DISCOURSES ON SLANG: IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH CLASSES IN BRAZIL

DISCURSOS SOBRE GÍRIAS: IMPLICAÇÕES PARA AULAS DE INGLÊS NO BRASIL

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ABSTRACT: There are primarily two discourses on slang: one is based on the Linguistic Purism View (slang is seen as an ugly, poor and/or dirty vocabulary); and on the other hand, the Socio-historical-cognitive view understands slang as a rich component of language (BARRA, 2007; MATTIELLO, 2005; ZARBALIYEVA, 2012). Taking this into consideration, this qualitative and hermeneutic study aims at investigating which ideology lies in the discourse of two high school English teachers in Brazil. Furthermore, the focus of this study is also on investigating the possible implications of that ideology for the English classes in the Brazilian context. For the aforementioned purposes, the teachers were interviewed and their discourses were analyzed under the Critical Discourse Analysis approach (MACHIN; MAYER, 2012), more specifically based on the Sociocognitive approach (WODAK & MEYER, 2009). Results show that the teachers' discourses are shaped by both perspectives (Linguistic Purism and Socio-historical-cognitive perspective). As a consequence, the use and the teaching of slang in Brazil are limited because of several reasons, especially concerning its semantic field.

KEYWORDS: Discourse. Slang. English classes.

RESUMO: Há basicamente dois discursos no que diz respeito ao vocabulário gírio: um é fundamentado na perspectiva purista de língua (na qual a gíria é considerada um vocabulário feio, pobre e/ou sujo); por outro lado, a perspectiva sócio-histórico-cognitiva entende a gíria enquanto rico componente linguístico (BARRA, 2007; MATTIELLO, 2005; ZARBALIYEVA, 2012). Levando isso em consideração, o presente estudo qualitativo-hermenêutico objetiva investigar que ideologia está presente nos discursos de professores de inglês do Ensino Médio. Além disso, o foco do presente estudo também diz respeito à investigação de possíveis implicações da referida ideologia para as aulas de inglês no contexto brasileiro. Para as finalidades supracitadas, os professores foram entrevistados e seus discursos foram analisados sob a abordagem da Análise Crítica do Discurso (MACHIN; MAYER, 2012), mais especificamente fundamentado na perspectiva sociocognitiva (WODAK & MEYER, 2009). Os resultados mostram que os discursos dos professores embasam-se em ambas as perspectivas (purista e sócio-histórico-cognitiva). Como consequência, o uso e ensino de gírias no Brasil são limitados devido a diversos fatores, em especial, ao campo semântico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Discurso. Gírias. Aulas de inglês.

INTRODUCTION

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It is well known that every discourse carries certain ideology and also some relation of power. It is also known that discourse is undoubtedly intertwined with society. In fact, it is the relationship between language and society that constitutes socio-historical individuals. One of the premises of Modern Linguistics[1] is that we live in discourse (s), shaping and being shaped by them. Described shortly, it means that we act socially in discourse (s).

In light of this discussion, it is undeniable that the ideologies present in discourses have a great influence on our lives. Thus, ideologies influence our cognition, in other words, they influence what and how we think, believe and know about something, which in turn brings crucial implications for our social acts (what we do).

With this in mind, this paper focuses on slang, more specifically on the discourses on slang. Therefore, I may say that two discourses (ideologies) on slang coexist: one, grounded in the Linguistic Purism View that considers slang as a poor, ugly, wrong vocabulary, which should be avoided; and the second ideology (Socio-historical-cognitive View), whose premise is that slang is a powerful component that enriches language, reflects culture and enhances our linguistic knowledge.

the present paper aims at investigating which ideology is found in the participants' discourse and at discussing the possible implications of such ideology(ies) for their acts in English classes in the Brazilian context (since the participants were English teachers in Brazil). For this purpose, two English teachers, from public high schools in Brazil, were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed under the Critical Discourse Analysis approach, more specifically the trend that contemplates the sociocognitive aspect of discourse. Results show that the teacher's ideologies are based on both perspectives (Purism and Socio-historical-cognitive view). Therefore, the use and the teaching of slang is limited/restricted in their English classes.

This article contains the following sections: a theoretical framework that covers the concept of discourse as well as the two main views of language and how slang is perceived in each perspective; the methodological section that illustrates the nature of this research, participants, data collection and analysis; then, the data analysis section which discusses the ideologies in the teachers' discourse and finally, the conclusion of this paper.

2 DISCOURSES ON SLANGS

This theoretical section starts with the definition of discourse that I have adopted for this paper. Then, I raise a discussion concerning the underlying discourses on slang.

1.1 Discourse

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[1] Modern Linguistics is understood as the perspective that takes into consideration language as social practice, which enables individuals to act and transform the world they live in (WODAK; MEYER, 2009). Additionally, the Modern Linguistics perspective considers language as a profoundly social phenomenon, which in turn can only be analyzed if its multiple aspects are taken into account, such as: cognitive, historical, interactive and so forth (KOCH, 2004).

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I deem it necessary to shed light on the concept of 'discourse' given that this term has been applied throughout this paper. It is also pertinent to stress that the definition of discourse ranges according to a particular approach.

Taking that into account, the concept of discourse in this paper is grounded in the theoretical and methodological considerations of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (MACHIN & MAYER, 2012; WODAK; MEYER, 2009). Therefore, discourse is understood as language in use, so the context is considered to be extremely important. Additionally, discourse is a social practice, which in turn enables individuals to create, maintain or transform their reality(ies) in their social world. Such maneuvers through discourse are possible due to the ideologies and power relations embedded in it. Here, I consider *ideology* as the way that certain values and principles reflect interests from a social group (powerful group) (MACHIN, 2012; WODAK, 2009). Such values and principles are imposed on society and consequently they have a great influence on people's lives.

The considerations exposed here convey the idea that discourse is manifested collectively instead of individually, in other words, a group of people must subscribe to a particular discourse in order for it to be considered one. In the next subsections, I seek to bring an overview of the discourses on slang.

1.2 Linguistic Purism View versus Socio-historical-cognitive View of Slang

Language has been approached under distinct perspectives throughout the history of Linguistics, and each of these views has focused on different aspects of language. For this reason, the discourse on slang varies in accordance with a particular linguistic trend. Thus, different discourses on slang coexist, which influences the way slang is perceived in society.

For clarification purposes, I introduce a general concept of slang. In the light of Sociolinguistics, slang is understood as a lexical-semantic variation, originally related to a hermetic social group. Thus, it is a secret, cryptologic and ephemeral vocabulary that functions as a way of expression, identity and self-defense of that group. Apart from that, slang is also a vocabulary used broadly in society. It plays basically the role of intensifying the manner people express their feelings and opinions (CABELLO, 1991, 2002, 2003; MATTIELLO, 2005).

There are essentially two discourses on slang: one supported by a Linguistic Purism perspective, and the other one underpinned by contemporary linguistic trends that take into consideration the social, cognitive and historical aspects of language. I discuss each perspective separately in the next subsections.

1.2.1 Linguistic Purism View

It is undeniable that language is heterogeneous and profoundly social (CALVET, 2002; LABOV, 2008). This heterogeneity entails several coexistent language varieties. With this in mind, the Linguistic Purism View understands that one variety of the language is better, purer and more

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beautiful than others. This way, a certain variety is elected as the privileged one, whereas the unelected ones are stigmatized and marginalized in society (BAGNO, 2007).

Linguistically speaking, there is not a language variety better than any other, in the same way that there is not any language that is better than another one. Thus, the election of one variety is based on philosophical, political and economic issues (BAGNO, 2007). Taking this into account, it seems clear that the elite, as a dominant social group, rules this election of the standard variety (CAMACHO, 2001). Concurring with this premise, Gnerre (1985, p. 4, *translated*[2]) corroborates that "the value of a linguistic variety is based on the status of its speakers in society, that is, this reflects the power and authority they have in social and economic relations". This statement demonstrates how social issues influence the way people evaluate others regarding linguistic features (varieties, accents and others).

Under the Linguistic Purism Perspective, slang is stigmatized on account of some factors: First, slang is a set of vocabulary from the language used in particular groups, which in turn are marginalized in society, and so is their language (CABELLO, 1991, 2002, 2003; MATTIELLO, 2005).

Second, the absence or restricted use of slang words in written texts leads to some lack of social prestige, given that the standard language variety dominates the majority of the written text genres (PRETI, 2000, 2005).

Third, the stigmatization of slang is also because of its semantic field, which is associated with sex, parts of the body, excrements, sexual preferences and so on. By and large, these topics have been considered taboo words since ancient societies. As a result, this semantic field has been largely silenced, avoided and/or controlled by society (FOUCAULT, 1978, 1997, 2009). Here, it is imperative to highlight that this control is delegated to powerful social groups and not to the society as a whole.

In light of this discourse, slang is perceived as sub-cultural, vulgar, ugly and poor language. Thus, from such perspective, slang can maculate and compromise the 'purity' of the language. As a consequence, slang is neglected in several social spheres, such as education, politics, religion, literature and others.

1.2.2 Socio-historical-cognitive View

The contemporary perspectives that take into consideration the social, historical and cognitive aspects of language object to the Linguistic Purism view. Thus, language is studied holistically and any language variety is considered to be equally important. With this mind, slang is seen positively as a component of language such as any other one.

From this view, sociolinguists attribute some positive characteristics to slang. In this perspective, slang enriches language given that new words are created (neologisms); it also reflects a culture of a certain group (BARRA, 2007; MATTIELLO, 2005; ZARBALIYEVA, 2012).

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[2] "uma variedade linguística 'vale' o que 'valem' na sociedade seus falantes, isto é, vale como reflexo do poder e da autoridade que eles têm nas relações econômicas e sociais" (p. 4).

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Additionally, regarding the importance of slang to non-native students, linguists encourage the teaching of this vocabulary because of its pervasiveness in any language. They argue that it is indispensable for a student to be able to communicate effectively in as many contexts as possible; therefore, it is crucial that students have the knowledge of slang, since it is present in the language that is used in several different social contexts. Thus, the mastering of slang denotes a better linguistic performance (BARRA, 2007; BURKE, 1998; MATTIELLO, 2005 AND OTHERS).

In face of the two subsections, we may assume the coexistence of two discourses (and their ideologies) on slang: **1**- slang is a poor, ugly, wrong vocabulary that maculates language; **2**- slang is a powerful component that enriches language, reflects culture and enhances the linguistic knowledge. Although there are still these two discourses, the studies of Modern Linguistics (KOCH, 2004) show that the Linguistic Purism view has lost ground since its premises go against contemporary trends. Modern linguists, sociolinguists and other scholars have asserted that each linguistic feature should be equally taken into consideration when language is analyzed/ studied. Moreover, none of such features is expected to be downgraded in relation to one another (BAGNO, 2007; LABOV, 2008; MATTIELLO, 2005 and others).

In the next sections, I expose the methodology of this study and then I discuss to what extent each of the above-mentioned ideologies is present in the teacher's discourse and how such ideologies may influence the way teachers act in their classrooms.

2 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

This is a qualitative and epistemologically hermeneutic study since it aims at grasping and at interpreting the ideologies in the teachers' discourse on slang. This way the focus of this paper is on discourse; and the data analysis in underpinned by the assumptions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (MACHIN & MAYER, 2012; WODAK & MEYER, 2009), more specifically, by the sociocognitive perspective that focuses on the relation between discourse and society taking into consideration the cognition (social individual) as a mediation of both entities (discourse-social world). The sociocognitive view of Critical Discourse Analysis is based on two semantic dimensions: the *microstructure* concerns the local meaning of a part of a certain discourse; local meanings lead to a global meaning (the *macrostructure*), which enables a holistic view of the phenomenon observed.

The data originated from my master's thesis (SENEFONTE, 2014), whose unit of analysis was the teachers' cognitions, which in turn were analyzed by the Grounded Theory Method (STRAUSS & CORBIN, 1998). Although I used some of the data from my thesis, the focus of this paper leads to another perspective: the teachers' discourse(s) on slang, and the possible implications of such discourse(s) for the English classroom in Brazil.

For this paper, I have selected two[3] out of four interviews which were semi-structured and audio-recorded. With this in mind, in the second half of 2012, I interviewed 4 high school English teachers, from 4 public schools in a small town in the state of Paraná, south of Brazil. The 4 procedures were transcribed in Portuguese since they were carried out in that language. For the

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[3] Original interview transcripts found in Senefonte (2014).

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purposes of this paper, the two interviews selected were translated and edited in English. The interviews in Senefonte (2014) focused on three dimensions: *knowledge, use and teaching of slang* in English (as a foreign language) classes. Considering the objectives of this paper, I just cover '*use*' (in class) and '*teaching of slang*' dimensions, that is, I will focus on the ideologies in the teacher's discourse with respect to the teaching of slang in foreign language classes.

After exposing the theoretical and methodological assumptions that underpin this study, the next section of this papers aims at presenting and discussing the data generated.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, I open the discussion concerning the ideologies analyzed in the teacher's discourse. As previously mentioned, this discourse was generated through face-to-face interviews, which in turn were transcribed, so that I could analyze Umberto's and Valentina's[4] discourses. Once again, it is important to emphasize that I do not focus on the whole transcript; the analysis covers only the parts that concern the implications of teachers' ideologies for English classroom. In other words, I focus on the *use* (in class) and *teaching of slang* in English classes.

3.1 Umberto

With respect to the *use of slang* in class, Umberto reported that he used the vocabulary both inside and outside the classroom context. In class, slang is seen as a pedagogical resource (linguistic and cultural knowledge); outside, it has a sociolinguistic or sociopragmatic importance given that it conveys the idea of authenticity. In order to illustrate this idea, I bring the excerpt that covers the use of slang in class.

> Even in class, sometimes I use slang (…) when I'm talking with them, I use some slang or some expressions. Then, they ask "what's this teacher?" and I explain to them why I'm speaking in that way, while there's a different way in the textbook. That's the way I work; it's a way of awakening their curiosity (*translated*[5])

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[4] For ethical issues (BERA, 2012), the participant's real names were substituted for pseudonyms.

[5] Até mesmo na sala de aula, às vezes sim. É (...) conversando com eles, uso uma coisa ou outra, uma expressão ou outra. Aí eles perguntam aí o que é isso professor, aí eu vou explicar porque, porque eu to falando Assim se lá no livro tá de outro jeito. É dessa maneira, é como uma forma de despertar curiosidade deles.

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Although Umberto uses slang in class, this use is limited. For instance, he does not make use of slang in written texts: "because I **think** that in written texts, **you must** stick to the **standard** form, to the **normative** part of the language" (*translated*[6])

Under the sociocognitive approach for critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), we can consider two semantic structures: *micro* (local meaning) and *macrostructure* (global meaning). The highlighted words cover the microstructure. So, the first highlighted word (think) is an epistemic modality that conveys Umberto's judgment concerning the use/teaching of slang. In the second highlighted sentence (you must), we notice that the participant tries to justify the use of the standard form when he uses the pronoun 'you' (that represents we', everyone), and the modal verb 'must', which conveys obligation. The general idea framed by all sentences underlined is the macrostructure. Thus, the macrostructure illustrates that the restriction in his use (of slang) reveals that the ideology of a pure and homogeneous language still remains in Umberto's discourse. The last two underlined words reinforce that idea (standard, normative).

Besides the contextual restriction, we can notice another kind of restriction, concerning the semantic field of slang:

> Related to sexual connotation, I guess I don't **think** whether in class, we have this FREEDOM to go deeper or to teach students, for example, to say a swear word. Get it? The first thing students want to learn is to swear in English, to say a swear word in English and then, I seek to SOFTEN the offensiveness in those words. I explain it to them, when they ask, I explain again. I don't leave my students without an answer, but I try to REMOVE the sexual connotation. I seek to MAKE IT MORE PLEASANT, at least the sense that the word conveys (translated[7])

In the excerpt above, the semantic macrostructure is that Umberto accepts positively the use of slang from students, however there is a restriction regarding the semantic field. This restriction is related to the Purism View of language, in which language is seen as 'pure'. Umberto recognizes the importance of slang for the language, which in turn proves the ideology of Socio-historical-cognitive View (present in his discourse). However, the words in uppercase illustrate that he is contradictory, given that his attitudes reveal a Language Purism ideology. In that excerpt, we can notice Umberto's attempts to get rid of the 'filth' that slang can cause to the language.

With respect to the *teaching of slang*, although Umberto's discourse upholds a Purist view of language, such teaching, which is free and contextualized, occurs from student's curiosity. Although the participant enjoys working with such vocabulary, it is possible to notice some

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[6] Porque eu acho que daí, já na questão de, da escrita você precisa se ater mais a, a, à norma né, mais a parte normativa da língua mesmo.

[7] De conotação sexual, eu acho. Eu não sei se dentro da sala de aula a gente tem essa é(...) LIBERDADE pra você aprofundar ou é... Ensinar o aluno, por exemplo, a falar palavrão, tá entendendo. É que a primeira coisa que o aluno quer aprender é isso, aprender a xingar em inglês, falar palavrão em inglês. Aí eu procuro QUEBRAR essa, essa, forma ofensiva de usar as coisas, eu explico, explico, ele pergunta eu explico Eu não deixo meu aluno sem resposta, mas eu procuro tirar essa, essa conotação, procuro AMENIZAR, pelo menos o sentido da, da palavra.

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unpreparedness from Umberto with respect to the teaching of slang. We can observe these considerations in the following excerpt:

> We usually work with slang from doubts, from student's questions. THEY bring slang to the class and then, we work with it. I like when it happens because it leads to a more interesting class doesn't it? It comes from their curiosity (…) We have to start (working with slang) from what happens in the moment of the class, we need to improvise. I think there's no specific methodology to approach slang in class (…) (*translated*[8])

The option for the pronoun 'we' in the excerpt above might be Umberto's attempt to exempt himself from the responsibility of teaching slang in a careful and planned way. By using such pronoun, the participant moves away from his individual responsibility as a teacher and refers to teachers in a generic way.

Additionally, Umberto attributes some difficulties concerning the teaching of the vocabulary. Such difficulty clearly reveals that the participant's discourse is based on a Purist perspective of language, which elects one language variety as the correct one and stigmatizes the other varieties, especially when they belong to an informal or colloquial communicative context: "The difficulty (in teaching slang) would be (…) sometimes you approach an expression or some word that is offensive in the sense of having a sexual connotation, sometimes even discriminatory" (*translated*[9])

From what has been exposed so far, it is noticeable that Umberto's discourse oscillates between the Purism View of slang and the Socio-historical cognitive perspective.

3.2. Valentina

Unlike Umberto, Valentina hardly ever uses slang in her class. This use frequently happens outside the classroom (internet, with friends and other contexts): "I rarely use slang in class when I'm talking with my students; except when there is an exercise focused on this linguistic feature; so in this situation, the use is ok" (*translated*[10]). Another excerpt conveys the idea of restriction regarding the use of slang in class: "I don't use slang when talking with the students, except when you're chatting with them on the internet" (*translated*[11]).

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[8] Geralmente a gente trabalha gíria a partir de dúvida, de questionamentos dos próprios alunos. ELES trazem as gírias pra dentro de sala, aí a gente trabalha. Eu GOSTO. Quando acontece isso, porque você, é torna a aula até mais interessante né, porque parte do, da curiosidade deles (...) Você tem que partir do que acontecer ali na hora e improvisar mesmo. Eu acredito que não tem nenhuma metodologia específica para o ensino de gírias (...).

[9] A dificuldade eu acho que seria (...) às vezes você trabalhar um, um, uma expressão ou alguma palavra que seja ofensiva, no sentido de ter conotação é (...) Sexual, ou às vezes até mesmo discriminatória.

[10] Agora aos alunos em sala de aula não. Rara (xxx). Bom, a não ser que tem ali um exercício realmente FOCADO nessa comunicação linguística, aí beleza.

[11] Aos alunos não... É quando você tá numa rede social até comunicando com eles (...) Sim.

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The absence/restriction (microstructure dimension) of slang is also found in the writing. When asked whether or not she used slang in written texts, Valentina replies:

> In the language institute or High school, I seek to stick to the **standard form**, I try to teach **the purest** thing that I know of the language. When they are on the streets or internet, whatever (language variety) they want to use is their own responsibility, correct? (t*ranslated[12]*)

The excerpt above clearly illustrates that Valentina still holds a Purism ideology (which in turn is the macrostructure). The highlighted word (purest) emphasizes the premise of a pure language variety. Like Umberto, Valentina's discourse also reveals contradiction, which results in the semantic macrostructure: on one hand she perceives slang as 'dirty', so that she avoids using slang in order not to maculate the purity of language (Language Purism View); on the other hand, she recognizes the importance of slang as sociolinguistic knowledge (informality, spontaneity) and cultural knowledge (this view is underpinned by the Socio-historical-cognitive Perspective). This insight is expressed in the following part of her discourse:

> I **think** that depending on the place where **you** teach, on your objectives as a teacher it is relevant (the teaching of slang) since it is information, knowledge of the culture, of the country whose language we teach (*translated*[13]).
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> When **we** use it (slang) we show that we have a natural knowledge of the foreign language and there's more freedom, it's something more relaxing and laid-back, without much pressure (*translated[14]*)

In a microstructure level, the highlighted verb is an epistemic modality that conveys Valentina's judgment concerning the teaching of slang in her classes. Whereas the pronouns 'you' and 'we' represent everyone. The use of those pronouns is a way in which Valentina tries to legitimize the use and teaching of slang.

In accordance with the Socio-historical-cognitive view of language (macrostructure level), she accepts positively the use of slang from students: " It's fine. I'm not going to cut them off. I'm not going to stop my students from making use of something that they already know. And that's good for them, it's an additional knowledge they may not encounter in class" (*translated*[15]).

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[12] no instituto ou nas escolas estaduais eu tento apurar a, a língua culta, passar pra eles, o mais PURO do que eu sei, a partir do momento que eles estão nas ruas, ou nas redes sociais, o que eles quiserem usar, responsabilidade deles, né?

[13] Acho que dependendo do, do local que você da aula, do teu objetivo como professora, ele cabe sim, como informação, como PARTE mesmo do, do conhecimento, da cultura do país da língua ensinada.

[14] Quando usamos a língua, a gente mostra que a gente tem o conhecimento NATURAL da língua deles né e também quando a gente pode usar que é mais liberdade gente ta mais SUAVE né, mais tranquilo (...) não muita pressão.

[15] Não (...) Tranquilo. Eu não, não vou cortar, não vou impedir um aluno de usufruir de um lado que ele já sabe, um lado que ela já conhece né (...) É bom pra ele, conhecimento extra que ele talvez não tenha dentro da sala de aula.

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Concerning *the teaching of slang*, Valentina asserts that such approach is inexistent in her classes. It seems that such inexistence is a result of Valentina's unpreparedness to approach slang (like Umberto). She also attributes some difficulties, which have a methodological reason (different from Umberto's discourse, which considers the semantic field as a problem): "I would like (to teach slang), (…) but it is not possible. Unfortunately, I don't know in what moment I could put this in class" (*translated*[16]).

Furthermore, the participant perceives a difficulty to update the knowledge of slang. With this difficulty, she attempts to justify the inexistence of the teaching of slang in her classes:

> Slang changes so fast, (…) when you see the slang in a textbook, that slang is not used anymore (old-fashioned)(…). So, If we depend on the didactic material, it takes some time, (…) the slang in textbooks are outdated. This rapidness can make the teaching of slang more difficult (*translated*[17])

So, after this discussion, one can perceive that Valentina's discourse reflects two ambivalent ideologies on slang. On one hand, she perceives slang in an optimistic way; on the other, her discourse reveals a linguistic purism view. Once exposed the data discussion, I move to the conclusions of the present paper.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this paper I elucidated how discourse is related to our lives and how this relationship affects our social acts, attitudes, behavior and so forth. Therefore, I state that the ideology in the teachers' discourse frames the way they teach English in Brazil.

We saw that there are basically two coexisting discourses regarding slang: one highlights its potentialities while the other attributes only negative aspects, based on social factors (power relations, dominant groups and so on).

In this perspective, the teachers' discourse analysis revealed both ideologies: the teachers recognize the importance of slang as sociolinguistic, pragmatic and cultural knowledge; and this is the reason why slang is taught, even with restrictions (Socio-historical-cognitive view). However, the linguistic Purism Ideology still remains in their discourses and, as a result, the use and teaching of slang in English classes in Brazil are limited to scarce contexts and such restriction is especially semantically-oriented.

In Umberto's classes, the teaching of slang comes from the students' curiosity about it; and such use contains semantic restrictions. He argues that the teaching of slang is difficult because of its semantic field (especially when it refers to sex). Whereas in Valentina's classes, the teaching and

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[16] Gostaria. (...) Mas NÃO CABE. Infelizmente, não sei em que MOMENTO eu posso colocar em aula, em pauta, o assunto gírias.

[17] *Gíria muda muito rapidamente*. (...) você vê, nossa uma gíria, essa gíria já não é mais usada. (...) Então hoje, o material didático, se a gente for depender só dele demora um pouco, quando ela vai chegar (...) A gíria chegou no material e aí ela já tá bem atrasada. Então essa *rapidez*, talvez *dificulte o ensino*.

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use of slang is even more restricted than in Umberto's, given that she attributes methodological reasons. This way, we can notice the participant's discourse carries an ideology of purity and sacredness, in which individuals seek to maintain the language as a pure, homogeneous and sacred entity (SENEFONTE, 2014). With this in mind, it is understandable the reason why teachers try to avoid certain groups of slang in class (with sexual connation, for instance), since such groups maculate the purity of a language.

The implications of such ideology, as we could notice, are the restriction or inexistence of slang in English classes in Brazil. As a consequence, students are deprived of a linguistic feature that can enhance their communicative skills (PRETI, 2000; SENEFONTE, 2014).

Taking into account the findings of this paper, we could see a gap in the language teaching in Brazil, since language is not appropriately studied. The teaching of the normative grammar (standard language) is still excessively prestigious in classes whereas other language varieties are overlooked. This way, language as a multifaceted phenomenon is reduced to a set of rules and its teaching becomes meaningless to students since the social function of the language may be lost.

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