

# THE DISCURSIVE (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF THE AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH LEARNING: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON THE CATEGORY OF *PEREZHIVANIE*

A (RE) CONSTRUÇÃO DISCURSIVA DE EXPERIÊNCIAS AFETIVAS DE APRENDIZAGEM DE LÍNGUA INGLESA: UMA ANÁLISE À LUZ DA CATEGORIA DE *PEREZHIVANIE*

LA (RE-)CONSTRUCCIÓN DISCURSIVA DE EXPERIENCIAS AFECTIVAS DE APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS: UN ANÁLISIS A LA LUZ DE LA CATEGORÍA DE *PEREZHIVANIE*

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper has two main objectives: to generate intelligibility about the English learning experiences of a group of Undergraduate students, as well as to understand the process of discursive reconstruction of these experiences. Bearing these goals in mind, the category of *perezhivanie* (affective experience) is used aiming to comprehend theoretically the role of these affective experiences in the students' subjective English learning pathways. Semi-structured interviews were performed with the students of the Chemistry Teacher Formation Program of the Federal Institute of Maranhão – Campus Codó. In order to understand the different ways our affective experiences are materialized in discourse; this study employs the Appraisal System as an analytical tool to examine the meaning of the appraisals encoded in the narratives. The results demonstrate that the affective elements play a key role in the teaching-learning of English and that the appraisal represents an important tool for the reconstruction of our affective experiences.

**KEYWORDS:** Teaching-Learning of English. Affective Experience. *Perezhivanie*. Appraisal. Appraisal System.

**RESUMO:** Este artigo tem como objetivos principais gerar inteligibilidade acerca das experiências de aprendizagem de língua inglesa vividas por um grupo de alunos de Graduação e entender o processo de reconstrução discursiva dessas vivências. Com tal objetivo em vista, emprega-se a categoria de *perezhivanie* (experiência afetiva) com o intuito de entabular teoricamente o papel das vivências afetivas nas trajetórias subjetivas de aprendizagem de inglês. Uma sequência de entrevistas semiestruturadas foram realizadas com alunos do curso de Licenciatura em Química do Instituto Federal do Maranhão – Campus Codó. Ambicionando compreender as distintas formas como as nossas experiências afetivas se materializam em discurso, emprega-se neste estudo o Sistema de Avaliatividade como um instrumento de análise do significado das avaliações concretizadas nas narrativas. Os resultados

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das análises evidenciam que os elementos afetivos desempenham um papel central no aprender-ensinar inglês e que a avaliação representa um canal importante de (re-)construção discursiva das nossas experiências afetivas.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Ensino-Aprendizagem de Língua Inglesa. Experiência Afetiva. *Perezhivanie*. Avaliação. Sistema de Avaliatividade.

**RESUMEN:** Los principales objetivos de este artículo son generar inteligibilidad sobre las experiencias de aprendizaje de inglés de un grupo de estudiantes de Graduación y comprender el proceso de reconstrucción discursiva de estas experiencias. Con este objetivo en mente, se utiliza la categoría de *perezhivanie* (experiencia afectiva) para establecer teóricamente el papel de las experiencias afectivas en las trayectorias de aprendizaje de inglés. Se realizó una secuencia de entrevistas semiestructuradas con estudiantes de Licenciatura en Química del Instituto Federal do Maranhão - Codó. Con el objetivo de comprender las diferentes formas como nuestras experiencias afectivas se materializan en discurso, este estudio utiliza el Teoría de la Valoración como instrumento de análisis del significado de las evaluaciones realizadas en las narrativas. Los resultados expresan que los elementos afectivos tienen papel central en el aprendizaje-enseñanza del inglés y que la evaluación representa un canal importante para la (re)construcción discursiva de nuestras experiencias afectivas.

**PALAVRAS CLAVE:** Enseñanza-Aprendizaje de inglés. Experiencia afectiva. *Perezhivanie*. Valoración. Teoría de la valoración.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Tracing back to an older tradition, the thinking of Modernity celebrated a gloomy view of the influence of emotions in individual behavior. The recovery of Plato and Aristotle's philosophy, the aesthetic forms of classicism and the ethical ideals of Stoicism created a mentality highly opposed to the influence of *pathos* in human life, promoting models of social organization that reflected this view. This cult towards coldness, Rationalism and apathy produced a pedagogical doctrine based on the fight against the affects in the learning environment. The pedagogical consequences of this logocentric model were broad and profound: the classroom was conceived as a space in which only discipline (rational control of behavior) and intellectuality (rational control of thought) could thrive.

However, since the beginning of the Twentieth Century, challenging ideas started to contest the logocentrism's hegemony in western thought. Phenomenologists coined tough critiques to the Cartesian abstractionism, working for a reconciliation between philosophy and science and the materiality of human experience in the world. Meanwhile, the modernist aesthetic movement was inviting its audience to reject the canonic orthodoxies and schematic representations to embrace a visceral living of the art. Gestalt and Humanist Psychology proposed their first critiques to the behaviorist model. This turn in the circuit of dominant ideas in the intellectual panorama implicated in a fast erosion of Modernity's prestige as a hegemonic set of ideas. The repercussions of the logocentrism's crisis were felt in the reflection about classroom life: pedagogy thinkers from more humanized schools of thought came up with important critiques about the constituent elements of the Illuminist conception of Education, taking almost sacralized notions as discipline, rigid hierarchy, apathy and objectivism off the pedestal (DEWEY, 1979).

In the field of foreign/second language learning, this humanizing revolution resulted in an important change in the direction and in the objectives of the area: the obsessive quest for efficient teaching methods and flawless didactic procedures in the teaching of language content was on and on being abandoned while an interest regarding the life in the language classroom was slowly being nourished. Flowing along this movement of challenge of logocentrism canon, the affectivity became a relevant issue to language teaching scholars. Since the students are no longer seen as a homogenous mass, being considered in their subjective specificities instead, the affective element begins to be understood as one of the main traits of the learning process. Being the individual no longer only a rational mind imprisoned in an animal body, the whole of his/her experience gets counted in his/her learning and development pathway (Vygotsky, 1994).

In line with this investigative course, that finds in the emotions and subjective experiences of the individuals sharing the classroom space one of the main factors of the learning-teaching process, this study takes as its object of interest the affective experiences of a group of students in their specific pathways as English learners. The main goal of this research is to foster understandings regarding

these subjective experiences with the language and the way they become materialized in discourse. In order to do so, those experiences inscribed in narratives will be analyzed through the category of *perezhivanie* (translated in this paper as affective experience) coined by Vygotsky (1994). This idea equips us with a valorous theoretical resource in the endeavor to overcome the dichotomy between affect and reason, understanding our experiences as an idiosyncratic whole made of all individual's mental functions arousing in a specific encounter with the world.

After this introduction, this paper has a section in which a review of the studies about the role of affect in the process of teaching-learning second/foreign languages is presented. Afterwards, the theoretical framework of this research, based on the notion of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994) is discussed. The following section deals with the methodological guidelines of the study, unfolding the context of the research, the data generation instruments and the analytical toolkit. The subsequent section presents the data analysis and discussion. In the end, final remarks are shared.

## 2 THE CLASSROOM ON THE EDGE: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH ABOUT AFFECTS IN THE FIELD OF LANGUAGE STUDIES AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The studies about the role played by the emotions in the language learning-teaching process trace back to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA, henceforth). This area of knowledge founded in the 1960's supported the first round of research in the realm of affectivity in the 1970's, when a series of scholars aligned to the general thinking of this school became interested in the internal factors that interfere in language learning (Ellis, 1994). In her historical review of this line of studies, Barcelos (2015) highlights the groundbreaking nature of Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study about the role of motivation and sociocultural context in the learning of Second Language (L2). Another very important research in the development of the discussed line of investigation was conducted by Krashen (1985), introducing the notion of affective filter, an emotional barrier that curbs the memorization and grasping of linguistic data by the learners.

In the decade of 1990, the studies relating the affective fabric of language classroom to the learning pathway of the learners were taken to another level of depth. A worth mentioning piece of theoretical work is the *Biology of Knowledge* (Maturana, 1988). Relating the social organization to the biology through a dialectic perspective, the author ascribes a great value to the emotions, not only in the individual development, but also in the constitution of the environment and the system of relationships that guide classroom life. Another work that can be pointed out, from the same decade, is the book *Affect in Language Learning*, written by the linguist Jane Arnold (1999). The author, amid a thorough analysis of a series of emotions seen as relevant in the second/foreign language learning pathway, coins a thesis that becomes an inflection point in the studies about affect in the language classroom: the fundamental inter-relationship between cognitive and affective elements in the development of language proficiency in L2.

The turn of the millennium witnessed the interest on the issue of affectivity in language learning-teaching being broadened beyond the SLA field. The general realm of Language Studies (especially, the area of Applied Linguistics), by the end of the 1990's, decided to look to the affects in a more thoughtful way, opening a new and rich pathway of investigation of this phenomenon. A groundbreaking work in this movement is the book *Feeling Power*, written by Boler (1999) in the end of the past Century. In the referred writing, the author challenges the individualistic view of emotions, that is, the understanding that our affects are phenomena belonging exclusively to the individual who feels it, being their investigation, therefore, a duty of the biology or the psychology. In the view of the American thinker, "Emotions are not simply located in the individual, are not simply biological or privately experienced phenomena, but rather reflect linguistically-embedded cultural values" (Boler, 1999, p. 6).

In the Brazilian intellectual panorama, kickstarted by the pioneering work of Celani (2003) since the 1970's, the thinking of Moita Lopes (1996; 2006; 2013) designed the conception of a Brazilian Applied Linguistics, named *Mestiza Applied Linguistics* (2006)<sup>1</sup>, having its theoretical-methodological framework as the foundation of a series of studies associating affective factors to the network

<sup>1</sup> The Employment of the term "mestiza" refers to the author's insurgency against all forms of theoretical-methodological purism. The miscegenation that is inherent to the field would lie in its syncretism and its capacity of mixing eclectically different knowledges and ideas.

of human relationships inside of the language classroom. Some research exemplifying this line of investigation are Moraes Bezerra (2013), Nóbrega (2009), Abreu (2018), Borges (2017), Miller (2013). In contemporary Brazil, the issue of affectivity in the realms of Second/Foreign language learning-teaching is one of the most important trails of development of the field. The strong presence of authors imbued in this type of research in Academic Events, thematic issues in scientific journals (Borges, 2022), M.D and PhD theses (Piedade, 2019; Griffo, 2019) is an indication of the centrality of the affective element.

### 3 THE INTEGRATION OF THE AFFECTS TO THE WHOLE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE: VYGOTSKY'S CATEGORY OF *PEREZHIVANIE*

As highlighted by Averill (1980), one of the most important problems that weaken the theoretical works dedicated to the study of affects is its fragmentary and sometimes dichotomic nature. This partiality usually results in superficial views about the phenomenon or insular conceptions, in which the affects are seen as mental functions separated of the other psychological processes. When we investigate the role played by the affective elements in the language teaching-learning process, this insulated view becomes even more problematic: if the invisibility towards the emotion lead by the logocentrism represents a vulgar simplification of our psychological life, the exclusion of the cognitive factors out of the equation of learning is also a distortion, reducing the complexity of human experience (Vygotsky, 2001).

Trying to overcome this insulated and fractionated view of affect, this research subscribes the thinking of Vygotsky (1994, 1999), understanding the affects as an integrated unity of the subjective experience, the *perezhivanie*. As highlighted by Mok (2016), the notion of *perezhivanie* flourishes in the end of Vygotsky's life as a tentative effort to reformulate his mental development theory, breaking up with the objectivist conception (learning as an internalization of social environment data) that was dominant in Soviet Psychology during the 1920's. While the orthodox Reactology model saw the individual psychic life as a linear reflex of the environment, doing away with this interpretation, Vygotsky ascribes a key role in the development pathway to the array of idiosyncratic mental function of the subject in a certain moment. Thus, instead of understanding the learning process as an act of absorbing and converting symbolically elements of the environment into semantic forms, since the 1930's, Vygotsky starts seeing the learning as a subjective experience of the social reality. The subject does not suck in information from the reality, but the subject lives it. The concept of *perezhivanie*, in this sense, is the unity of all mental processes (affect, imagination, memory, cognition, attention, etc.) that emerge in one's conscience in a certain moment of encounter with the world.

Vygotsky passed away before he could produce a conclusive exposition about the notion of *perezhivanie*. However, throughout his last writings and speeches, the thinker presented a series of insights and theoretical sketches regarding this category – the conceptualization presented in the previous paragraph is based on these formulations. In a speech dedicated to the role of the environment in the child's development, Vygotsky (1994, p. 340) states that “it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determine how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the child's *perezhivanie*”. In a subsequent moment, subscribing the same view, Vygotsky goes on to say that “all the personal and all the environmental characteristics are represented in a *perezhivanie*” and that “different events elicit different *perezhivaniya*<sup>2</sup> in the child” (1994, p. 343). As synthesized by Cong-Lem (2022), Vygotsky's definition of *perezhivanie* is based on 4 pillars: 1) the characteristics of the individual's mind in the moment; 2) the environment data; 3) the subjective refraction of the environment data; and 4) the influence of this experience in the development/learning pathway. Therefore, in line with Veresov (2014), Mok (2016) and Fleer (2016), one can conceive the *perezhivanie* as a subjective experience that allows us to contemplate the world in a singularly refracted way (particular way), being, in this fashion, relevant to the individual's learning pathway. Thus, not all the experiences lived by the individual in each moment of his/her life can be classified as *perezhivanie*, but only the ones that, in the subjective view of this person, play a certain influence in his/her learning pathway.

If we were computers, or the logocentric machine thought out by Descartes, our apprehension of the world data would be linear; existing as a reflex instead of a refraction (Mok, 2016). However, our mind is constituted by a network of psychological functions

<sup>2</sup> Plural form of *perezhivanie*.

that operate actively in our process of living the world, painting our experiences with subjective colors. Our memories of the past emerge in the present; our imagination makes us see what is not in front of our eyes; our attention renders our concentration more or less kin and our perception can deceive us. However, among all these “refractors”, the affect stands out as the most important and influent one. The emotions that render us hostage in a certain encounter with the world; the feelings that we carry inside of our heart; our most impulsive reactions; our changing mood; our burning desires: these are the blurred lenses that filtrate and modulate subjectively our contact with the reality. Therefore, one can say that the affect is the most important element within *perezhivanie*, seen as a form of experience that articulates in a unique way the individual’s interaction with the real world. a simple walk through a garden while being happy is a different experience than walking on the same scenery in sadness or anguish. In summary, the affects make our moments in the world singular; the affectivity, in line with the other mental functions, renders the same event different when lived by different people.

The category of *perezhivanie* offers us a rich theoretical instrument to understand the role played by the affects in situations of learning-teaching and, more precisely, in the pathway of English learning walked by the participants in this study. Firstly, this notion helps us to understand these emotionally charged experiences in a historically articulated way. Each of our *perezhivaniya* have influence in our contact with the world, not only in the moment in which we live them, but also crystalizes it in our memory, rendering this moment as part of our psychological landscape (Fleer, 2016). In addition to it, this idea helps us to conceive the affects as part of the whole of the experience, establishing a dialogue, in every instant, with the different cognitive, mnemonic, perceptive, imaginative variables of our mind. Therefore, adopting the *perezhivanie* as a lens to study the affective phenomena helps us to overcome problematic dichotomies such as affect-cognition. Being emotion and reason two of the founding elements of our pedagogically relevant affective experiences (*perezhivaniya*), the relationship established between them is not one of friction, but of complementarity.

After the composition of the theoretical framework that characterizes the notion of *perezhivanie* as a subjective experience that mediates the individual’s contact with the reality and influences in the way this person learns, there is still one point left to be clarified. If our experiences are idiosyncratic and ephemeral, how can we access the experiences of someone else? Sociocultural psychologists such as Zaporozhets (1977) developed experimental methods to mensurate these variables. Other thinkers such as Veresov (2014) and Fleer (2016) have employed ludic tools in order to understand the others’ experiences. In a previous work (Abreu, 2018), I gave my own contribution to this collective endeavor of making *perezhivanie* a viable analysis category to be used in research regarding the affects in their inter-relationship with the classroom life. When we look at it through a discursive perspective, one can see that one of the means of contacting the other’s experience is through its materialization in discourse. In fact, we cannot access directly (without the mediation of language or other psychological method) someone else’s lived moments, but we can have a glimpse of those moments when they are reconstructed by language, usually, through the production of stories and narratives, giving these experiences a sense of unity. These discursive reconstructions of past experiences are a reliving of the same experience as well (Abreu, 2018). To touch a past *perezhivanie* in order to reconstruct in words, the subject relives that moment. Therefore, this reconstruction effort is, in itself, another meaningful learning experience. This process of reliving past *perezhivaniya* while we transform them into words was called in a previous writing of discursive *perezhivanie* (Abreu, 2018): a *perezhivanie* lived during the discursive work of reconstructing another past *perezhivanie*.

#### 4 GENERAL CHARACTERIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research is founded in a qualitative approach, as preconized by González-Rey (1997). According to the author, the qualitative research is based on three central pillars: the dialogical character of the approach, the singular as a legitimate instance of research and the constructive and interpretative nature of the knowledge. The scientific production directed by these guidelines sees the process of knowledge construction not as an objective work of cropping truths out of the reality, but a shared endeavor of weaving understandings through dialogue, in a constant movement of reinterpretation and discussion. Having this epistemological and methodological framework as a foundation, this study portrays an exploratory character, having as its main objective the broadening of the intelligibility horizons about the English learning experiences of the participants in the study and the way these lived moments are turned into discourse.

Presented the methodological conception guiding this research and the nature of its objectives, in the following section, the context of the study is described.

#### 4.1 GEOGRAPHIC AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

This paper is a result of a research project developed in the Instituto Federal do Maranhão (IFMA) – Campus Codó<sup>3</sup>. This educational institution displays a large tradition in the field of Agriculture and Livestock management, besides having 4 teacher formation programs in the areas of Mathematics, Biology, Agricultural Sciences and Chemistry.

In line with the Pedagogical Projects of IFMA's Teacher formation programs, the pre-service teachers have in their curriculum the subject of English for Specific Purposes. The research project being presented here was developed during my work as a professor at the forementioned course with a group of students from the Chemistry Teacher Formation Program during the first semester of 2022. The class was formed by 28 students between 18 and 25 years old. These students came from the cities of Codó and Timbiras. Coherent to the level of economic and social development of the Brazilian state of Maranhão, home of one of the lowest Human Development Indexes and income per capita of the entire country, the students of the class were mainly from socioeconomic contexts of harsh poverty. In this scenario, it was not uncommon the case of students giving up on the course due to financial difficulties (from the bus fare to go to IFMA to the cost of food and uniform) or due to the need of working full time (in many cases, in jobs in the rural production context).

#### 4.2 PARTICIPANTS OF THE RESEARCH: THE HUMAN FACE OF THE SCIENTIFIC WORK

The research Project synthesized in this paper was presented to the students enrolled in the subject of English for Specific Purposes, which is usually offered in the third semester of the Chemistry Teacher Formation Course. An invitation was made aiming to the participation of students who might be interested in the research and had spare time to participate in the interviews. In the end, among the 28 students enrolled in the English for Specific Purposes subject, 5 students were attracted by the investigations and decided to integrate the project<sup>4</sup>. In this article, due to limitations in space, only the data extracted from the interviews with two students will be analyzed.

Before the beginning of the activities, each participant of the research received a copy of an Informed Consent Form with all the information regarding the objectives of the research and potential risks (of social nature) in its execution. In this moment, all implications and ethical cares concerning the development of the study were explained and discussed with the participants of the research.

Aiming to preserve the anonymity of the two participants in the data collected, their names were replaced by nicknames chosen by them. Sofia and Gisele, despite belonging to the same course and being enrolled in the same subject, have different English learning pathways. While the latter had the opportunity to study in non-regular English courses out of school, the former only had the chance to study English in the school environment. Another important variable regarding both participants in the research is their relationship with the English language. While Gisele shows sympathy towards the language, having desire to live in a country where English is the official language, Sofia has a more pragmatic relationship with it, understanding it as a tool for social and professional success – as a type of skill that can open doors in some careers.

<sup>3</sup> This study had the financial support of the IFMA-Codó and the *Fundação de Apoio à pesquisa do Estado do Maranhão* (FAPEMA).

<sup>4</sup> Only the students from the Chemistry Teacher Formation Program enrolled in the subject of English for Specific Purposes were invited to participate in the research.

In light of this diversity of backgrounds and relationships with the language, each of the participants has weaved her own pathway of conflict and contact with English and affective experiences with the language. However, before we dive into these experiences, it is necessary to sketch in detail the methodological and data analysis-generation procedures.

#### 4.3 DATA GENERATION PROCEDURES

The data analyzed in this research were generated through interviews performed with both participants of the study. The conversations established with each of the participants individually followed the semi-structured interview model advocated by Burgess (1984), that sees the research interviews as interactions without a rigid script but organized around a previously established theme.

In spite of the absence of a survey-like script of pre-formed questions, the semi-structured interview can count on previously elaborated interrogations, that can be introduced facultatively throughout the dialogue as a means of fomenting reflections instead of an obligatory stage of the interview. Epistemologically, the semi-structured interviews advocated in this research are close to the notion of Exploratory conversations (Moraes Bezerra, 2013) employed by a series of scholars affiliated to the Exploratory Practice group. In this sense, they are interactions about a certain topic (with a certain degree of thematic flexibility) tilted towards the production of understandings, problematizations and questionings regarding some aspect of human life. The interviews were performed inside the institutional space of the IFMA-Codó, according to the participants' schedule and availability. The conversations lasted in average 12 minutes. The interactional data were registered through a voice recorder App set in a smart phone device. No editing resource or audio treatment tool were used in the recorded data.

#### 4.4 ANALYTICAL TOOLKIT: SENSE MAKING INSTRUMENTS

As explained in section 3, the notion of *perezhivanie* consists in the trail of learning experiences lived by a certain individual. In the network of psychological functions constituting these experiences (VYGOTSKY, 2001), the affects play a decisive role, highlighting the moments of subjective meaningfulness in our development pathway. Considering the discursive *perezhivanie* (ABREU, 2018) as the linguistic materialization of these experiences, one question may stand out: how can we find the affect in these discursive reconstructions of lived experiences? As stressed by Ochs and Schieffelin (1989), our emotions are spread throughout all our utterances: each word choice, syntactic structure, rhythm, voice tone, intensity. Language as a whole is permeated by affectivity. However, some specific linguistic forms allow us to have a more systematic and thorough contact with the affects in language. One of them, highlighted by Martin and White (2005), is the appraisal that impregnates the language. The evaluative traits inscribed in our discourse not only canalize and condensate the fluidity of our emotions in particular words/expressions (what makes them more mappable), but also render more understandable the way the elements of the world touch (and, thus, affect) us. Therefore, to understand the appraisal game in a certain interaction allows us to have a broader and clearer view of the affective outline of the experience reconstructed in words.

In light of the key importance of the appraisal elements to the understanding of the role played by the affects in the turning of our experiences into words, it is crucial to have an analytical toolkit able to map in a broad and systematic manner the semantic structure and the discursive function of the different evaluative moves throughout a certain utterance. In this research, the resource used in this effort is the Appraisal System (Martin; White, 2005)

##### 4.4.1 Appraisal System: a tool for evaluation analysis

The appraisal System (AS, henceforth) is a tool employed in the categorization, description and systematization of the evaluative elements offered by the language in the discursive weaving of value. Each language organizes their own axiological resources in grammatical structures and lexical items in order to make available to the language users value construction tools (VIAN JR, 2011) that, once turned into convention, can be comprehended by their interlocutors. Therefore, the AS offers a didactic map of the

language evaluation tools, presenting in a systemic form not only the different types of appraisal categories available in that language, but also creating means to understand their function and discursive meaning in a certain interaction.

The AS is integrated to larger framework of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994), being located in the level of the Discourse Semantics beside other two systems: Negotiation and Involvement (Eggins, 1994). The AS is also stratified into three subsystems: Gradation, Engagement and Attitude. Among them, only the latter will be employed as evaluative resource in this study. The Subsystem of Attitude classifies and organizes the evaluative resources of the language according to their semantic nature and their discursive power. There are three categories prescribed by the model as different ways of producing appraisal: Affect, Judgement and Appreciation.

The category of Affect refers to the value constructions based on the employment of words and expressions that trace back to the key to human emotions. Therefore, utterances such as *I love chocolate* or *She hates movies*, more than an expression of feelings, from an axiological perspective, construct appraisals that turn these emotions into subjective criteria for the valuing of some element in the world – in the presented cases: chocolate and movies. The category of Judgement comprehends the appraisal coined in the domain of ethics and morality, that is, appraisals produced by linguistic constructions that qualify behavior, actions and people in light of polarities such as fair-unfair, correct-incorrect, right-wrong, legal-illegal, holy-unholy, etc. When one says *my brother is a great father* or *my mother-in-law is a holy woman*, this person coins evaluations about both individuals in the realm of Judgement. Finally, the category of Appreciation refers to the linguistic constructions of value based on words/expressions of value grounded in the semantic terrain of aesthetics and beauty. Binomials such as ugly-beautiful, perfect-imperfect, tidy-messy are representative of this type of appraisal. Therefore, utterances like *your work is pretty* and *the painting ended up being imperfect* illustrate the model of value construction coined by Appreciation.

On top of the categories belonging to the Subsystem of Attitude (Affect, Judgement and Appreciation), the Subsystem of Gradation, another branch of AS, will be used as an analytical category that displays the evaluative intensity of a certain term/expression. Considering that the expression *very beautiful* is more charged with evaluation load than the adjective *beautiful* by itself, one may understand that the adverb *very* plays the semantic role of a gradation device.

In this paper, we are employing the AS as a tool to generate understandings about the appraisals spotted in the interactional segments transcribed from Gisele and Sofia interviews. Three criteria were implemented in the segmentation of the passages to be analyzed: thematic convergence with this work (English learning experiences), the richness of the linguistic elements and their originality.

After finishing the selection of the data to be scrutinized, the data were transcribed over a simplified version of the transcription model preconized by Loder, Bulla and Garcez (2014), in which the prosody markers are highlighted only when they contain interactional meaning. The discourse fragments were organized thematically throughout the analysis according to the qualitative interests of the study, not sticking to any type of chronological order. Based on the framework of analytical categories within the AS, this research aims to reach a deeper and wider view of the affective relationship of the interviewees with the constituent elements of their learning experiences, being this relationship more easily reviewed through appraisal. Therefore, the AS toolkit is used in this paper as a sense-generating instrument applied to the different interactional passages, being these senses and meanings qualitatively interpreted throughout the analytical work.

## 5 DATA ANALYSIS

Only two passages from the entire interviews with Gisele and Sofia are analyzed in more detail in this paper. Next, we look at one of the segments of the interview with Sofia.



## 5.1. PASSAGE 1: FOI SÓ DERROTA

Sofia	1	<i>Vixi, eu até gostava das aulas de inglês (hhhh), gostava mesmo (.) mas eu tinha era medo de falar lá na::frente lá na turma (.) a professora ficava pedindo pra gente cantar, â:: ficar fazendo lá atividade de conversa, né (.) sempre tinha alguém que ficava lá mangando da gente quando a gente falava em inglês (.) teve uma vez mesmo que a professora fez foi pedir pra eu falar uns negócio lá pra turma (.) eu sei que eu falei tudo errado hhhhhhh aí começou foi aquela zoada na sala e a professora mandou parar hhhh foi só derrota</i>
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
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In the passage 1, there is a segment of Sofia's interview, in which the student stresses her affective ambiguity towards the English language: on the one hand, there is a positive affection towards the language (*eu até gostava das aulas de inglês*); on the other hand, there is a paralyzing fear of communicating in front of her colleagues in English (*eu tinha era medo de falar lá na::frente lá na turma*). Aiming to explain and justifying this network of diverse feelings, the interviewee reconstructs discursively a moment of *perezhivanie* (an experience that is relevant for her learning pathway) lived in her English classroom when, instigated by her teacher to try to interact in English, she produced a supposedly low-quality oral performance in the target language, living an experience of negative appraisal from her friends and deep embarrassment.

The first aspect to be stressed in the passage traces back once again to Vygotsky (1994, 2001) thinking about the notion of *perezhivanie*. To the Soviet scholar, our experiences unify the different mental processes that constitute our subjective life (affect, cognition, memory, perception, etc.). When approaching the category of sense, which is the experience lived by a subject when facing a certain word (Veresov, 2014), Vygotsky (2001, p. 465) characterizes it as "the sum of all psychological processes that it (the word) arouses in our conscience". Thus, our experiences are short-lived crystallizations of a certain psychological array produced by an idiosyncratic encounter with the world. Therefore, it is expected this fluid fabric of psychological functions forming all our experiences (including the *perezhivaniya*) to be present when a certain individual rebuilds his/her lived moments into words.

Sofia's endeavor of discursive reconstruction spotted in the passage 1 corroborates the theoretical guidelines presented by Vygotsky (2001). In her brief narrative, different mental processes get intertwined, weaving an experience fabric tracing back to the moment relived by the student. The function of memory obviously plays a key role in this narrative work. It is the nourishing source of the interviewee's *perezhivanie*. However, Sofia's remembrances recovery does not occur in a linear and objective manner, but instead in a creative and idiosyncratic form. In other words, the student is not perfectly reproducing the lived events, but she is reliving them and, by doing so, reconstructing them subjectively. This subjective distortion, or refraction (Vygotsky, 1994), of the memory happens through the mixing of it with other mental functions, such as the affect or the cognition.

The weaving of Sofia's remembrances into words entangles her lived memories with a series of affects, which are coined into discourse in a variety of ways. In a first moment, remembering vaguely her English learning pathway, the interviewee scrambles this memory with two emotions: the affection towards the language and the fear of speaking it (lines 1 and 2). However, in line with Martin and White's (2005) view, the clearest way of emergence of Sofia's affectivity in her experience reconstruction occurs in the inscription of her affects in the appraisal throughout the text. In the line 1, the affection of the student towards the language is materialized in a positive appraisal coined in the semantic key of Affect (Martin; White, 2005). This evaluation is also boosted by a Gradation element (Martin; White, 2005) reaffirming and aggravating the affect directed towards the English Language (*mesmo*). In the following line, another negative appraisal regarding the situation of communicating in English is constructed by Sofia using the semantic key of Affect (Martin; White, 2005): *eu tinha era medo de falar lá na::frente lá na turma*. Besides expressing a bad and paralyzing feeling when facing her classroom peers, the fear felt by the student also evaluates in a depreciating manner her communicative skills in English, putting in doubt her capacity of interacting in that language.

Another appraisal that knits Sofia's memories to her emotions in her narrative can be found in the lines 7-9 of the passage 1, when the narrator scrutinizes in a depreciating manner her performance speaking English: *eu sei que eu falei tudo errado / foi só derrota*. In the highlighted segments, the negative appraisals produced in the semantic key of Appreciation (Martin; White, 2005) are presented. In both expedients, there are elements of Gradation (Martin; White, 2005) aggravating the intensity of the evaluation: *tudo* (line 7) and *só* (line 9). This evaluative framework reconstitutes in discourse a feeling of shame and embarrassment relived by the students when reconstructing her experience. The entanglement of these affects with the re-experienced memories becomes even clearer when Sofia's reaction towards her peers' mocking is also reconstructed in the narrative: *sempre tinha alguém que ficava lá mangando / aí começou foi aquela zoada*. The relived memories told in Sofia's story come out drenched in affects, rendering evident the mixing between emotions and memory in this discursive *perezhivanie*.

Nevertheless, among the entanglements of the mental functions that constitute our experiences, the knot that can be seen in the most diaphanous way is the intertwining between affect and cognition (that is, our human capacity of knowing and rationalizing the world). As highlighted by Solomon (2003), the evaluative activity can be seen as a conjugated effort of our cognition and our emotions in putting into words a rationally organized appraisal regarding the way the world has affected us. Therefore, all scrutiny about the world is a document of the entanglement between emotion and reason, the main constitutive elements of our experiences. This perception was also shared with Bakhtin (2003), who announced the essential unity formed by ideology (our capacity to conceptualize our utterances) and axiology (our capacity to utter value in language).

In the negative evaluation of her own performance speaking English (*eu falei tudo errado*), Sofia articulates in a complex manner her affects with an effort of rationalization. Cognitively, to classify something as incorrect demands a comparison work that involves the scrutinized element and a certain model of correction. Thus, in order to understand her speaking as incorrect, Sofia not only had to rationalize in an abstract way the constitutive parts of her speaking, but also had to compare that same performance with an idealized reference model. In an affective perspective, the negative appraisal about her own communicative performance as wrong and laughable generates a cascade of feelings. First of all, this negative evaluation arouses a feeling of shame that flows into becoming a feeling of fear towards even trying to learn English. These emotions, thus, behave in a rationalized form. There is an inherent logic in them. By the same token, all Sofia's cognitive endeavor into trying to rationalize her experiences is impregnated and boosted by her emotions. There is, therefore, the establishment of a relationship of complementarity and feedback between affect and cognition – which is made concrete in the pieces of interaction analyzed.

To understand the way Sofia reconstructs her discursive *perezhivanie* allow us to see more clearly the way these affective experiences have marked her learning pathway. In the beginning of passage 1, the narrator renders explicit her affectively-charged relationship with the English language: on the one hand, there is affection and interest moving her to study the language; on the other hand, there is the fear of speaking in front of people that scares her out of the English classroom. In an effort of solving this apparent dichotomy in her story, Sofia reconstitutes one of her most meaningful experiences inside of the English classroom. In this experience, another affective element arises: the shame and embarrassment in face of her own communicative performance, seen as unsatisfactory and laughable. In the network of the interviewee's narrative, the shame felt in face of her *derrota* (line 9) lived in the school's realm generated her contemporary fear of learning English.

Sofia develops throughout the passage 1 a sophisticated piece of theoretical work. The narrator not only reconstitutes some of her experiences, but also produces a theory about the reasons behind her affective conundrum regarding the learning of English: having affection towards the language and, at the same time, being afraid of speaking it. During her effort of reliving the crucial moments in her learning pathway, the participant of the study sheds light on her experiences while reliving them, in a moment of psychological work that mixes affect, memory and cognition in a trail of experiences.

## 5.2 PASSAGE 2: EU ME APAIXONEI PELO INGLÊS DE VERDADE

Gisele	1	<p><i>Comigo (.) assim (.) na minha vida (.) o inglês foi tipo um amor à::: tipo não vou dizer à primeira vista porque eu não gostava muito de inglês quando eu tinha aula normal= normal não, quer dizer, normal de escola, do verbo to be e tal (.) mas eu tô falando de quando eu comecei a fazer o curso lá na plan, eu fiz foi me apaixonar pela língua né (.) eu me apaixonei pelo inglês de verdade</i></p> <p><i>Mas foi assim? é::: (.) você começou a estudar e já se apaixonou?</i></p> <p><i>não sei se foi de cara, né? Mas eu lembro é de que bem no começo lá do curso, a professora, a Taciara (.) nossa, ela era tão linda â::: eu ama:::va ela lá a professora ela botou lá uma música do Imagine Dragons e eu amei dema:::is a aula, ouvindo a minha banda favorita (.) foi tipo um sonho (.) aí eu fiz foi continuar estudando lá até ano passado</i></p>
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Author	7	
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Gisele	10	
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In the passage 2, there is a brief segment of the interviewer's conversation with Gisele, in which the interviewee reconstructs in a narrative her pathway of enchantment towards the English language, comparing two different kinds of English classes experienced by her. One of the models, the school model, is classified as uninteresting and tedious. The second model is presented as the contrary: captivating and lead by a teacher to whom Gisele directs clear affection. This chain of affective links paves Gisele's learning pathway, being pointed out as the key factor in the success of the student's learning enterprise.

Throughout the passage, the student builds a synthetic panorama of her relationship with English. This effort is evident since the first line of the segment when the interviewee says: *na minha vida (.) o inglês foi tipo um amor*. Therefore, Gisele outlines an overview of the moments in her life considered important in her English learner pathway. Different episodes in this journey are glued together during the narrative, illustrating the moments of conflict and reconciliation involving the narrator and the language.

This mnemonic weaving is cut through by affective elements, being the intertwining between emotion and remembrance constructed in a diaphanous way in the appraisal expedients throughout the passage. The segment begins with a highly positive evaluation about the English language, which is coined in the semantic key of the Affect (Martin; White, 2005): *na minha vida (.) o inglês foi tipo um amor*. Besides making explicit her feelings towards the English language, Gisele organizes this feeling into a timeline, highlighting the experiences that resulted in her love towards English: *à::: tipo não vou dizer à primeira vista porque eu não gostava muito de inglês quando eu tinha aula normal= normal não, quer dizer, normal de escola, do verbo to be e tal*. The culminant point in Gisele's experience learning English at her school lies in her negative evaluation, produced in the semantic region of Affect (Martin; White, 2005): *eu não gostava muito de inglês quando eu tinha aula normal*.

Two evaluative resources are entangled in the composition of the affective aura that characterizes Gisele's experiences with the *inglês de escola*. The first of them is the depreciating appraisal regarding the student's contact with English in her school environment, which was coined under the aegis of Affect (Martin; White, 2005): *eu não gostava muito de inglês*. The second evaluative input, based on the semantic key of Appreciation (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005), builds a negative value regarding the type of English class offered by her school: *eu tinha aula normal= normal não, quer dizer, normal de escola, do verbo to be e tal*. The adjective *normal* displays the notion of a tedious and boring teaching, unable to captivate the student. This same idea is once again pointed out with the exemplification of the kind of content was taught in Gisele's English classes: *do verbo to be e tal*. The repetition of the *verbo to be* in her English classes stresses even more the depreciating appraisal already inscribed in the expression *normal de escola*.

This web of negative evaluations directed towards the model of English teaching experienced by Gisele in her learning journey renders evident the mix between the interviewee's memories and her affects. The classes, classified as *normais*, not only receive negative appraisal from a pedagogical point of view, but are also presented as guilty of Gisele's initial lack of interest towards the English language. The *amor* of the narrator towards this foreign language was not *à primeira vista* due to her disaffection regarding this boring approach of teaching. Two contrasting feelings are, then, unified and scrambled together in the twine of Gisele's *perezhivanie*.

This entanglement between memory and affect keeps on conducting the rest of the narrative in the passage 2. Contrasting with her disenchantment about the way English was taught at her school, Gisele reconstitutes a very different experience of English learning in a non-regular course: *quando eu comecei a fazer o curso lá na plan, eu fiz foi me apaixonar pela língua né (.) eu me apaixonei pelo inglês de verdade*. While the student's experience with the *inglês de escola* was characterized by boredom and lack of interest, her learning pathway at *plan* is relived as a passionate experience. The employment of two terms that refer to passion (*apaixonei* and *apaixonar*) constructs a highly-graduated positive appraisal regarding Gisele's learning experience coined at the semantic region of Affect (Martin; White, 2005). This evaluation is followed by the element of Gradation *de verdade*, which ascribes even more axiological charge to appraisal. This network of evaluations not only qualifies in a positive manner the type of teaching Gisele experienced in her non-regular course, but also makes clear her affective link with the language, entangling once again memory and emotion.

After being elicited by her interlocutor to explain which of the moments lived at *plan* was the one responsible to arouse in her heart the passion for English, Gisele weaved in another part of her hank of remembrances two other affective experiences: *a professora, a Taciara (.) nossa, ela era tão linda ã:::: eu ama::::va ela lá a professora ela botou lá uma música do Imagine Dragons e eu amei dema:::::is a aula, ouvindo a minha banda favorita*. In the highlighted segment, one can see a trail of positive appraisals towards both the teacher Taciara and the student's favorite band, establishing a connection between both figures within her learning experience. Two elements are worth mentioning. Firstly, the evaluative elements constructed by the narrator are grounded in different semantic regions. Regarding her teacher, the interviewee praises her both on the semantic key of the Affect (*eu ama::::va ela*) and Appreciation (*ela era tão linda*). Regarding the learning task mentioned by the student, containing a song from the band *Imagine Dragons*, it was also positively valued in the key of Affect (*eu amei dema:::::is*) and Appreciation: *a minha banda favorita* (Martin; White, 2005). The second element to be pointed out is the intertwining between both evaluative efforts. Although they may have different goals, both appraisals refer to the same experience lived by the student. Thus, the prettiness of her teacher and the love for the song of her favorite band compose a bigger picture of the same experience, synthesized in the expression: *foi tipo um sonho*.

Besides the entanglement between memory and affectivity in the web of experiences relived in Gisele's narrative, these elements also related with a series of cognitive inputs. Among them, two of those entanglements are worth mentioning. The narrative fabric woven by the student regarding her pathway of passion and disenchantment with English establishes a series of links between snapshots of experience ruled by causal relationships organized in a logical manner. Gisele's love is not immediate due to her negative experience at school. Nevertheless, the non-regular course in which she enrolls allows her to meet a teacher that follows a different pedagogical approach. In this new scenario, the student has the chance of participating in a class in which her favorite song is used as linguistic resource, making her to fall in love with the language. As a result, Gisele perseveres in her English studies: *ai eu fiz foi continuar estudando lá até ano passado*. There is, therefore, a clear chain of events joined by a logic of causality organizing the interviewee's narrative, which is found in a network of affectively charged memories, and renders the experience into words, integrating all these psychological processes into a discursive unity.

The second knot between affect and cognition in the passage 2 can be seen in the web of appraisals coined by the student. By evaluating the model of teaching offered by her school in a negative manner, the interviewee weaves a logic entanglement between her experience with the language and the kind of teaching she faced at her school environment. By the same token, the association between her love towards English, the beauty of her teacher and her passion for her favorite band weaves an interface between the emotions experienced by the student and the trail of logically intertwined experiences that resulted in Gisele's successful learning. It

is a very sophisticated filigree constructed by the student, reconstituting in the materiality of discourse the fluid and complex unity among the mental functions that emerge in each human experience (Vygotsky, 2001).

The analysis of the details concerning the discursive reconstruction of Gisele's *perezhivanie* helps us to understand the way the affective experiences lived by the participant guide her language learning pathway. The disenchantment experienced by the student in her English classes at school weakened her interest in studying the language. However, her affection towards teacher Taciara and her exciting classes allowed her to live happy and passionate experiences at the *plan* English course, being these lived moments the predominant factor in decision to persevere studying English.

In only a few lines, Gisele weaves a narrative synthesizing her entire pathway as an English learner. This chain of experiences organized in a brief story reveals the student's capacity to theorize about her own process of learning. Reliving discursively these *perezhivaniya*, the interviewee intertwines her memories, affects and rationalizations in experiences turned into words. These discursive *perezhivaniya* help her to relive the past and, by doing so, understand her journey as an English learner.

## 6 FINAL REMARKS

This article was oriented by the main objective of generating understandings about the role played by the *perezhivaniya* (affectively charged experiences that are relevant to the subjective development) in the English learning pathway and the way these experiences are reconstructed in discourse. The analyses developed have shed light on the process of transforming experiences into narratives, enriching our perspective with the subjective inputs of the students that participated in this research.

In both interviews performed, the interviewees' learning pathway was determined by affective experiences that established the direction of their journeys as English learners. Therefore, the data scrutinized corroborate Vygotsky's theorization that conceives the process of subjective development as a trail of *perezhivaniya* lived by the individual (Vygotsky, 2001, 1994). Another spark of intelligibility generated by the study has to do with the way the affective experiences are rendered into text. Although there is no parallelism between our experiences and the realm of discourse, there are some basic constitutive traits of our experiences that are transmitted to the discursive reconstruction of these lived moments. One of these characteristics is the subjective time fluidity, that can be seen in the narratives analyzed. There is no respect for any chronological linearity in the narrative weaving. The experiences turned into stories follow only the winds of the interaction and the narrator's interests. The second trait of our experiences that can be seen in the Sofia and Gisele's narratives is the complex unity among the different mental functions (Vygotsky, 2001). While attention, perception, memory, affect, cognition, etc. fuse within each of our experiences, these elements, when reconstructed into discourse, are also intertwined, building up a homologous unity, although grounded in a different realm.

Despite the need for future studies that may deepen the reflections sketched in this paper, this research consolidates some ideas. Firstly, the centrality of the subjective experiences in the understanding of the direction and the success of an individual's pathway of learning a foreign/second language is endorsed by this study. The great challenge posed to teachers and curricula designers is to imagine, formulate and implement pedagogical tools that allow us to dialogue with the students' affective experiences in a pedagogical context based on collective interaction. In other words, the main pedagogical challenge is to construct an intersubjective space in which the individual subjectivity can flourish, creating an environment in which positive, passionate and instigating experiences may thrive.

The second understanding to be corroborated by this study is the unbreakable unity between affect and cognition. This integration, announced almost a century ago by Vygotsky (2001), is still misunderstood by some of the factions dedicated to the reflection about classroom life. As pointed out by Pavlenko (2013), the affective turn in the field of social and pedagogical studies, by introducing the phenomenon of emotion as a key issue in the contemporary academic debate, has also exposed some of the weaknesses of this line of thought. As highlighted by the author (Pavlenko, 2013), many of the scholars dedicated to the study of affects try to separate the affective elements from the cognitive ones, as if they were promoting a kind of *pathos* vendetta against centuries of *logos* hegemony. To study the process of foreign/second language learning through the lenses of the psychological unity of our experiences allows us

to overcome this simplistic and blurred view of our subjective relationship with language and learning. To learn a second/foreign language, just like learning anything else, requires a full plunge of the subject in this work, living this process in its wholeness. It requires, therefore, that affect, reason, memory and all other psychological functions work together in order to make this singular encounter with the world to become the richest and most fruitful it can be.

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Received on January 12, 2023. Accepted on July 7, 2023.