martins Mohr⁹ designed an extension project – English for the Blinds – at UTFPR in order to teach English to the blind and visually impaired learners. Undergraduate students investigate which technologies, more specifically ICT, may be used in the teaching and learning of English.

Classes are held on Saturday mornings – from nine to midday –, and many learners arrive earlier in order to interact with each other, as well as the teacher and undergraduate students – which work as assistants some times, and teachers at others.

⁷ In the original: ‘Art. 19 A criação de Escola Especial é ato pelo qual a representante legal da mantenedora expressa a disposição de ofertar Educação Básica, na modalidade de Educação Especial, exclusivamente para alunos com necessidades educacionais especiais, com graves comprometimentos, múltipla deficiência ou condições de comunicação e sinalização diferenciadas’. (PARANÁ, 2003, p. 4)

⁸ Professor at UTFPR and Director of Inter-institutional Relations of UTFPR.

⁹ Psychologist at Psicopedagógico Monitoring Center and Student Assistance at UTFPR.

Before each class, the undergraduate students develop new materials with the coordinator of the project. For these classes, all of the units are printed in Braille and also in large letters (font style 45). Some other materials used to assist learners are: mp3¹⁰ files of the units – recorded on learner’s cellphones and also on flash drives –, instant messaging apps, and social networks, for example. What is expected with the ICTs is to improve learner’s pronunciation, fluency, accuracy and social practices.

Basically, the classes follow the same routine: classes start at 9:30, but it is common for learners to arrive earlier – around 9:00 – in order to talk to each other, to the teacher, to the undergraduate students and also to ask for help on how to work with the ICTs presented to them. Due to the fact that we have learners at different levels of the English language, we divide them into small groups. As we do not have a regular frequency of learners and undergraduate students, sometimes a small group of learners work with two or three undergraduate students; at other times – which is quite common – each learner has one undergraduate student to work with them through the unit. At around 10h30 min in the morning, we have a small pause, where all the participants can have a coffee break. In case a group reach a point of the unit where there is a song, usually, all of the learners make a pause and listen to the song; and most of them remember the song by heart that they already heard.

Outside the classroom, learners can practice what they have learned in a closed group on Facebook (English for Us) where all the participants – that use this social network – are members; also on a group that Professor Retorta suggested (Blind and Visually Impaired), where there are members from all over the world; Facebook messenger; on WhatsApp; though e-mails; text messages, those being examples of what can be witnessed in the group.

Still talking about practice, many activities are designed in which learners cannot only practice the target language, but also get in touch with different cultures; such as¹¹: a visit to Oscar Niemeyer Museum (MON), a Chilli lunch, and get together to taste traditional North American foods.

¹⁰ MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 Audio Layer III, more commonly referred to as MP3.

¹¹ Those activities will be better explored later on the study.

In this section, more detailed information about the extension project of UTFPR to teach the blind and visually impaired learners was described. In section 2, the theoretical framework will be presented.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This second section brings the theoretical scope compound by Cope & Kalantzis (2012 and 2000), Lankshear & Knobel (2008 and 2005), and Glister (1997). Also, the conceptual framework about the object of study. In order to start each subsection, a brief comment about each author will be made; and, in the sequence, the theory that each one defend will be presented.

2.1. COPE & KALANTZIS

Cope and Kalantzis conceptualize literacy as

the heart of education's promise. Of all the functions and purposes of education, reading and writing have always been foundational. Literacy is the first major function of formal education both historically in the origins of modern, institutionalized education and in the life story of every child or adult learner as they enter the modern education process. Literacy represents a kind of symbolic capital in two senses: as the preeminent form of symbol manipulation that gets things done in modern times and as a symbolic marker of 'being educated'. (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p. 121)

And the authors complement literacy by saying:

The problem for institutionalized education, and the problem for the teaching and learning of literacy, is that students bring with them different life experiences. What they know, who they feel themselves to be, and how they orient themselves to education varies because their lifeworlds vary; because life as they have subjectively experienced it varies so markedly. As a consequence, people experience education differently, and their outcomes are different. (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, p. 121)

With these first words, we can see that Cope & Kalantzis (2000) crave for a change in the role of schools and education in general. The chapter of the book 'Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures' is entirely dedicated to the changing role of schools.

In order to justify the use of literacies in the plural form, Cope & Kalantzis (2012) compare the 'old basics' – as they called it – as the ones that were used when the term literacy was current. The 'new basics', refers to the terminology also used in the plural form like literacies. As represented in the following table:

OLD BASICS	NEW BASICS
Reading and writing are two of the three 'r's	Literacy and numeracy are fundamental life skills
Phonics rules	Multiple 'literacies' for a world of multimodal communications
Correct spelling and grammar	Many social languages and variation in communication appropriate to settings
Standart, educated English	Kinds of people' who can innovate, take risks, negotiate diversity and navigate uncertainty
Appreciating texts of prestige 'literary' value	A wide and diverse range of texts valued, with growing access to different media and texts types
Well-disciplined 'kinds of people'	People who can negotiate different human contexts and styles of communication

Table 3 - Old and new basics
Source: Cope & Kalantzis (2012)

In the old basics, reading and writing were a part of the three proverbial 'r's of reading, writing and arithmetic; considered the base of literacy. The phonetic rules consisted in translating the sounds of speech into symbolic images of writing and reading as a process of decoding. It focused on the textual formalities as correcting grammar and spelling, in order to achieve the standard of the educated form of the language. Students only read and appreciate 'good writing', starting with readers and, later on, with the canonical texts – the only ones that had the prestige of the 'literacy' value. And, finally, the old basics produced people who were only literate for a particular society and in a certain sense.

Cope & Kalantzis (2012) also state that the changes from the 'old' to the 'new' basics are challenging as well. And, those challenges cannot be faced without a prepared professional to deal with the changes new learners must go through. Professionals which will not 'close the door of the classroom and do their own thing' (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2012, p. 10). These professionals work in a collaborative way: sharing learning designs with other teachers online, reusing and adapting other's learning designs, team teaching, for example. And the authors also created a table to better visually this schema.

NEW LEARNERS	NEW TEACHERS
Research information, using multiple sources and media	Engage learners as active knowledge-makers
Analyze ideas from multiple perspectives	Design learning environments rather than just delivering content
Work in groups as collaborative knowledge-makers	Provide learners with opportunities to use the new media
Take difficult questions and solve problems	Use new media for learning design and student access to these designs at any time and from any place
Take responsibility for their learning	Are able to 'let go' as students take more responsibility for their learning
Continue their learning independently beyond the lesson and the classroom	Offer a variety of learning paths for different students
Work closely with other learners in an environment that nurtures collective intelligence	Collaborate with other teachers, sharing learning designs
Critically self-assess their own thinking and learning	Continuously assess student learning and progress, using that information to create the most appropriate learning experiences for different students

Table 4 - New learning
Source: Cope & Kalantzis (2012)

'How can these enormous changes be negotiated, extended and supported?' (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2012, p. 12). There are two possibilities of changing: from the bottom up or from the top down.

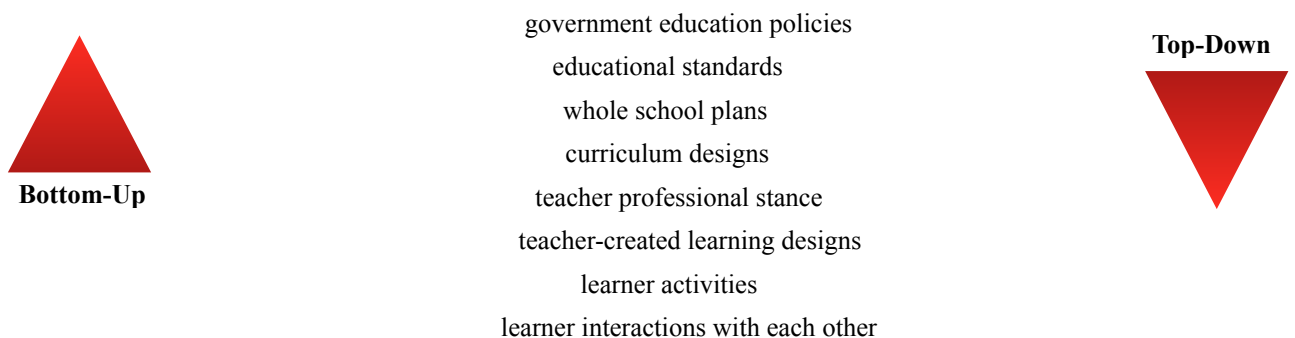


Figure 1 - Sources of change in education
Source: Cope & Kalantzis (2012)

One way to go is from the bottom up, where 'users', 'consumers' and 'producers' make a solid and sustainable change when they do not simply react to externally imposed change. This is possible with the expanding habits of collaboration and the increase use of online tools, when teachers are accustomed to creating learning tasks and learning environment in a more engaging way. Consecutively, these practices create professional

retraining opportunities for teachers in a more practical way, by learning and applying new learning design skills and ways of engaging learning, and, as a teacher/researcher observe learner's performance, to help them achieve positive outcomes.

The other way to do this is from the top down, i.e., in a way of remodelling the learning objectives of the entire educational system – subject by subject. In order to achieve this goal, new educational standards are necessary and objectives for education as well. In times like this, nothing less than a revolution in the educational objectives and systems are needed. However, as Cope & Kalantzis (2012) state “resource constraints and political ambiguity often make top-down changes difficult to achieve.” (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2012, p. 13)

Cope & Kalantzis (2012) also accentuate that meaningful and lasting changes require support from all the communities' sectors. The teacher's part is to become a new kind of professional, by interacting with the community to explain what changes are necessary and engage others to help them to produce the outcomes. Another part of this change, are the parents; who need to participate and support different kinds of learning, media and learning environments.

In order to summarize Cope and Kalantzis' main ideas, we have their definition of literacy as the first major function of formal education both historically in the origins of modern, institutionalized education and in the life story of every child or adult learner as they enter the modern education process. Literacy also represents a kind of symbolic capital in two senses: as the preeminent form of symbol manipulation that gets things done in modern times and as a symbolic marker of 'being educated'. In the sequence, the difference between the 'old basics' *versus* the 'new basics' was described; and this differentiation was the way that the authors used to explain why the term literacy is not as appropriate as literacies. In order to achieve this 'new basics', new teachers are required; and, the differentiation by 'old teachers' and 'new teachers' was also presented in this section. Finally, Cope and Kalantzis emphasize that for those changes to happen there are two main paths: the bottom-up or the top-down.

In this section, we provided basic information about Cope and Kalantzis, their definition of literacy, introduced the difference between literacy and literacies – with the support of the 'old basics' *versus* the 'new basics', also tackled the difference between the new teachers and the new learners, and, finally, covered the bottom-up or top-down change models

created by Cope and Kalantzis. In the next section, a similar approach will be taken; some brief information about Lankshear and Knobel will be presented and the theoretical scope used in this study will also be presented.

2.2. LANKSHEAR & KNOBEL

In ‘Digital Literacies – Concepts, Policies and Practices’ (2008), Lankshear & Knobel state that they use the plural form of literacy – as literacies – in order to recognize some advantages, these being:

- a) the vast diversity of ‘digital literacy’ that exist;
- b) the strength and usefulness of a sociocultural perspective on literacy as practice;
- c) the benefits that may occur from adopting an expansive view and their significance for educational learning.

According to Street literacy “is best understood as a shorthand for the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing” (STREET, 1984, p. 1). In Lankshear & Knobel’s view , this approach to literacy has two important implications, concerning also why the use of the plural form of the term. ‘The first is that reading and writing always involve particular kinds of texts and particular ways of reading and writing that vary enormously.’ (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2008, p. 7). And, the second is not so simple to explain as the first one: ‘it is well known that different people can read the same text in different ways and, furthermore, that some people simply cannot make sense of certain texts (despite being able to decode or encode them accurately) that other people handle with ease.’ (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2008, p. 8). Both views are extremely important to this work, because different ICT require different ways of reading and writing, as we will demonstrate with the examples in the sequence.

Lankshear and Knobel (2008) emphasize that there are three understandings of digital literacies (DLs) events. The first – operational – is to understand DLs as a set of skills to locate, organize, understand, evaluate and analyze information using the digital technology. The second view – cultural –, takes into account the understanding of texts in relation to the

cultural context. The third view – critic – draws attention to the fact that literacies are socially constructed and selected.

The authors also highlight that the term ‘new literacy’ what is often referred to as the ‘post- typographic’ forms of textual practice. This new concept

include using and constructing hyperlinks between documents and/or images, sounds, movies, semiotic languages (such as ... emoticons (‘smileys’) used in email, online chat space or in instant messaging), manipulating a mouse to move around within a text, reading file extension and identifying what software will ‘read’ each file, producing ‘non- linear’ texts, navigating three-dimensional worlds online and so on. (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2005, p. 16-17)

In this perspective, the cyberspace differs from a physical space; due to the fact that information is not consumed but rather used. And, the usage depends on many different factors, such as: age, generation, amount of instruction and amount of time spent with new technologies. This notion, of the ability to use this new technology also raises the difference between those who are able to read the new literacies as opposed to the ones who are not able to deal with them: the first ones being called ‘insiders’ and the second group composed by ‘newcomers’. In this sense, what the authors believe is that many young people are insiders, while institutionalized education does not respond to this type of knowledge and, even more, cannot even follow it through.

Lankshear and Knobel (2005) also recognize the need to revise the educational system as a whole; because these new literacies are day by day more present to our daily lives; and the students are growing up with them, so something need to be done in this sense. Considering that

postmaterialist worlds of the attention economy openly embrace tendencies that currently constitute problems for schools. It may well be time in formal education to rethink the issue of education. The interface between digital technologies and new literacies offers a promising place to start. (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2005, p. 130)

In addition to this, the authors focus on the implications of new literacies for the classroom. Since literacies as social practices end up crashing into epistemologies and therefore, they argue that it is about time to develop something like ‘digital epistemologies’,

and the need for it to be basis of new approaches to both curriculum and pedagogy. In their own words:

we believe it is not simply our literacies that have been powerfully impacted by the information technology revolution. More profoundly, the entire epistemological base on which school approaches to knowledge and learning are founded is seriously challenged and, we think, made obsolete by the intense digitization of daily life. (LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2005, p. 152)

In this section, a few information about Lankshear and Knobel was presented and, also, an extract of their theory. The next section will have the same characteristics, Glister will be shortly presented, and the extract where he defines DL will be displayed.

2.3. GLISTER

In this section, the term DL defined by Glister (1997) will be defined.

Paul Glister discovered the power and potential of Internet early on; when he coined the term ‘Digital Literacy’ in 1997, in order to suggest a more active engagement with new media – emphasizing that this term has more to do with mastering ideas than keystrokes.

As mentioned previously, Glister (1997) was the first to define DL, as

the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers. The concept of literacy goes beyond simply being able to read; it has always meant the ability to read with meaning, and to understand. It is the fundamental act of cognition. Digital literacy likewise extends the boundaries of definition. It is cognition of what you see on the computer screen when you use the networked medium. It places demands upon you that were always present, though less visible, in the analog media of newspaper and TV. At the same time, it conjures up a new set of challenges that require you to approach networked computers without preconceptions. Not only must you acquire the skill of finding things, you must also acquire the ability to use these things in your life. (GLISTER, 1997, p. 1-2)

With Glister’s (1997) definition, it is possible to make a connection with what was defended by Street (1984) about critical literacy. This last on defends that literacy comprises more than the simple ability to read and write, and emphasizes the importance of cultural aspects in all forms of literacy.

This concise section brought the definition given by Glister (1997) of the term Digital Literacy. The following section will explore the conceptual framework, by mentioning four studies conducted in Brazil as well as three international studies.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section will briefly mention four studies that were conducted in Brazil, from 2010 to 2013 and that can somehow be related to the subject addressed in this work: “*A apropriação da Língua Inglesa pelo aluno cego matriculado no ensino fundamental: um estudo de caso*”, Perinni (2013); “*O ensino de língua inglesa a alunos deficientes visuais na escola pública: uma busca aos lugares verdadeiros*”, Dantas Silva e Medrado (2010); “*A GENTE VIVE NUM MUNDO NORMAL*”: *Afetividade e construção do conhecimento na aula de língua inglesa para deficientes visuais*”, Silva (2010); e “*O ensino de língua inglesa para pessoas cegas, um desafio para a inclusão na era digital*”, Correia dos Santos e Fontes (2010). In the sequence, three international studies will be presented: “*Pathfinder Project: New Ways To Access English for Blind Students in Argentina*”, by Barbarán e Requejo (2012); “*Lesson Planning for Visually Impaired Students of English*”, by Galetová (2012); “*New Ways of Language Learning for Blind or Visually Impaired Children and Teenagers*”, by Quatraro e Paiano (2010).

Perinni (2013) – in “*A apropriação da Língua Inglesa pelo aluno cego matriculado no ensino fundamental: um estudo de caso*” –, aims at understanding how a blind student in an elementary public school learns English. In order to achieve this goal, the author chose to work with a qualitative approach, a case study, with the assumptions of a social-historical approach, based on authors such as Vygotsky, Bakhtin. The research *corpus* was obtained through document analysis, semi-structured interviews, observation of the English classes and school environment. The data analysis showed that the blind student did not show a learning process different from any of the other students, the only difference is that that specific students needed other ways of learning to perform as well as the others.

“*O ensino de língua inglesa a alunos deficientes visuais na escola pública: uma busca aos lugares verdadeiros*”, by Dantas Silva e Medrado (2010) was carried out to

understand the following aspects: interaction, affect and cognition that are involved in the teaching-learning English processes of a visually impaired student. Based on Vygotsky and Tomasello, the authors used an ethnographic and qualitative-interpretive methodology. They collected the data at two schools in João Pessoa – PB – Brazil. Eleven classes were attended and notes were taken. The teachers from those classes as well as the students and the visually impaired students were interviewed. The results showed that both teachers argued that they did not have the knowledge on how to work with visually impaired students, and that the affective aspect can influence how the students learn the language.

Silva (2010), in *“A Gente Vive num Mundo Normal”: Afetividade e construção do conhecimento na aula de língua inglesa para deficientes visuais”*, based her investigation on the theoretical framework of Vygotsky and Tomasello, and aimed at discussing how an English teachers’ actions can contribute to the teaching-learning English process of visually impaired students. To collect her data, she conducted interviews and observed classes of a group that had two students with visual disabilities. The qualitative analysis revealed that the teacher’s actions built an affective environment that helped students to develop meaningful learning.

And, in the last Brazilian research reported here– *“O ensino de língua inglesa para pessoas cegas, um desafio para a inclusão na era digital”* –, Correia dos Santos e Fontes (2010) studied about teaching English to blind students using the computer as a didactic-pedagogic tool, and mentioned some technological resources that can help in the English classes. Their study was based on a bibliographical research and aimed at contributing with other studies in this area, due to the limited number of bibliography.

“Pathfinder Project: New Ways To Access English for Blind Students in Argentina”, by Barbarán e Requejo (2012), intended to design an English course with blind teachers and students. The project is an ongoing study that has the objective to develop improvement in the English instruction through forum with teachers that had already worked with blind students, and the class method based on Internet and multimedia elements.

Galetová (2012) , in “Lesson Planning for Visually Impaired Students of English”, aimed at showing some differences of activities made for non-handicapped and for visually handicapped students. She used a list of learning tools to cope with these students. For the theoretical framework, Armstrong and Hlusi were used to underlie the study. As for the

results, the researcher found out that the teachers of visually impaired students did not spend more time on lesson planning. They used the same lesson plan some other times and, modified or handcrafted more materials.

Finally, in the last international article – “New Ways of Language Learning for Blind or Visually Impaired Children and Teenagers” –, Quatraro e Paiano (2010) intended to disclose about ELLVIS (English Language Learning Programme for Visually Impaired Students) project, which had the purpose of improving the access of visually impaired students to the English classes. The project is a second version of another self-learning project: AllVip (Accessible Language Learning for Visually Impaired People), and this second version was designed for children and teenagers.

This chapter was divided in many sections in which the theory of the following authors were presented: Cope & Kalantzis (2012 and 2000), Lankshear & Knobel (2008 and 2005), and Glister (1997). In the sequence, the conceptual framework about the object of study was also presented. In the next chapter, we will have the methodological design; where the methodological choice – in this case the qualitative and interpretative approach – will be explained; and, also, the methods and data collection, the characteristics of the scenario and finally, of the participants.

3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about the methodological design in which this study was based on. First, the study design will be explored; next, the methods and the data collection will be presented; in the sequence, the scenario and the participants will be described.

3.1. STUDY DESIGN

In this subsection, we will present the study design; by justifying the use of a qualitative research field as in classroom ethnography, and its main characteristics.

Fetterman (1998) defines ethnography as “the art and science of describing a group or culture” (FETTERMAN, 1998, p. 11). It relies on very personal experiences and participation by the researcher. Hammersley (1990) explains that ethnography should have most of the following five aspects:

- a) People’s behavior is studied in an everyday context, instead of under experimental conditions created by the researcher;
- b) The data is collected from a variety of sources, but observations and informal conversations are usually the main ones;
- c) The approach to gather the data collection is “unstructured” – it does not involve following through something planned at the beginning of the research;
- d) The focus is usually a single setting or a small group; and
- e) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions – usually by descriptions and explanations.

If this definition of ethnography is taken into the classroom, we have the perspective that culture is constructed on a daily basis. In this sense, students and teachers create patterns over time in the way they interact, understand and believe. This can be a possibility to improve both teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process.

This type of research is ideal to this study due to the fact that the ethnographer looks into the classroom from both perspectives: as a teacher and as a learner; and understands how

complicated the social interactions are. This method is also recommend to teachers researchers¹², because this will allow teachers to understand the differences between classrooms and different groups of students.

As far as the data collection in the ethnographic research goes, there are: observations – observation in the classroom, observation outside the classroom –, field notes, interviews, and recordings. In this study, the data was collected through observation – both inside and outside of the classroom –, field notes, and interviews.

When analyzing and reporting findings, the researchers try to look for trends and patterns. In this kind of analysis, bringing order to the data it is very important. By interpretation, it is require to attach meaning and significance to the analysis. As an outcome of the results, teachers can take informed decisions and take actions based on the findings.

With an ethnographic perspective, the researcher can step aside and imagine herself/himself as one of the actors of that environment. The scenario evolves on a daily basis: depending on student's needs and also on what is being taught.

In section 3.1. Study Design, we mentioned that this study was conducted in a qualitative perspective and, more specifically, as classroom ethnography. On the next section, we will make more detailed comments about the data collection.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

This section is divided into five subsections, and each one of them corresponds to a different research instrument: Facebook, WhatsApp, profile, questionnaire, and interview outline. The first two subsections – Facebook and WhatsApp – aim to describe particularities of those platforms when blind and visually impaired work with them. Meanwhile, the last three – profile, questionnaire, and interview outline – were feedback given by the learner's in three different moments of the extension course English for the Blinds: the first in the first semester of 2014, the second in the second semester of 2014 and third in the first semester of 2015.

¹² At UTFPR the conception that we, as undergraduate students, acquire during the course, is that all teachers need to be researchers in order to reflect upon our own practice, always trying to improve.

3.2.1. Facebook

The aim of this section is to describe the essence about Facebook, as well as to explain what are the differences between the blind and visually impaired learners from English for the Blinds group.

Facebook is a social network that facilitates the connectivity between family and friends. Originally was designed for college students – created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, enrolled at Harvard University at the time –, but soon, it became popular all over the globe. According to its page, Facebook’s mission is to “give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.”¹³

When talking about this social network, we need to have in mind the difference between the desktop and the mobile version of Facebook. Basically, the difference between them it is in the style of navigation. The first one – desktop Facebook (www.facebook.com), or the Web browser – works with a three-column layout and the primary content is displayed in the center column, with navigation and advertisements in sidebars on both sides – what can be complicated for people is the use of assertive technology – i.g. screen readers – to navigate. While the second one – mobile Facebook (m.facebook.com) –, displays only the main content, filling up the entire mobile window, and the navigation starts in the upper part of the page. This difference can be seen in the following two images:

¹³ https://www.facebook.com/facebook/info?tab=page_info

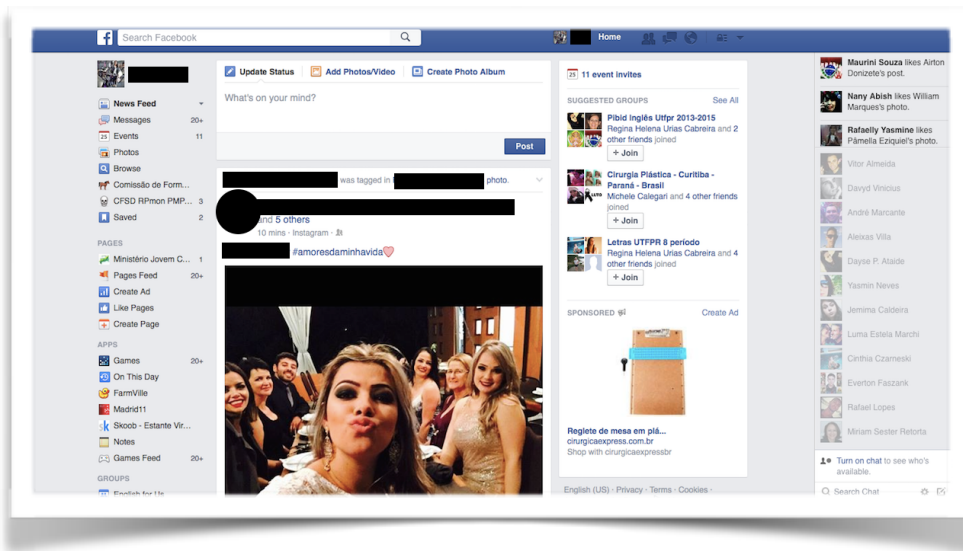


Figure 2 - Desktop Facebook
Source: Facebook

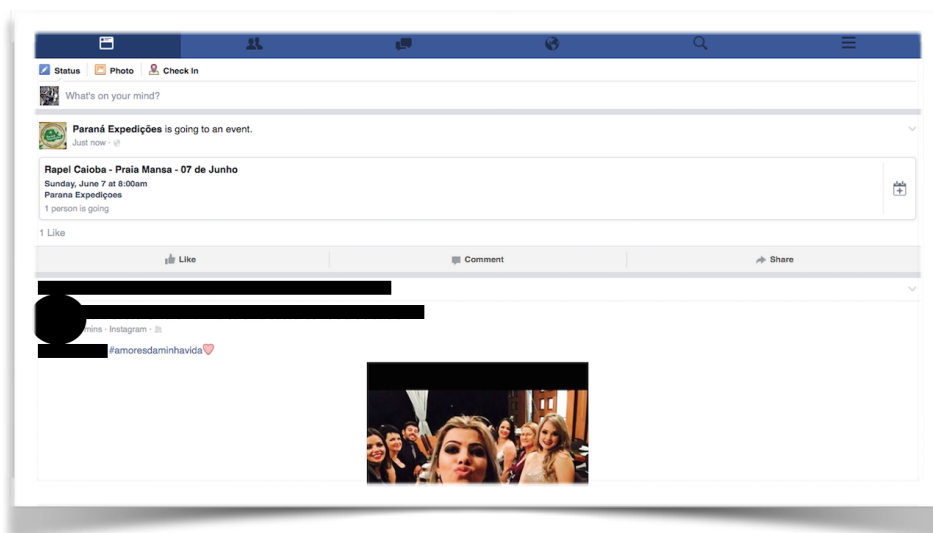


Figure 3 - Mobile Facebook
Source: Facebook

It is important to highlight that Facebook's help center recommends the use of the mobile version, on the accessibility basics, when answering the question 'What are the best ways to access Facebook while using assistive technology?', and the answer is:

If you're on a computer, we recommend that you go to www.facebook.com using an assistive technology client like VoiceOver, JAWS or NVDA. If you're on a mobile phone or tablet, we recommend that you either go to m.facebook.com from your mobile browser, or that you use the app built for your operating system, like Facebook for iPhone or Facebook for Android¹⁴.

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/help/accessibility>

However, the blind students from the English for the Blinds course say that because the screen readers do not read web facebook, they access the mobile version in their PCs in order for the screen readers to work without any interference.

After applying an initial questionnaire¹⁵, we noticed that many learners used this social network. So, a closed group – English for Us – was created in order to propitiate a space of communication between learners, undergraduate students and professor Retorta. Nowadays, the group has 58 (fifty-eight) members, including learner's, undergraduate students, former undergraduate students, and Professor Retorta. The group also works as an extension of the classroom, where learners can have access to materials of each unit, exercises and audios. This was also a space in which undergraduate students post activities regularly of each unit, and learners do the exercises and get back to UTFPR's students for corrections¹⁶

In addition to this, there is also another group – this one is public – that some learners participate: Blind and Visually Impaired People. This is a group of 1,464 members, that Professor Miriam suggested that the students from English for the Blinds participate, due to the fact that there are member from all over the world, with the majority of North American residents. In this group, education is not the focus, this being different from the previous group mentioned; the topics are of all sorts, and learners can practice EAL.

The aim of this section was to provide some information about Facebook, and also show some particularities of the use of this social network for blind and visually impaired; in addition to this, two Facebook groups were mentioned.

3.2.2. WhatsApp

In this section a few comments about WhatsApp will be made. Also a few more about a computer based extension of WhatsApp – WhatsApp Web – that is starting to be used in English for the Blinds as a way to the exercises reach to learners.

According to the platform own website, WhatsApp Messenger is

¹⁵ See section 3.2.3. Profile

¹⁶ A few more comments about this type of extension the class will be mentioned on section 4. Making sense of the data, and also it is possible to check Czarneski's study.

a cross-platform mobile messaging app which allows you to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone and Nokia and yes, those phones can all message each other! Because WhatsApp Messenger uses the same internet data plan that you use for email and web browsing, there is no cost to message and stay in touch with your friends.¹⁷

As far as numbers go, statistics show that in April of this year the mobile messaging app announced more than 800 million monthly active users; leading it to the most popular apps worldwide position¹⁸.

In January of this year, Jan Koum – co-founder of WhatsApp with Brian Acton – announced the launch of WhatsApp web on Facebook:

Today, for the first time, millions of you will have the ability to use WhatsApp on your web browser. Our web client is simply an extension of your phone: the web browser mirrors conversations and messages from your mobile device - this means all of your messages still live on your phone. To connect your web browser to your WhatsApp client, simply open <https://web.whatsapp.com> in your Google Chrome browser. You will see a QR code -- scan the code inside of WhatsApp, and you're ready to go. You have now paired WhatsApp on your phone with the WhatsApp web client. Your phone needs to stay connected to the internet for our web client to work, and please make sure to install the latest version of WhatsApp on your phone. Unfortunately for now, we will not be able to provide web client to our iOS users due to Apple platform limitations. We really hope you find web client useful in your everyday lives.¹⁹

This extension of the mobile app, can contribute to teaching/learning process of blind and visually impaired in the sense of bringing more practicality for those individuals that feel more comfortable of working in the computer than on their cellphones. The only problem with this extension is that it does not work on iOS based cellphones, such as iPhones.

The idea that Professor Retorta had, was to either stop sending exercises through Facebook's closed group – English for Us – and start sending them by WhatsApp; or to keep sending the exercises through English for Us and also through WhatsApp. This is what this study will investigate, i.e., will learners adapt to social networking website and app? Are they accessible?

¹⁷ <https://www.whatsapp.com>

¹⁸ According to <http://www.statista.com/statistics/260819/number-of-monthly-active-whatsapp-users/>

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/jan.koum/posts/10153027180560011?fref=nf&pnref=story>

This section intended to make a few comments about WhatsApp and also to present the newest feature, WhatsApp Web. The next section presents the initial questionnaire that was applied to English for the Blinds learners at the beginning of the first term.

3.2.3. Profile

This section is intended to make some comments about the first questionnaire answered by the learners of the extension course English for the Blinds, in order to create their profile; with those information, the course was improved.

As was mentioned previously, a initial questionnaire (ATTACHMENT A, page 74) was applied in order to create learner's profile and also to try to understand what was the best way to conduct the classes, as the most suitable method to use.

The questionnaire was composed by 12 (twelve) questions, and the questions inquired about learner's: age, study level, modality of study – if learner's study in private or public school system, at home, with tutors, regular schools or special education schools –, ability to see – if they were born blind or visually impaired or if they acquire it afterwards –, ability to use Braille, preferences of ICT to use in daily life, experience with English learning, and thoughts on how they think was the best way to acquire the target language.

This section provided information about the profile of learners of English for the Blinds, with some direction of what kind of questions were asked in the questionnaire.

3.2.4. Questionnaire

This section intends to report the second questionnaire that was applied to the learners of the extension course; on how it was applied, who created it and what kinds of questions there were.

The second questionnaire (ATTACHMENT B, page 77) applied was designed by Professor Retorta and Cinthia da Cruz Czarneski²⁰, as a way to receive learner's feedback at end of the second second semester of 2014.

Questions of this questionnaire inquired most about learner's habits – concerning the study of English outside the classroom – on Facebook, including if they had an account, how often they use it, if they had accessed one of the closed groups suggested, if they had downloaded audios that were posted on a closed group created for them, for example. Also, there were question about the use of the mp3 files that were made available, how learner's perceived the study of the AD outside of the classroom, what ICT was better available for them, if they had any difficulties when using the ICT suggested, if they had any ICT to suggest for us to use the next term, and learners evaluation of the course, in general.

The questionnaire was applied by Czarneski with the help of other undergraduate student, and learner's answered the questions in duos or trios. The questions were asked in Portuguese, and answers were recorded and written on paper by the undergraduate students; due to the fact that not all learners are proficient in Braille.

On how the questionnaire was created, in Czarneski's (2015) words:

In order to prepare the questionnaire, first we (the student and Professor Retorta) thought about the answers needed to improve our course towards technological resources used. We needed to know if the ICTs used in class were accessible, what were the difficulties faced by the students and solutions proposed by them. We cover all the technological resources used and ask them to give us a feedback of the course. The questionnaire provided student's self-reflection as asked about their own development over the course and they also spoke what helped or not during the course. (Czarneski, 2015, p. 38) [translated by the authors]²¹

²⁰ This questionnaire was a part of Czarneski's study, entitled 'O uso do Facebook como AVA no Ensino de Língua Inglesa para cegos'. She was also an undergraduate student and participant in the extension project English for the Blinds.

²¹ In the original: "Para elaborar o questionário, primeiramente pensamos nas respostas que precisaríamos para melhorar nosso curso em relação aos recursos tecnológicos utilizados. Precisávamos saber se as TIC utilizadas em aula foram acessíveis, quais as dificuldades enfrentadas e soluções propostas pelos próprios alunos. E, assim, a partir das respostas surgiram as perguntas. Abordamos todos os recursos tecnológicos utilizados e pedimos que eles nos dessem um *feedback* do curso. O questionário proporcionou uma autorreflexão em cada estudante já que responderam sobre o seu próprio desenvolvimento ao longo do curso além deles falarem o que contribuiu ou atrapalhou para um bom aproveitamento do curso." (Czarneski, 2015, p. 38)

The purpose of this section was to describe how the questionnaire applied in December, 2014, was conducted. While the aim of the next section, is to describe the interview outline taken on the third term of the course.

3.2.5. Interview Outline

In section 3.2.5. – Interview Outline –, the questionnaire applied in the third term of classes will be explored.

This third questionnaire (ATTACHMENT C, page 81) was based on Zanamwe, Rupere and Kufandirimbwa (2013) questionnaire – survey questionnaire on use of social networking sites in Higher Education in Zimbabwe. The title of this questionnaire was survey questionnaire in use of social networking sites and apps, and it had 14 (fourteen) questions.

At first, we send the questionnaire to the Facebook closed group and also a link (the file was uploaded at Google Docs) to WhatsApp group. With this initiative, only a 02 (two) leaners answered it. Later on, we applied the questionnaire as an interview outline to the rest of the leaners. In duos and trios of learners, another undergraduate student and I took notes of their answers while recording it. The difference between this questionnaire and the other two that were applied, is that this was the first applied in the target language.

In this section, we mentioned about the interview outline done with learners. In the following section, a few comments about the scenario will be made.

3.3. SCENARIO

The aim of this section is to present the scenario where this study took place; and, also, make a few more comments about the extension project English for the Blinds developed at UTFPR.

The Federal University of Paraná (UTFPR) was not created, but rather transformed from the Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica do Paraná (CEFET-PR) into a University, the first of this kind in Brazil. UTFPR focuses on undergraduate, graduate and extension courses. It offers 100 higher education technology, bachelor degrees and language arts degrees. But also offers 19 technical courses in various areas.

As a way of continuation the undergraduate studies, the University offers over 90 specialized courses, 40 post-graduate studies programs, masters and doctoral courses as well as hundreds of research groups. UTFPR has 13 campuses in Paraná and intends to expand this activity. All of the campuses keep designed courses according to the needs of the region where it is located. Some of them offer technical courses and degree, and most only undergraduate and graduate degrees. All undergraduate courses are authorized and the vast majority has already been recognized by the Ministry of Education.

Currently, UTFPR has 2,549 teachers and 1,176 technicians and administrative employees. The number of regular students in technical, undergraduate and graduate courses is superior to 32 thousand.

The extension project English for the Blinds was envisioned and designed by Professor Retorta in UTFPR. This extension project was created due to the lack of studies in teaching/learning additional languages for blind and visually impaired, and also to the lack of instruction that undergraduate students majoring in Language Arts English/Portuguese have in how to cope with those learners. Project's classes started on the beginning of March, 2014, and ended on mid-December of the same year; and are held on Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 12:00 at UTFPR (Curitiba campus), on room E-107. This room was chosen taking into account the fact that the building has ramp and is close to the main entrance – some entrances are closed on Saturdays. Learners sit in small groups with undergraduate students and study the content of each unit.

In this section, the scenario was present and also a few comments about the extension project – English for the Blinds – were made. In the following section, the participants that were a part of this study will be presented.

3.4. PARTICIPANTS

This section is intended to present the participants of this study, that being, the same learners that participate in the extension project English for the Blinds that occurs at UTFPR.

As mentioned previously, at the beginning of English for the Blinds, a questionnaire was applied, in order to gather learner's profile. At that time, 27 (twenty seven) learners answered to the questionnaire; in which there were 03 (three) people that were not blinded or

had any visual difficulty. In July, 2014, there were 15 (fifteen) learners in the extension project, being 7 (seven) women and 8 (eight) men; and there was one student that could see.

Being blind or visually impaired is only one of the similar aspects shared by this learners; because this group is a very heterogeneous one. One aspect that can be mentioned is the age difference, it hangs from 18 - 56 years old; and, with that difference, there are learners that are still studying, the one that have college degrees, that work full time, do not work, have families, and still live with their parents, for example.

Despite the heterogeneity of this group, it is possible to separate them into two groups according to their ability to see. The first group is composed by 03 visually impaired learners – there are able to see from 5% (five percent) to 30% (thirty percent) –; for them, the units are printed in large letters (font style 45) and audios are provided for those who want to study at home. The second group, and the most challenging one, are the ones that are blind, in a total of 11 (eleven) learners; for them, units are printed in Braille and they have the same audios as the previous group. In this last group, a difficulty found is that some learners do not know Braille, what can become a challenge when they have to read a sentence aloud, for exemple.

This section was designed to provide some information about the participants of the extension project English for the Blinds. And, in this chapter, the objective was to describe the methodological design of this study - including: the study design, data collection, scenario and participants. The following chapter gives information about all the data analyzed.

4. MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA

In the section that follows, the data gathered through Facebook – 4.1.1 Blind and visually impaired people, 4.1.2. English for Us, 4.1.3. Facebook Messenger, 4.1.4. Brunches and Field Trip –, WhatsApp, profile, questionnaire and interview outline are analyzed and discussed.

4.1. FACEBOOK

The aim of this section is to reunite all the data collected through Facebook, in order to do that, a few subsections will be presented: 4.1.1 Blind and visually impaired people, 4.1.2. English for Us, 4.1.3. Facebook Messenger, and 4.1.4. Brunches and Field Trip.

4.1.1. Blind and visually impaired people

To begin this section, we will show an image where Professor Retorta asked in the open Facebook group ‘Blind and Visually Impaired people’ if our learners could participate.



Figure 4 - Professor Retorta asking if our learners could be members of the group
Source: Facebook

It is important to mention here Cope & Kalantzis (2012) theory that the ‘new teachers’ should design learning environments rather than just delivering content, provide learners with opportunities to use the new media, and use new media for learning design and student access to these designs at any time and from any place. That being exactly what Professor Retorta did with that initiative. Due to Professor’s suggestion, one learner – A – presented himself/herself to the group and even started conversations with other users, as we can see in the following images – images 5 and 6 –:



Figure 5 - Learner ‘A’ presenting himself/herself to the group
Source: Facebook



Figure 6 - Learner ‘A’ thanks the replies
Source: Facebook

On the same day that ‘A’ posted on Blind and Visually Impaired people group, on Facebook, his/her spouse – learner ‘B’ – also presented himself/herself on it:



Figure 7 - Learner ‘B’ presents himself/herself to the group
Source: Facebook

Professor Miriam made sure to comment on the post in both languages, to demonstrate her satisfaction with our learners communicating in the target language:



Figure 8 - Professor Retorta praises learners in the target language
Source: Facebook

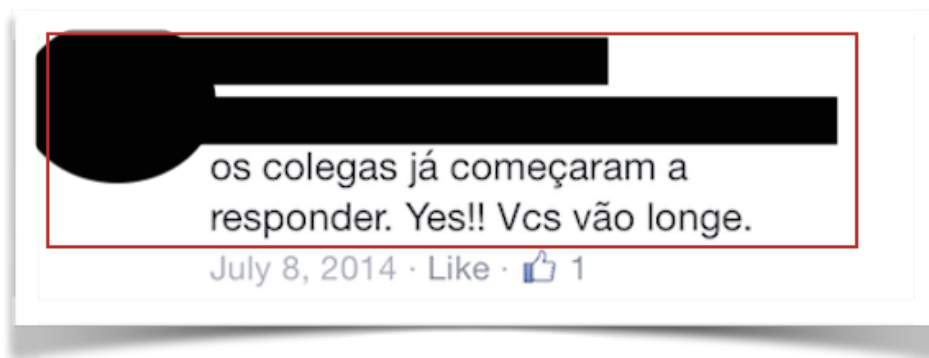


Figure 9 - Professor Retorta praises learners also in mother tongue
Source: Facebook

With the previous images, it possible to see that by having a ‘new teachers’ approach – Cope & Kalantzis (2012) –, Professor Retorta manage to make our learners to have a ‘new learners’ perspective; by taking responsibility for their learning, continuing their learning independently beyond the lesson and the classroom, and by working closely with other learners – in this case, also natives – in an environment that nurtures collective intelligence.

In the sequence, learners ‘A’ and ‘B’ had a Skype conference with someone that they met on that group, by presenting themselves. As Glister (1997) states that literacy is not only about finding things, but rather the ability to use them in daily basis. According to this experience, ‘B’ said:

Teacher Miriam, ‘B’ from the English course, sorry to bother you on a Saturday afternoon, but I’m here extremely excited. I’ve just talked to my America friend from the United States by Skype. It was a mess. But we could understand each other. ‘A’ spoke a little bit too. Most of it was in English, because it is easier for me, but we spoke a little in Spanish.[...] it was an amazing experience, very nice, this course is worth a thousand. I just want to thank you for all the opportunities, the tips, the effort you’ve been having with us, and the willingness, OK? [...] God bless you, thank you. (‘B’, English learner by Skype). [translated by the authors]²²

The purpose of this section was to provide examples in which learners interacted in the target language using Facebook’s open group Blind and visually impaired people. In the following section, a few examples of learner’s interaction in English through Facebook’s closed group English for Us will be commented upon.

²² In the original: “Professora Miriam, ‘B’ do curso de Inglês, desculpe por incomodar num sábado a tarde, mas eu estou aqui extremamente empolgada. Eu acabei de falar com minha amiga americana dos Estado Unidos pelo Skype. Foi uma confusão. Mas nós nos entendemos. ‘A’ falou com pouco também. A maior parte foi em inglês, porque é mais fácil para mim, mas falamos um pouco de espanhol também. [...] Foi uma experiência maravilhosa, muito bom, o curso está valendo nota mil. Eu só queria te agradecer por todas as oportunidades, pelas dicas, todo o esforço que você tem tido conosco e a boa vontade, OK? Deus te abençoe, Obrigada.

4.1.2. English for Us

The purpose of this section is to present examples in which learners from the English for the Blinds course use the English language.

Lankshear and Knobel (2008) highlight three understandings of DLs. First – operational – DLs are seen as a set of skills to locate, organize, understand, evaluate and analyze information using the digital technology. Second – cultural – is related to the understanding of texts in the cultural context. And, third – critic – is related to the fact that literacies are socially constructed and selected. This third case will be exemplified in the following examples.

In figure 10, learner ‘C’ uses the language in a spontaneous way.



Figure 10 - Learner ‘C’ uses English spontaneously
Source: Facebook

While in figure 11, learner ‘D’ wishes everyone a happy blind’s day.

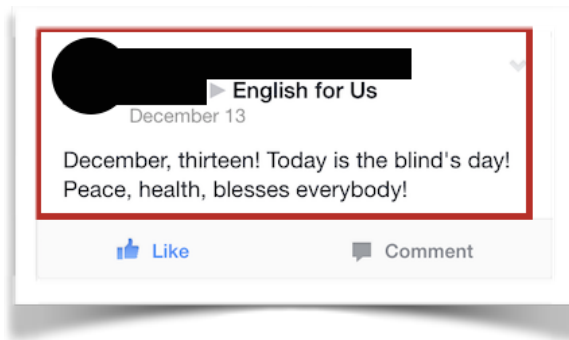


Figure 11 - Learner 'D' wishes a happy blind's day
Source: Facebook

While in figure 12, learner 'E' asks the teacher a question.



Figure 12 - Learner 'E' asks a question
Source: Facebook

With the examples seen in figures 10, 11, and 12, it is possible to visualize what Lankshear and Knobel (2008) state in the critic stage of DLs, in which literacies are socially constructed and selected because in figure 10, learner 'C' interacts with the group in the target language in an spontaneous way; while in figure 11, learner 'D' selects information based on a social group and shares this information with the rest of us; and, in figure 12, learner 'E' asks a question, and the answer to it can be of good use to all members.

In this section, a few examples of what was written in the target language by English for the Blinds learners on the English for Us closed group was presented. In the next section, some examples of conversations between learners and undergraduate student of English for the Blinds will be displayed.

4.1.3. Facebook Messenger

This section will present a few examples of interaction in the target language by learner and UTFPR undergraduate student; by exemplifying Cope & Kalantzis (2012) ‘new basics’, where people who can innovate, take risks, negotiate diversity and navigate uncertainty. This being exactly of the learners of the following examples did.

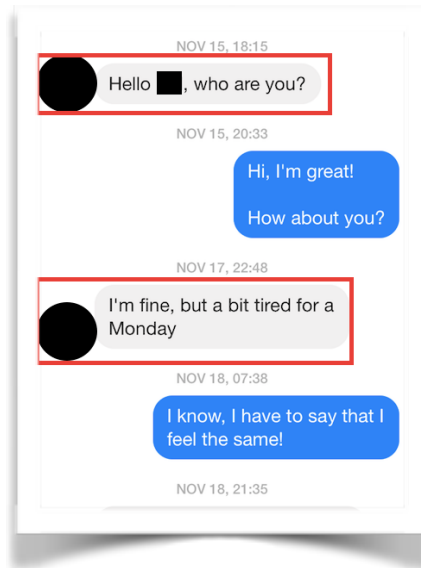


Figure 13 - Learner ‘F’ starting a conversation
Source: Facebook

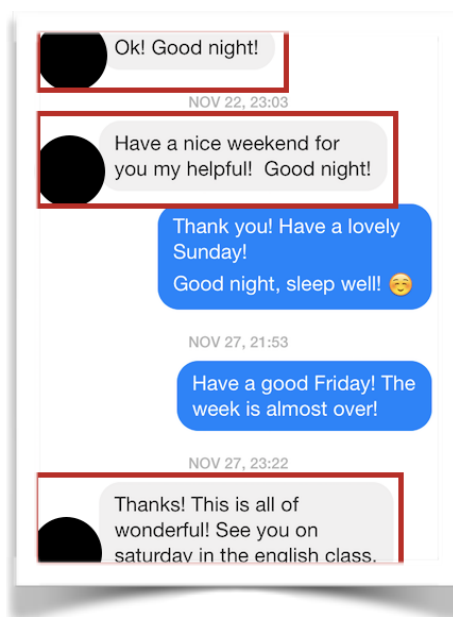


Figure 14 - Learner ‘F’ using the target language
Source: Facebook

In Image 13, learner ‘F’ starts a conversation in the target language, without being asked to; what it is very rewarding to a teacher that it is both helping them to learn EAL and also to use technologies. And, in the next figure, the same learner engages himself/herself in another conversation, not related to the classroom; that is an interesting fact, since that the initial impression was that learners would only extend classes through internet contact outside the classroom.

In this brief section, we showed two examples of how a learner interact using the English language in informal conversations with an undergraduate student. In the following section, we will show a few examples of activities that were done in the extension course English for the Blinds.

4.1.4. Brunches and Field Trip

In this section the main objective is to exemplify some examples of activities and field trip that were done with the English for the Blinds learners.

The first activity (Figure 15) was a brunch after class; and, before that, two learners of the English for the Blinds course played the acoustic guitar and sang to the classmates.



Figure 15 - Professor Retorta reminds learners of the activity
Source: Facebook

The second activity (Figure 16) was a brunch, as well, organized by Professor Retorta. In this brunch there was *chilli con carne*. And, it was called ‘chilli brunch’.



Figure 16 - Chilli Brunch
Source: Facebook

Chilli con carne it is a typical Mexican dish, but when teaching EAL it is important to make learners realize that not only the stereotyped dishes are present in the daily life of Americans, for instance; since in the United States there are a lot of Mexicans, typical food of this culture is current in people's lives. This being one way that we, as EAL teachers can help learners with critical thinking about daily life aspects.

The third and final activity was a field trip to MON. This field trip was proposed by a former undergraduate student of UTFPR, who still participate in the project, always that it is possible. Learners got the opportunity to touch the artwork of João Turin. In this exhibition, volunteers would describe in details the piece while learners would be touching it. In the following picture, there is one learner feeling one of his pieces.

Helloooooo!!
How are you guys?

Conversando com a Prof. **Miriam**, pensamos em fazer um passeio diferente e fora da sala de aula com a turma: visitar o Museu Oscar Niemeyer. Vocês conhecem?

Lá está tendo uma exposição das estátuas de bronze do João Turin, e são obras que podem ser tocadas pelos visitantes, aproximando todos da arte. Foi um desejo manifestado pelo próprio artista em vida. É muito interessante. E também podemos aproveitar e passear por outras salas...

Quando: 14 de fevereiro (sábado)
Local de encontro: UTFPR - nos deslocaremos juntos para o Museu.
Horário de saída da UTFPR: 14h30

ps: iremos como um grupo escolar, portanto precisamos da confirmação de quem poderá participar para pedirmos isenção da entrada, tudo bem? (alunos e professores - todos devem se manifestar)

Figure 17 - Field Trip invitation
Source: Facebook

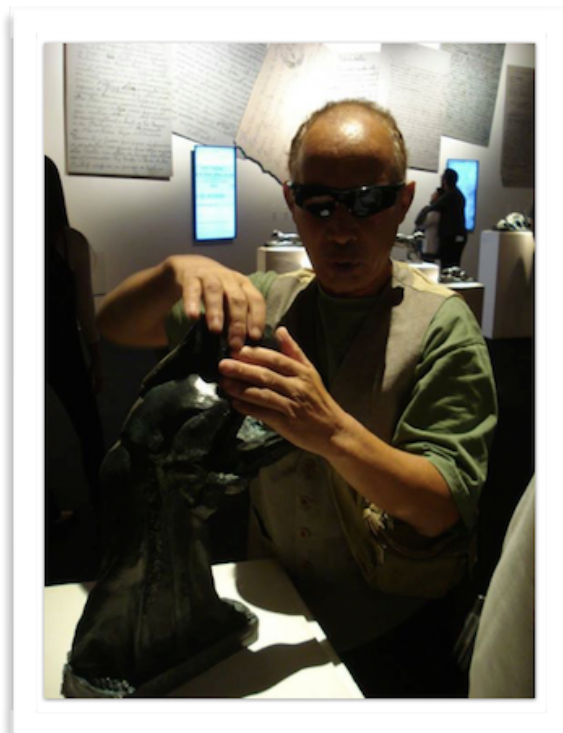


Figure 18 - João Turin exhibition
Source: Facebook



Figure 19 - João Turin artwork
Source: Facebook

This field trip was planned having two aspects in mind: the number of times that our learners had already gone to a museum and also that this specific exhibition was organized according to Turin's wishes, when he was still alive: that people would be able to touch the sculptures. According to the social networking relation, the invitation to this field trip was done through the group English for the Blinds, an event on Facebook was created, after the visitation, learners talked about their experiences on the same group, and many pictures were shared on WhatsApp; and this is a strong indicator that learners are using the technology proposed by us, even the ones that did not had much contact with the technology, are being able to use it.

In this brief section, we mentioned three actives done with the English for the Blinds' learners; two of them were brunches and one was a field trip. The next section will make a few comments about WhatApp.

4.2. WHATSAPP

The aim of this section is to demonstrate some extra class informal activities done through WhatsApp. Basically, this section will present three examples: the first, the interaction between a learner who could not install the update on his/her cellphone and the researcher of this study; the second, complaints of the blind learner about the screen reader that did not efficiently read a comment on a school assignment; and, the third, examples of apps to used on smartphones by these blind students.

In the first case, learner ‘G’ received a notification from Apple according to which he/she needed to download the latest software update. Because it was a fairly new device, the learner did not know exactly what to do. Once the download was complete, the smartphone restarted, by doing so, the screen reader – voice over – turned off, letting ‘G’ completely lost. After a while, she ended up sending me a message on WhatsApp to see if I was available to help her. When asked about what ‘G’ felt after this experience, he/she answered:

The feeling after this process was of fear, due to the lack of technology and access, nervousness about not knowing what to do, distress because it is a very expensive device, newly acquired and above all a panic to imagine that I could ended up no cellphone-less, because for me, it is a working tool, what normally a sighted person solves by car, I can solve, most of the time, over the phone.²³ (‘G’, English learner by WhatsApp). [translated by the authors]²⁴

This experience was a bit complicated, because usually when a learner that uses iOS has a problem, what I do is to talk to them at the same time that we are doing the action on both phones, simultaneously. But, with this specific situation, this was not possible; because I had already downloaded the latest version on my phone previously, and those updates are not something that we really pay attention to, when we are doing it, so I did not fully remembered what the steps were, clearly. Although, with patience by both sides, we ended up doing the update successfully. This situation, as well as the next one, prove that technologies can help blind and visually impaired people on their daily lives; the only things that can compromise it,

²³ This is only a small extract of ‘G’ experience; the full material it is available as ATTACHMENT D, page 89.

²⁴ In the original: O sentimento de todo este processo foi o de muito medo frente ao desconhecimento da tecnologia e do seu acesso, o de nervosismo por não saber como agir, a aflição por se tratar de um aparelho muito caro, recém-adquirido e, sobretudo, um pânico por imaginar que poderia ficar sem celular, pois o mesmo para mim, é ferramenta de trabalho, pois o que uma pessoa com visão resolve indo aos lugares de carro, posso resolver, na maioria das vezes através do telefone.

are difficulties that they enumerated when talking to us, and also, the difficulties that they face it when using different devices and apps.

The second example of this section refers to a case in which the learner had to know a link suggested by his/her teacher to complement his/her school assignment. This paper written by the learner was for an extension course that 'H' is taking, but it has nothing to do with English for the Blinds course. First, 'H' contacted me by WhatsApp to see if I could help him/her; after that, he/she made a FaceTime Call to see if I could read the website written on the comment; which was not possible. After that, 'H' send me the PDF²⁵ of the page, since I was not at home, and my smartphone does not show comments on PDFs, I had to sent it to my boyfriend, who copied the link, sent to my by WhatsApp and I forwarded to 'H'. About this experience, 'H' says

Hello! As I mentioned to you last Saturday, May 23, I had to read a document in the format (doc), and I knew there were comments in the text and it was necessary that they be read; though, the screen reader read the entire text and when passed through parts where were the comments he only read a small part of these. I tried to use all the features the application offers such as change cursors, but still reading the information were compromised. It is important to point out that I was using the screen reader - Jaws, version 14 for Windows, in Portuguese. So the solution we find together, enabled me to access the information, which makes me very grateful to you. A big hug and always count on me. ('H', English learner by WhatsApp). [translated by the authors]²⁶

Trying to help 'H' with this situation was a bit tricky. Also mentioned before, I was not at home when 'H' reached out to me, and I did my best to try to help him/her, what actually took a while. But those situations are common when dealing with technology, we can always find a way to solve the problem, en if we need to use many different paths. This situation is similar to the first one presented, because it does not involve a classroom situation, but it is confronting to know that learners will ask for help when dealing with DL

²⁵ PDF: Portable Document Format

²⁶ In the original: "Olá! Como eu já comentei com você, no último sábado, dia 23 de maio, precisei realizar uma leitura de um documento no formato (doc) e, que eu sabia haviam comentários no corpo do texto e se fazia necessário que estes fossem lidos porém, o leitor de tela leu todo o texto e quando passava pelos trechos em que estavam os comentários ele apenas lia uma pequena parte destes. Tentei usar todos os recursos que o aplicativo disponibiliza como mudar os cursores, mas mesmo assim a leitura das informações ficaram comprometidas. É importante salientar que eu estava usando o leitor de telas - Jaws, versão 14 para o Windows, em português. Então a solução que nós encontramos juntos, me possibilitou o acesso as informações, o que me faz ser muito grato a você. Um grande abraço e conte sempre comigo."

and, facing problems. Also, this situation serves as an experience for us, teaching that comments do not work properly with screen readers.

The third example of this section is a list of apps that ‘I’ send me by WhatsApp, those are the ones that he/she considers to be the most helpful for his/her daily life. A few examples of them, are: Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Youtube, and Google Tradutor²⁷.

The aim of this section was to present three examples in which learners use WhatsApp to communicate in extra classes conversations. In the following section, the profile of learners will be explored.

4.3. PROFILE

In this section, the first questionnaire applied to the learners of English for the Blinds will be explored. We wanted to know who are students are and how much they know and use ICT.

This questionnaire – Attachment A – contained 12 (twelve) questions, in which we were supposed to use the data collected to understand a little more about our students. In the first question our aimed was to knowledge learners’ level of instructions; and 09 (nine) of them have an undergraduate degree, the same number – 09 (nine) – completed high school, 04 (four) started colleges but did not have the chance to finish it, and 01 (one) did not finish high school.

When asked about where they studied – second question –, the majority – 11 (eleven) – said that they had studied in the public system, while 09 (nine) studied both in the public and the private system, 02 (two) of them did not answer the question, and 01 (one) studied only in schools created for blind people.

The next question – question number 03 –, inquired about their blindness; if they were born blind or if they acquire it after birth; 11 (eleven) answered that they were born blind, 07 (seven) that they acquire it after birth, 02 (two) did not answer the question, and 03 (three) said that they were not blind or visually impaired.

²⁷ The entire list is on ATTACHMENT E. page 92.

The fourth question was a follow up to the previous one; 07 (seven) of them are able to see – from 5% (five percentage) to 30% (thirty percentage) –, 11 (eleven) do not see anything at all, 02 (two) did not answer the question, and 03 (three) said that they were not blind or visually impaired.

While the fifth question intended to know if they learned how to read before or after becoming blind; to which 12 (twelve) did not answer the question, 10 (ten) before and 1 (one) after it.

The next question – number six – intended to know how much they knew about Braille; and 10 (ten) answered that they could understand Braille completely, 07 (seven) said that they could comprehend partially, 3 (three) did not answer the question, and the same number – three – said that they could not read in Braille.

When asked if they used another technology to communicate, 5 (five) did not answer the question, 01 (one) said that he/she did not use anything else to communicate, and the rest said that they mostly used computers and cell phones to communicate.

As a sequence of this question, on number eight we asked what did they use, among cellphones, computers with special softwares, iPad, mp3 player, and others; and, the only thing that only one of them said that he/she used was the iPad, probably due to the price of this gadget.

When asked if they had studied English at some point of their lives, 20 (twenty) said that they had, 3 (three) have not, and 1 (one) did not answer the question. The amount of time that they spent studying the language varies from two months to four years.

In the tenth question, the majority of them answered that they consider themselves to be at an elementary level – to be more precise, 17 (seventeen) of them –, 4 (four) said that they do not have any knowledge of the language, 1 (one) said that consider himself/herself and pre intermediate, and the same number – one – did not answer the question.

The following question – number eleven – most of them answered that they would learn English to improve their résumé – 17 (seventeen) at total –, 13 (thirteen) said that they would like to learn more about other cultures, 12 (twelve) said for self- improvement and the same number said to learn in the target language, 11 (eleven) to listen to songs and watch movies in the target language, and 1 (one) said to travel and the same number said because he/she liked the Language.

The last question, number twelve, when asked how would they think that they would learn English more easily; 11 (eleven) said through conversation, 04 (four) through writing, 03 (three) with mp3 files, and the same number – 03 (three) – with Braille, 02 (two) with reading, and the rest answer only once to the following means: repetition, written exercise, vocabulary, computer, grammar, translation, and music.

The intention of this profile was to better understand our learners, so we were able to improve our classes. It is needed to highlight that this was the first experience of most of the group participants as teachers of blind and visually imputed learners. And, everything was considered novelty to us.

The purpose of this subsection was to present the profile of English for the Blinds learners. It is important to mention that this profile helped us to design the course in a way to best attend learners. The following section is similar to this one, since the questionnaire that will be comment about it is not the object of study of this work; but it also helped us to design this study as well as to implement some activities o the extension course.

4.4. QUESTIONNAIRE

This section will present the second questionnaire applied in English for the Blinds – as the questionnaire presented in 4.3. Profile, this questionnaire helped us throughout the classes of English for the Blinds –; in this questionnaire, we aimed to see the effectiveness of using Facebook to send learners the activities for each lesson; also, to evaluate the course and learner's learning process.

In this second questionnaire, there were twenty one questions, in which students' should answer a little bit more about their online habits. It is important to say that the people who answered both questionnaires are not necessary the same ones. Even knowing this, we used both of them to try to understand a little bit better our studying group.

In the first question – a –, when asked if they had a Facebook account, 10 (ten) answered that they did,, and 4 (four) said that they did not have it. 07 (seven) answered that they logged on a daily basis, 5 (five) the question did not applied, 01 (one) said that he enters the networking twice a week and the same number – 01 (one) – said that he went to the site only once a week.

The following question refers to a group created to include all the learners that had Facebook, to post exercises, reminders, news and any curiosity that they might want to post. So, 08 (eight) of them said that they already accessed the group, to 04 (four) of them the question was not applied, and only 01 (one) did not access it. Question letter 'd' refers to how often learners' access the page; and 08 (eight) said that they went on it every time that there was a notification, and 06 (six) the question was not applied. As said previously, the group was created to post exercises, and question 'e' meets this usage; and 06 (six) learners were able to download the audios in the group, the same number (six) the question was not applied to them, and 02 (two) said that they could not download anything. In sequence, we asked how often they did the exercises, and to 05 (five) of them the question was not applied, 04 (four) said that they rarely did the exercises, 02 (two) answered twice a week and the same number (two) answered only once a week. For those that could not access the audio, we asked which problems they had to access them; and for 12 (twelve), the question was not applied, 01 (one) answered that he/she could not download the audios through cell phone and 01 (one) said that he/she did not have internet access. Still inquiring about the group, we wanted to know if they could access the links for videos that we posted; and 05 (five) answered that they could, for the same amount of learners (five) the question was not applied, 03 (three) did not answer the question, and 01 (one) did not try to access the videos. And, we did ask if the social networking media – in this case, Facebook – helped them to learn the language; and 08 (eight) of them said that it did, while to 06 (six) of them the question was not applied.

Question 'j', inquires about another group 'Blind and Visually impaired people'; a group of blind and visually impaired with people from all over the globe. Professor Miriam Sester Retorta asked in the group if her learners' would be welcome to participate (image 1), and 04 (four) students said that they did access the group.

In question – letter 'k' –, we asked if students had answered the grammar questions that Czarneski (2015) – posted, mainly weekly, on the page; and for 06 (six) of them the question was not applied, 04 (four) of them said that they did not answer them and the same amount of learners (four) said that they did.

In question 'l' about if they used the audios of the classes that were posted to them, either on their cell phones or mp3 players; and the numbers for this question were a little

more inspiring: 11 (eleven) of them said that they did, 02 (two) said that they did not, and for 01 (one) the question was not applied.

Another interesting data is the one of question letter 'm', in which 10 (ten) learners said that is very important to study English outside of the classroom, and 4 (four) said that it is important.

The other question – letter 'n' –, we asked learners how they learned English the best way when they were at home; 04 (four) answered that through cell phones, Braille and flashdrive (the same number, meaning four, for each category), 03 (three) said that they learned best through mp3 players and 01 (one) though Facebook.

In question 'o', we wanted to know which technology that we used they thought that their learning process was facilitated. 06 (six) answered through flashdrive, 03 (three) through Facebook, 02 (two) with the help of cell phones and Braille (the same amount for each), and 01 (one) for each of the following categories: written paperwork, by writing, and mp3 players.

By using the same line of reasoning, we asked which technology was not helpful; and 04 (four) answered that none – they thought that if some website or gadget was not helpful for them, it could be for somebody else –, 02 (two) answered Edmodo, Facebook – mainly because those learners did not use this platform – and the same number did not answer the question, and 01 (one) of the learners answered one of the following: Braille – because this learner could not read in Braille –, personal issues, and outdated technology/gadgets – because this specific learner did not have internet access or anything to access from a mobile platform.

When we asked if learners' had difficulties in using the technology that we suggested throughout the course – letter 'q' – 09 (nine) answered that they did not have any problems, 04 (four) said that they did – due to multiple facts: they did not have a computer at home, they did not have a Facebook account nor did they could access Edmodo, and that he/she was insecure using that technology –, and 01 (one) did not answer the question.

In letter 'r' we asked if learners thought that we could have used something else inside and outside the classroom; the majority 13 (thirteen) said no, that everything that we used was enough, and only 01 (one) said that he/she wished that we had a computer lab to work in.

In the following question – 's' – we wanted to know how learners' considered their own learning process during the course; 08 (eight) said that they considered a good

development, 05 (five) said that it was a reasonable development, and only 01 (one) said that it was not good enough.

In question ‘t’, we asked if the course attended their expectations; and 13 (thirteen) said that it did, and only 01 (one) did not answer the question.

The final question – ‘u’ –, we wanted suggestions that we could use to improve the course for next year; but the answers were not significant, because most of learners answered that the course was great, and that they did not have such an opportunity before.

In this section, our objective was to demonstrate the answers from the second questionnaire applied to the learners of the extension course at UTFPR. In the next section, the interview outline will be discussed and related to the theories brought previously to this study.

4.5. INTERVIEW OUTLINE

The aim of this section is to describe the interview outline done to investigate a few more aspects of ICT and apps in learner’s daily life.

The questionnaire had 14 (fourteen) questions. And 02 (two) learners answered it at home and send me the answers by e-mail. And other 09 (nine) learners answered it during class. Another undergraduate student and I took learners in small groups to another classroom– the first with 04 (four) and the second with 05 (five) learners – to another room in order to ask them the questions. Since the questionnaire was in English, we asked them in this language and asked them to help us translate to our mother tongue, so all learners could understand it. All answers were recorded.

From the 11 (eleven) learners that answered the questionnaire, 05 (five) are blind and the others are visually impaired. Their age ranges from the age of 13 (thirteen)– the youngest learner that we have – to more than 50 (fifty) years old. As far as the devices that they use to connect the internet, they use laptops, Smartphones – the majority of them –, cell phones and desktop computers. Related to where do they accessed internet from, most of them – 09 (nine) – accessed them at home, and they also access the internet on their cell phones/Smartphones – 07 (seven). And, the last question related to internet access, we asked how often they accessed it. The majority – 05 (five) – answered that they accessed the internet several times

a day, while 03 (three) accessed it once a day, and 01 (one) accessed it several times a week, once a week and several times a month.

In question number six, all of them said that they had a social networking account or profile; most of them had Facebook – only one learner did not have it –, and WhatsApp, only two learners did not have it. On the frequency that they logged into their accounts, most of them accessed it at least once a day. The amount of time spent on social webnets varies: most of them spent more time on Facebook but only logged in a few times a day; while on WhatsApp they spent less times but kept on checking in every once in a while during the day.

In question number ten, we asked them if they thought that Social Networking sites should be used in education; only 02 (two) learners answered that they did not think that those sites should be used in Education. One said that if these sites used for Education, which is a tendency, can get learners easily distracted by the possibilities of communication, and this student would rather talk to friends than study. And, the other learner said that he/she preferred online courses and not that Social Networking sites as an extension of presential courses.

When asked what apps learners used in their daily lives, the majority of them answered in a similar way, basically: Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Youtube, Google Translator. And, when asked what apps they think that would be useful to learn English, the app list included: Facebook, WhatsApp, WhatsApp Web, Skype and Google Translator.

The most important aspect of this interview outline was to find out what apps learners used the most, so we could prepare the following classroom activities focusing on them; and, also, to recognize what apps they do not have much contact with. In this sense, we have been studying the possibility to have specific classes to teach learners to use those apps, and this questionnaire will help in this sense. Personally, this interview outline helped me to get in touch with many apps that I did not even know about, such as Be my eyes²⁸, which is, unfortunately, only available to iOS user; where a sighted person can help a blind one to find items – I am already a member, but I did not have any calls, yet.

²⁸ <http://www.bemyeyes.org>

In this section, the most important answers from the survey questionnaire on use of social networking sites and apps were shown. In the following section, a few final considerations will be made.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this brief study, our main aim was to investigate how the blind and visually impaired learners use ICTs to communicate and learn the English Language. In this sense, our specific aims were to observe, research and study how learners of the extension course English for the Blinds interact with each other, with Professor Miriam, and with the undergraduate students of UTFPR that are volunteers in the course. In order to achieve these aims, we used the classroom ethnography research. The data was collected through classroom observations, profile, questionnaire, interview outline, the usage of Facebook groups, and text messages on Facebook and WhatsApp.

As far as the methodology used in the extension course English for the Blinds to learn the Additional Language goes, there was a vast variety of it; due to the fact that we have a very heterogenous group; and, as come to the conclusion with the learners, this is the differential of this English course. Also, we are always trying to use the Information and Communication Technology in a favor to help blind and visually impaired learners not only to learn the target language, but also with daily activities and to learn to use some of the technology available out there.

As the result of the analysis, we can come to the conclusion that different learners do not use ICT in the same ways; but when they have means to use the technology, they will help each other to find the best way for each one to adapt. Due to accessibility limitations, learners will ask for help and support to sighted people through various platforms; and, each difficult may be solved in a different way.

A difficulty found in the development of the project was that some apps and even social networking website were not as accessible as they claimed or were even planned to be. In order to overcome such issues we had to try to come around the difficulties faced by leaners, with the resources that we had at the moment: and the most rewarding part of the extension project was that there were students from a large variety of backgrounds, so everyone could contribute in a way or another.

Also, we need to remember that in the extension course we had both iOS and Android users; and some apps do not work in both operational systems. The ideal was that the apps

that were suggested to be worked with worked in both systems; but, whenever this was not possible, there was the necessity to provide a similar app to the other operational system.

As a personal outcome of being a member of this extension course, even if for a short period of time, I can express the necessity that I felt to learn Braille. This urge came because we had to give learner the unit that we were going to work with during the class; and, sometimes, the units got mixed up and we needed to ask a learner for help and read the handouts in Braille for us, in order to figure out which units they were. And it amazes me, is that during all of my academic life I had never had any contact with this written system, not even during my teaching undergraduate degree.

Considering the investigations and analysis carried out in this thesis, it was possible to realize how much Information and Communication Technologies can assist blind and visually impaired learner with their daily life and also with the learning of an Additional Language. Considering the results, it is possible to claim that this topic needs to be more explored by researchers of Applied Linguistics. Even though we recognize the limitations of such a study, we hope that this work can contribute to the teaching and learning of English as an Additional Language to blind and visually impaired learners; and also motivates future studies in this filed of study.

In relation to future researches, a possibility is besides posting activities of each and every unit on Facebook group, we may also post them on WhatsApp – through WhatApp Web –, because most learners prefer to use the screen readers on desktop computers and on laptops than with the cell phones and Smartphones accessibility mode – such as ‘voice over’ – to do the activities. They claim that it is easier for them. The only problem with this alternative mode, is that WhatsApp Web is not available to iOS, a way out was to post those activities in as many platforms as possible, and check which ones learners prefer to use.

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ATTACHMENT A

Questionário – Competências de comunicação

Nome: _____ Idade: _____.

1. Qual é seu nível de instrução?

 fundamental I incompleto fundamental I completo fundamental II incompleto fundamental II completo ensino médio incompleto ensino médio completo superior incompleto/ curso de: _____. superior completo/ curso de: _____.

2. Você estudou em:

 casa com tutor escola regular pública escola regular particular escola especial. Qual? _____. híbrido _____ anos em escola regular _____ anos em escola especial

3. Você

 nasceu com a deficiência adquiriu a deficiência. Há quanto tempo? _____.

4. Você

 enxerga _____ % totalmente cego

5. Você foi alfabetizado antes ou depois da cegueira? Como foi o processo?

6. Braille

- totalmente alfabetizado em Braille
- parcialmente alfabetizado em Braille
- não é alfabetizado em Braille

7. Você usa outros meios de comunicação? Quais e como?

8. Para se comunicar você utiliza:

- celular
- computador com software especial
- iPad
- mp3 player
- outros

9. Você já estudou inglês? _____

Quanto tempo? _____

Onde? _____

10. Em sua opinião, qual é seu nível de proficiência em inglês?

- não conheço a língua
- básico
- pré intermediário
- intermediário
- avançado

11. Por que você aprenderia inglês?

- para ouvir filmes e músicas
- para ler em inglês
- para melhorar o perfil para o trabalho
- para conhecer outras culturas e outros modos de vida
- para desenvolvimento pessoal

() _____

12. Como você pensa que seria mais fácil aprender inglês?

ATTACHMENT B

Questionário TCC 2 - O uso do Facebook como AVA no ensino de Inglês para Cegos

Nome:

Data:

a. Você tem conta no FACEBOOK? Em caso negativo, por quê não?

b. Com que frequência você acessa o FACEBOOK?

c. Você já acessou o grupo ENGLISH FOR US?

d. Com quanta frequência você acessa o grupo ENGLISH FOR US?

e. Você conseguiu baixar os arquivos de áudio postados no grupo?

f. Caso positivo, com quanta frequência você faz os exercícios de áudio?

g. Caso negativo, qual (quais) problemas você teve em acessá-los?

h. Você conseguiu acessar os links (de vídeos) postados no grupo?

i. O Facebook te ajuda a aprender inglês? Caso positivo, de que forma?

j. Você acessou o grupo BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE?

Caso positivo, por qual motivo? Conversou com algum outro participante? Quantas vezes? Como foi a experiência? Caso negativo, por qual motivo?

k. Você respondeu os exercícios de gramática postados no facebook?

Caso positivo, encontrou alguma dificuldade em acessá-los ou compreendê-los?

Caso negativo, por que não? _____

l. E os áudios do celular ou mp3 no pendrive? Já estudou com eles? Caso positivo, qual frequência? Como foi (foram) essa (s) experiência (s)?

m. Em uma escala de 1 a 5. Para você, qual a importância de se estudar inglês fora da sala de aula?

- (1) nenhuma importância
- (2) pouca importância
- (3) relativamente importante
- (4) importante
- (5) muito importante

n. Como você melhor estuda inglês em casa? Mais de uma resposta poderá ser marcada.

- () lições em Braille
- () lições em áudios no mp3 player
- () lições em áudios no pendrive
- () lições em áudios no celular
- () lições em áudios no Facebook
- () outros _____

o. Entre os recursos tecnológicos utilizados ao longo do curso, qual foi o melhor para você aprender a LI?

p. Qual recurso não teve um bom rendimento? Você consegue citar um motivo pelo qual o recurso não foi bem aproveitado?

q. Você teve dificuldade para usufruir dos recursos tecnológicos disponíveis pela professora?

Caso positivo, qual foi sua dificuldade? E por quê?

r. Em sua opinião, algum outro recurso tecnológico poderia ter sido utilizado no curso e não foi? Qual (quais)? _____

s. Em uma escala de 1 a 5, como você considera seu desenvolvimento na LI durante o curso?

- (1) nenhum desenvolvimento
- (2) pouco desenvolvimento
- (3) desenvolvimento razoável
- (4) bom desenvolvimento
- (5) muito desenvolvimento

O que mais contribuiu para o seu desenvolvimento?

O que faltou para melhorar seu desenvolvimento? _____

t. O curso atendeu suas expectativas?

Caso positivo, em qual sentido?

Caso negativo, o que faltou?

u. Como poderíamos melhorar nosso curso? Quais outras tecnologias poderíamos utilizar dentro e fora da sala de aula?

ATTACHMENT C**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND APPs**

Name:

Blind Visually Impaired

1. What is your gender? (Mark one answer only)

male

female

2. How old are you? (Mark one answer only)

15 - 20

21 - 25

26 - 30

31 - 35

36 - 40

41 - 50

more than 50

3. Which of the following devices do you use to connect to the internet? (You may mark more than one answer)

Laptop

Desktop computer

Cell phone

Smart phone

iPad

Others. Specify:

4. Where do you usually access the internet from? (You may mark more than one answer)

- Workplace
- Home
- Cellphone/Smartphones
- Others. Specify:

5. How often do you access the internet? (Mark one answer only)

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- Several times a month
- Once a month
- I don't use the internet

6. Do you have a Social Networking account or profile? (Mark one answer only)

- Yes
- No

7. If you answered YES to question 6, which of the following accounts do you have? (You may mark more than one answer)

- Facebook
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- Others. Specify:

8. For each account you have, specify the frequency of visit/number of times you log to your account. (Mark one answer for each account you have)

Facebook

- Few times in a year
- Once a month
- Once a day
- Many times a day

Twitter

- Few times in a year
- Once a month
- Once a day
- Many times a day

WhatsApp

- Few times in a year
- Once a month
- Once a day
- Many times a day

Instagram

- Few times in a year
- Once a month
- Once a day
- Many times a day

Others

- Few times in a year
- Once a month
- Once a day
- Many times a day

9. For each account you have, specify the length of the session or time you spend logged on.
(Mark one answer for each account you have)

Facebook

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 to 60 minutes
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- all day long

Twitter

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 to 60 minutes
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- all day long

WhatsApp

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 to 60 minutes

- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- all day long

Instagram

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 to 60 minutes
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- all day long

Other

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 to 60 minutes
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- all day long

10. When you log on to a computer, which sites do you visit in order of preference? (use 1 to indicate the most preferred and 3 the least referred)

- Online newspapers

Social Networking sites

E-mail accounts

Others. Specify:

11. Do you think social networking sites should be used in education? (Mark one answer only)

Yes

No

12. Indicate your level of proficiency/skill in using each of the following technologies. (Mark one answer for each account you have)

Facebook

No skill

Very low

Low

High

Very high

Twitter

No skill

Very low

Low

High

Very high

WhatsApp

No skill

- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

WhatsApp Web

- No skill
- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

FaceTime calls

- No skill
- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

Skype

- No skill
- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

Instagram

- No skill
- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

Blogs

- No skill
- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

E-mail

- No skill
- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high

13. What apps do you use and think that are helpful in you daily life?

14. What apps do you think would be useful to learn English? Why?

ATTACHMENT D

Meu nome é 'G'. Tenho 45 anos e moro em Curitiba Pr. Sou deficiente visual (cegueira total) em decorrência de glaucoma congênito. Já tive resíduo visual, bastante pequeno, quando mais jovem, mas este era suficiente somente para identificação de cores, Tv muito próxima dos olhos, fotos, e objetos que fossem muito grandes e com cores muito intensas. Este relato se refere a minha experiência, como deficiente visual e usuária do Iphone 5s.

Decorridos, aproximadamente, 3 meses depois da aquisição do aparelho acima mencionado, recebi uma notificação da Apple, empresa responsável pela fabricação e comercialização dos Iphones que necessitaria fazer minha primeira atualização do aparelho, para melhor usufruir dos recursos e benefícios que a tecnologia poderia me proporcionar.

Em um primeiro momento, fiquei preocupada, pois como o aparelho que utilizo tem vários aplicativos específicos para facilitar minha vida enquanto deficiente visual, tais como, leitor de dinheiro, identificador de cores e fotos, identificador de embalagens, etc., tive grande receio de que estes aplicativos fossem prejudicados e pudessem deixar de funcionar corretamente.

Tendo obtido informações seguras de que poderia fazer a atualização com confiança, então resolvi realizar o procedimento em casa com a ajuda do meu marido, também deficiente visual (cegueira total), decorrente de glaucoma congênito.

Iniciamos o procedimento - importante salientar que os aparelhos celulares por nós deficientes visuais tem um aplicativo de voz que fala todos os comandos por nós utilizados (voice over) - numa sexta-feira por volta das 18:00 h. Fui até ajustes, geral, atualização de software e iniciei a atualização. O aplicativo de voz iniciou a leitura inicial dos termos de licença da Apple e solicitou o "aceitar" ou "não aceitar". Concordei com os termos de licença e fui até o botão instalar e dei dois toques na tela do aparelho. Então o que ocorreu neste momento foi um pânico geral por parte de mim mesma e do meu marido que estava me auxiliando e acompanhando todo o processo. Por quê? Simplesmente o Voice Over parou de falar e o aparelho não obedecia a nenhum comando de voz ou de toque. Então aguardamos, aproximadamente, uns 5 minutos - os cinco minutos de maior tortura, sem sabermos ao certo o que estava ocorrendo e como era a primeira vez que realizávamos o procedimento e

estávamos sozinhos em casa nos sentimos perdidos e com uma sensação de impotência diante de uma tecnologia que para nós naquele momento estava totalmente inacessível.

Passados os cinco minutos iniciais e não obtendo nenhuma resposta do aparelho que permanecia no mais profundo silêncio ... recorri ao primeiro expediente que me ocorreu ... chamar minha vizinha mais próxima, que é uma amiga muito querida e disponível. Fui até o apartamento ao lado, bastante aflita e nervosa e solicitei a minha amiga se ela poderia dar uma "olhadinha" no aparelho para ver o que poderia estar ocorrendo. Ela, prontamente, me atendeu e veio até minha casa. Verificou o aparelho celular, mas como é uma senhora e utiliza várias tecnologias, mas não detém conhecimentos mais profundos das mesmas, ela nos relatou que o aparelho estava "aceso" e que havia um desenho de uma "maçã mordida" na parte inferior da tela. Tentou também, como nós, tocar várias vezes, tentou desligar o aparelho, mas sem êxito.

Agradecemos muito a nossa querida amiga, e ela foi embora triste por não poder nos auxiliar mais. Depois da saída dela, alguns minutos decorridos, inesperadamente, o "voice over" ficou ativo novamente e começou a falar em vários idiomas (inglês, espanhol, português, chinês, etc.) saudações e a tela parecia que não parava mais de girar estas mesmas mensagens.

Como não sabíamos - nem eu, nem meu marido - achamos que o celular estava atualizando cada aplicativo e por isso as saudações. Hoje, sabemos que neste momento, teríamos que definir o idioma. Mas naquele momento, não tínhamos este conhecimento e estávamos, ambos, muito nervosos e com muito medo de dar algo errado com o aparelho que é muito novo e recém-adquirido. Decorridos alguns minutos, começamos a perceber que as mensagens se repetiam sucessivamente e, então tentamos contato com vários amigos para pedir ajuda. Mas como isso ocorreu numa sexta-feira nos foi difícil encontrar alguém disponível. Não sabíamos o que fazer e, confesso, estava realmente em pânico! Então entramos em contato com uma amiga muito especial e querida, que além de nossa amiga é uma das tutoras do curso de Inglês que estamos fazendo pela UTFPR. Ela possui um Iphone idêntico ao meu e então foi o nosso grande anjo da guarda! Uma verdadeira bênção em nossa vida! Expliquei a ela o que estava ocorrendo e ela foi tentando nos dar dicas até que meu marido - acredito verdadeiramente, por inspiração divina - passou o dedo sobre a tela de baixo para cima e o "voice over" informou que a atualização havia sido realizada com sucesso. Então com o auxílio da nossa amiga, continuamos as configurações necessárias para a

efetivação da atualização do aparelho e tudo deu certo, depois de muito nervosismo, medo, aflição e pânico por minha parte e de meu marido.

Todo este relato detalhado, serve para dizer que a tecnologia é muito útil, necessária e imprescindível para todos e mais ainda, para nós deficientes visuais. Porém, ela ainda é limitante e restrita, causando a nós muitas vezes insegurança de que realmente daremos conta de realizar os procedimentos necessários e que poderemos realizar com independência, segurança e confiança os procedimentos necessários para utilizar e usufruir dos benefícios que a tecnologia nos oferece.

Qual o sentimento que ficou deste relato? O sentimento de todo este processo foi o de muito medo frente ao desconhecimento da tecnologia e do seu acesso, o de nervosismo por não saber como agir, a aflição por se tratar de um aparelho muito caro, recém-adquirido e, sobretudo, um pânico por imaginar que poderia ficar sem celular, pois o mesmo para mim, é ferramenta de trabalho, pois o que uma pessoa com visão resolve indo aos lugares de carro, posso resolver, na maioria das vezes através do telefone.

Em síntese, posso dizer que este relato tem um objetivo de descrição do fato, mas, muito além, disso, reflete o sentimento de impotência que nós deficientes visuais sentimos ao nos depararmos com algo que necessita prioritariamente da visão para ser executado. Reflete ainda, o sentimento de insegurança que a tecnologia ainda nos inspira. Mas para finalizarmos, acredito que este relato além de todos os sentimentos acima mencionados, reflete a gratidão imensa, primeiramente a Deus que sempre nos socorre e nos ampara em momentos difíceis, ao meu marido que teve paciência, perseverança e buscou várias alternativas de solucionar o problema e foi incansável em me ajudar e a nossa querida e mais que especial amiga que nos ajudou de forma carinhosa e com uma orientação precisa para que finalizássemos esta aventura que mais pareceu um drama, mas com final feliz, graças a Deus e ao carinho de todos os envolvidos nesta história. Muito obrigada e espero que este relato venha a contribuir para a pesquisa, para o estudo e para o melhor entendimento das limitações, dificuldades e desafios que nós deficientes visuais enfrentamos a cada dia e a cada momento de nossas vidas.

ATTACHMENT E

Apps

(alguns são pagos e outros gratuitos)

- Facebook (iOS e Android);
- WhatsApp (iOS e Android);
- Twitter (iOS e Android);
- Skype (iOS e Android);
- Youtube (iOS e Android);
- Leitor de dinheiro (iOS e Android);
- Ariadne Gps (iOS);
- Color Id (iOS e Android);
- CamFind (iOS e Android);
- iBooks (iOS);
- Adobe Reader (iOS e Android);
- Google tradutor (iOS e Android);
- Google Now (iOS e Android);
- TuneIn Radio (iOS e Android);
- Prizmo (iOS);
- Dropbox (iOS e Android);
- Four Square (iOS e Android);
- Light Detector (iOS e Android);
- Pages (iOS);
- Evernote (iOS e Android);
- TapTapsee (iOS e Android).