

DOSSIER

Literacy and Curriculum: between the establishment of meanings and the experiments that create fissures and make other ways of life possible

Venezuelan immigration and the context of literacy of Brazilian and Venezuelan children in municipal schools in Boa Vista, Roraima, Brazil: a look at management considerations

A imigração venezuelana e o contexto da alfabetização de crianças brasileiras e venezuelanas em escolas municipais de Boa Vista, Roraima, Brasil: um olhar para as considerações da gestão

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ABSTRACT

We sought to understand how the Municipal Department of Education and Culture (SMEC) and the public schools in Boa Vista/Roraima are responding to the literacy process, considering the influx of Venezuelan children into the schools. This article is the result of ongoing ethnographic research in two municipal schools in Boa Vista/RR. We conducted interviews with the secretary and deputy secretary, the management team of the two schools involved, and the teachers who work in them. We drew up categories of analysis: training, performance, relationships, and challenges. As far as professional training is concerned, all the subjects have training consistent with their area of work, and they highlight the actions that SMEC has been offering. In terms of professional performance, the professionals have been committed to the different actions deliberated by the SMEC. However, there is a need for the family to be present in this process. Immigration intensified the focus on education. The worsening and emergence of some problems was not only due to immigration. The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic/vulnerability of families are important elements in the literacy process and in the relationship between the school, families, and children. The challenges encountered in the literacy process enable and give rise to an understanding of structural problems arising from various social factors, which are then analyzed, and alternatives sought to remedy the problems with the SMEC.

Keywords: Immigration. Brazilian and Venezuelan Children. Literacy. Management.

RESUMO

Buscamos o entendimento sobre como a Secretaria Municipal de Educação e Cultura (SMEC) e as escolas públicas de Boa Vista/Roraima estão respondendo ao processo de alfabetização considerando o ingresso de

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crianças venezuelanas nas escolas. Este artigo é decorrente de uma pesquisa etnográfica, em andamento, em duas escolas municipais de Boa Vista/RR. Realizamos entrevistas com a secretária e vice-secretária, com a equipe gestora das 2 escolas envolvidas e os professores inseridos nelas. Elaboramos as categorias de análise: formação; atuação; relações e desafios. No que tange à formação profissional, todos os sujeitos apresentam formação condizente com a área de atuação e destacam as ações que a SMEC vem oferecendo. Na atuação profissional constata-se que os profissionais têm se empenhado nas distintas ações deliberadas pela SMEC, contudo, há a necessidade de a família estar presente neste processo. A imigração intensificou o olhar para a educação. Fica claro que o agravamento e o surgimento de alguns problemas se deram não somente pela imigração. A pandemia da Covid-19 e a questão econômica/vulnerabilidade das famílias aparecem como elementos importantes no processo de alfabetização e na relação que se estabelece entre a escola com as famílias e as crianças. Os desafios encontrados nos processos de alfabetização viabilizam e dão vazão para o entendimento de problemas estruturais decorrentes de vários fatores sociais, que passam a ser analisados e buscadas alternativas para sanar as problemáticas junto à SMEC.

Palavras-chave: Imigração. Crianças Brasileiras e Venezuelanas. Alfabetização. Gestão.

Approaches

Since the years 2017-2019, research has shown a significant increase in Venezuelans migrating to various countries in Latin America due to the economic and social crisis in their country. Brazil has been one of the countries receiving these Venezuelan immigrants. According to data from the Federal Subcommittee for Reception, Identification, and Screening of Immigrants, over the past five years, Brazil has registered the entry of more than 700,000 Venezuelans (MJSP, 2022). Many Venezuelans cross the border through the state of Roraima and typically concentrate in the capital, Boa Vista, and the border municipality, Pacaraima. These studies show that Venezuelan immigrant children have been susceptible to child labor and dropping out of school (Custódio; Cabral, 2021). Additionally, they face discrimination in the enrollment process in Brazilian schools (Lacerda; Melchior, 2021), xenophobia, and racism (Assumpção; Aguiar, 2019), and are often regarded as “the other” (Vasconcelos, 2018).

The conjunction of immigration and the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the challenges and vulnerabilities of the public education system, especially in a reality that was already struggling due to the lack of federal and state support. Brazilian children and Venezuelan immigrant children share classrooms and resources in one of the Brazilian states that suffered the most from the pandemic and that continues to be one of the states with the lowest vaccination rates in Brazil, with 69.3% of its population vaccinated, only ahead of Amapá, which has 68.8% of its population vaccinated (G1, 2023).

In response to the growing number of Venezuelan immigrants arriving in the country, since 2018, the Brazilian federal government has established a voluntary internal relocation program known as ‘Interiorization’ as part of the Welcome Operation. The Interiorization program promotes the relocation of Venezuelans located in Roraima to other municipalities throughout Brazil. Despite initiatives like these, there remain complex situations that need to be addressed.

In this context, this article¹ results from an ethnographic project that aims to understand the process of integration of Brazilian and Venezuelan children in the municipal school environment in Boa Vista/RR. To this end, we work with two specific objectives: (1) to explore how Venezuelan refugee children and Brazilian children experience the school and educational environment in public elementary schools; (2) to understand how representatives of the Municipal Department of Education (SMEC), school administrators, and teachers of municipal public schools are supporting the educational opportunities of Brazilian children and Venezuelan refugee children in Boa Vista/RR. Due to the ongoing status of the research, in this study, we focus on specific objective 02, for which we have data that will be explained.

Therefore, we aim to understand how the Municipal Department of Education and the municipal public schools of Boa Vista/RR are responding to the literacy process considering the admission of Venezuelan children.

What we perceive about this objective is the process of mobilizing actions carried out by school teachers and the administration, SMEC, as well. At the same time, there are opportunities to strengthen actions so that they are consistently implemented throughout the school community. Venezuelan children and families exhibit complex realities that require the integration of social and economic policies in addition to educational ones.

Followed Paths

This article results from an ongoing ethnographic project, which, in its macrostructure, encompasses a two-year study that aims to understand the integration process of Brazilian and Venezuelan children in the municipal school environment in Boa Vista/RR. Therefore, in this stage of the investigation and, consequently, in the elaboration of this article, we focus on how the SMEC and the public schools in Boa Vista are responding to the literacy process, considering the admission of Venezuelan children in their classrooms.

This ethnography lasted two years (2022.2 to 2024.1) and was organized based on the studies by Emerson, Fretz e Shaw (1991). The project involves a team of researchers based in Boa Vista/RR at the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR) and another team based in the USA at Harvard University, which funds the research. The team based in Boa Vista/RR has been conducting investigations on Venezuelan immigration over the years, given the participation of its members in undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs in Education at UFRR. Thus, the study proposal stems from Harvard University's interest in hosting research in immigration areas, and the Roraima team operationalizes the actions through coordination with the SMEC and the schools.

To conduct the research, we initiated a series of procedures that started with initial contact and approval of the research development by the SMEC and the Ethics Committee. Following these approvals, we contacted the SMEC and discussed the project. The SMEC indicated the two municipal schools with the most enrolled Venezuelan immigrant students. With this information,

¹ The research is funded by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and a Lemann Research Grant from Harvard University.

the SMEC introduced the research team to the school administrators, who, along with the school staff, selected the classes to participate in the research. It is worth noting that this contact happened at the school, where the researchers visited, familiarized themselves with the environment, and talked with the school management team to understand and select the classes that could contribute to understanding the integration of Brazilian and Venezuelan children.

Thus, in 2022, it was selected a first-year class from each school. These classes were followed up in the subsequent year (2023) and will continue to be followed up in the third year (2024). The follow-up is conducted and documented in weekly observation reports. In each class, one team member dedicates two hours per week to note the integration processes of the children in the school environment. These procedures pertain to the entirety of the project. Nonetheless, in the present article, we focus on the following research instruments: legal documents and semi-structured interviews.

Regarding document analysis, we considered national public policies for immigrants, legislation related to immigrants' access to services, and data from the Education Observatory (SMEC). These data enabled us to understand the legal procedures held by the municipal education network of Boa Vista/RR.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the secretary and vice secretary of SMEC, school administrators, teachers, and caregivers of children enrolled in the municipal schools of Boa Vista/RR. Thus, for ethnographic analysis, we sought interactive patterns among the data from the documents, semi-structured interviews, and observation reports (2022 and 2023).

As for data analysis (Emerson, Fretz; Shaw, 1991), the team read the interviews and notes. After familiarizing themselves with the data, the researchers began categorizing it by identifying significant units or segments related to the research question. This identification involved labeling and organizing these units into categories, which can be descriptive (explicitly summarizing content) or interpretive (capturing underlying meanings). After this stage, themes were reviewed and compared synchronously with the categories throughout the data set. We looked for patterns, connections, and relationships between different categories. Themes were identified as recurring patterns of meaning or ideas in the data.

Theoretical analysis and structures

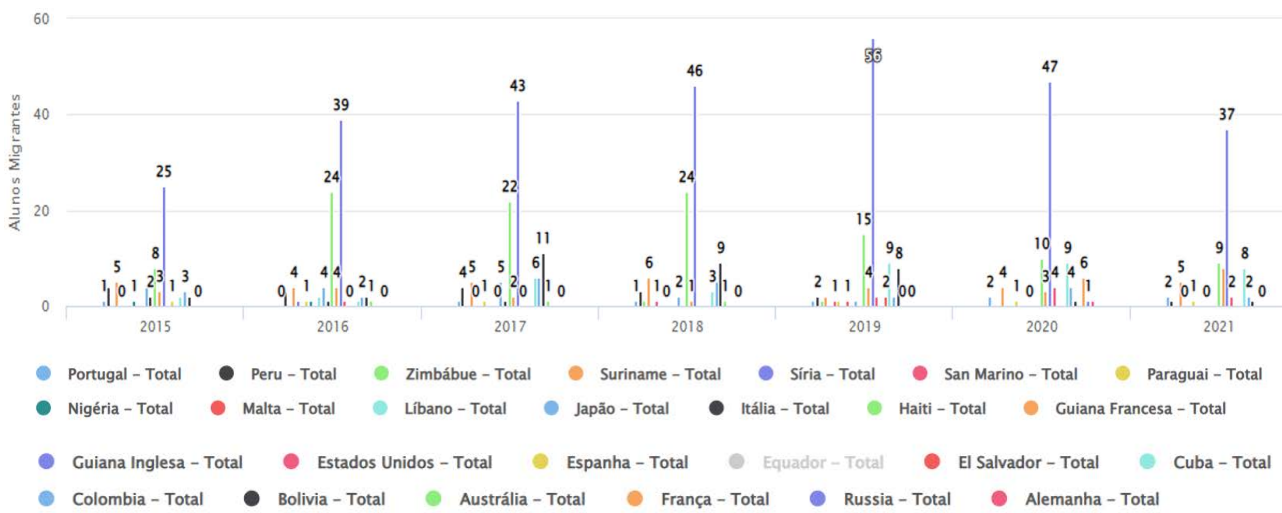
Immigration movements have increased considerably. At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, significant transformations in Brazilian and international migration policies can be observed. In 2017, Migration Law No. 13.445/2017 (Brazil, 2017) was enacted, considered one of the most modern laws in the world regarding the guarantee of Human Rights for migrants. This law envisions migrants as national citizens aligned with constitutional principles, a situation that changes the perspective of immigrants as a threat, as seen in the previous law No. 6.815 of August 19, 1980 (Brasil, 1980) and (Lacerda; Melchior, 2021).

Based on the principles found in Art. 3rd of the Brazilian migration policy, Venezuelan immigrants are received and begin to enter various social sectors in the city of Boa Vista/RR, including education, health, and commerce, among others.

Regarding education, data from the SMEC found in the Education Observatory (2023) show part of the educational reality of the 126 municipal schools in Boa Vista/RR city. There are 12 indigenous and five rural schools (located in rural areas) among the schools in Boa Vista/RR.

We highlight that the Education Observatory is a SMEC project that seeks to provide transparency to the data of municipal schools in Boa Vista/RR. In 2023, there are approximately 48,500 enrolled children. In the following, it is possible to see the nationalities existing in the municipal education system until 2021.

Image 1: Enrollment of students by nationality (except Venezuelan).

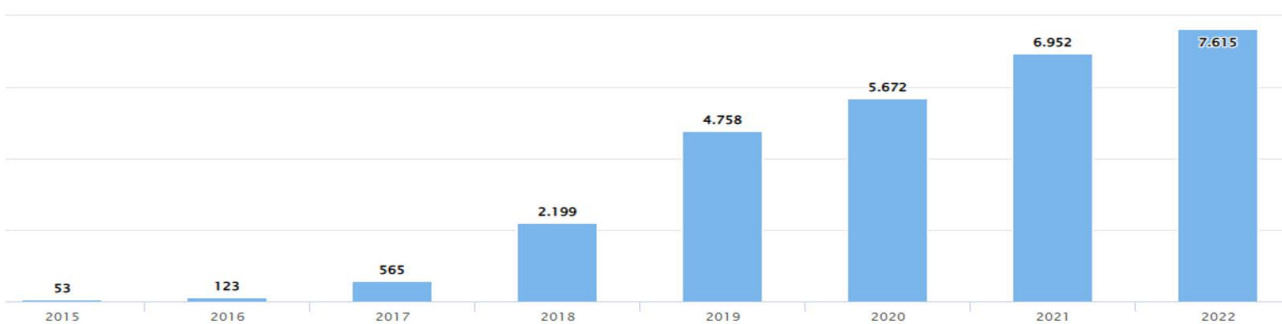


Source: Education Observatory of Boa Vista/RR (2023).

The enrollment data reflect the diversity of nationalities present in the municipal schools, highlighting immigrants from Guyana and Haiti, who have a higher number compared to other nationalities.

However, regarding Venezuelan immigration, we see a much more significant number, as shown by the Education Observatory data, especially in 2022, when out of 45,627 enrolled children, 7,615 were Venezuelan.

Image 2: Enrollment of Venezuelan immigrant students.



Source: Education Observatory of Boa Vista/RR (2023).

We assume that around 15 and 20% of the children admitted to municipal schools are Venezuelan. With the intensification of Enrollments in schools starting in 2017, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, the incidence has increased annually, and distinct issues have begun to emerge in school environments.

In this context, we aim to understand how SMEC and public schools in Boa Vista/RR are responding to the literacy process, considering the influx of Venezuelan children. To this end, we analyzed the interviews conducted with SMEC and the interviews with administrators, teachers, and caregivers of the two schools identified as having the highest number of Venezuelan students in Boa Vista/RR.

Both schools are located near reception shelters for immigrants. Municipal School 01 shares a border wall with the Rondon Shelter, the two being located in the 13 de September neighborhood. In 2022, when we began the research, the school had 541 students, with 270 of them being Venezuelan students. In 2023, of 533 enrolled students, 257 were foreigners, and among these, 122 lived in shelters. Additionally, the school had 26 indigenous students from the Warao ethnicity, all living in shelters. Municipal School 02 is located in the Nova Canaã neighborhood, where the Pintolândia Shelter (a shelter for Venezuelan and Warao indigenous immigrants) was located. In 2022, the school had 850 students, with 131 being Venezuelan students. In 2023, the school had 966 enrolled students, with 161 being Venezuelan students and 13 Warao indigenous students.

In constructing the research, from the access to SMEC and the administration teams of the two schools, we conducted interviews with the secretary and vice secretary of SMEC, the administration teams of the two schools, and the teachers working in the classrooms selected for the study.

Participants included the Secretary of Education (SeSMEC) and the Deputy Secretary of Education (SeAdSMEC), the Pedagogical Coordinator of Municipal School 01 (CPPp), the Homeroom Teacher of Municipal School 01 (PRPp), and the Arts Teacher of Municipal School 01 (PAPp). At Municipal School 02, participants included the Pedagogical Coordinator (CPNc), the Homeroom Teacher (PRNc), and the Caregiver (CNC), summing eight educational professionals from the municipal education network involved in various aspects of training².

Through the conducted interviews, we began to organize the data into categories and subcategories, presented below, to discuss and problematize the issues raised.

Table 1: Analysis' categories

CATEGORIA	SUBCATEGORIAS
Training	Training Background; Years of experience
Performance	Performance within SMEC's structures; Performance with immigrant students
Relationship	Relationship with the management team/SMEC; Relationship with the parents; Relationship between the children
Challenge	Issues; Suggestions

Source: authors (2023).

² The interviews and data analysis stage included the participation of Yasmin Gabriela da Silva Faray, student of the Undergraduate Visual Arts course at UFRR.

In the *Training* category, we entered the perspective of teacher training and or training focused on school management. Regarding the *educational background*, all eight professionals have training in Pedagogy with specialization in areas of interest. The Arts Teacher (PAPp) specializes in the arts, the Homeroom Teacher at School 01 (PRPp) specializes in Psychopedagogy, and the Homeroom Teacher at School 02 (PRNc) has specializations in School Pedagogy, School Administration, Theology, and Media in Education. On the other hand, the Caregiver at School 02 (CNC) does not have any specific training, as the position does not require it. The Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of Education have specializations in School Pedagogy and Special Education, respectively.

Regarding their *years of experience*, the Homeroom Teachers (PRs) present between 20 and 35 years of experience, primarily in literacy, coordination, and school management. The Pedagogical Coordinator at School 01 (CPPp), the Arts Teacher (PAPp), the Pedagogical Coordinator at School 02 (CPNc), and the Caregiver at School 02 (CNC) have between 4 and 12 years of experience, encompassing various professional roles. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary also have between 10 and 15 years of experience.

Educator Paulo Freire (1996) referred to training as a permanent activity, constantly renewed through action. We understand that training does not occur merely through the accumulation of knowledge but is a process shaped by various formative actions. It is an ongoing practice and improvement. In this sense, the continuing education of these professionals needs to remain in constant engagement and advancement, and it is from this perspective that we observe the endeavors being made by the professionals included in this investigation.

According to Libâneo (2008, p. 227),

the term “continuing education” is accompanied by another term, the initial education. Initial education refers to the teaching of theoretical and practical knowledge related to professional training, complemented by internships. Continuing education is the expansion of initial education, aiming at theoretical and practical professional improvement within the work context and the development of a broader general culture, beyond professional practice.

Therefore, we infer that education professionals must be aware that the continuing education process has to be present through their entire professional careers. However, it is relevant to highlight that teachers working in the classroom are often invited or appointed to work in administration roles (Pedagogical Coordination and School Administration), even without specific training for such positions. Consequently, the experiences in school management are not necessarily related to training qualifications. As a result, many teachers, at some point in their careers, end up entering the experience of school management and seeking specific specializations in school management, for example.

The Deputy Secretary of Education (SeAdSMEC) highlights that one of the achievements in recent years has been the United Managers project, which seeks to work on the training and socialization of experiences with the managers. It is a way encountered by SMEC to be closer to the managers and to facilitate dialogue between them and the Basic Education Superintendence. That is one of the projects that emerged in response to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase in Venezuelan immigration, and it is still ongoing.

In the category of *Professional Practice*, we seek to present considerations concerning the *roles within SMEC's structures*, exploring how pedagogical guidance is provided by the SMEC and its operationalization by the teachers; furthermore, we present data to understand the *practice with immigrant students*. In the subcategory of professional practice within SMEC's structures, we found that the SMEC is organized as follows:

specifically, within the pedagogical structure we are organized by macro areas. In each macro area, we have a technical team with a coordinator who oversees a certain number of schools. [...] So within this macro area, we have the coordinator and the monitors. These monitors are professionals who provide support to the schools. [...] So, we have the Basic Education Superintendence that coordinates this work, and then we have the managers and the representatives of the Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Physical Education, and Arts departments. It is a team that coordinates and supports the work of the coordinators who supervise the monitors. So, it's a cascading effect" (SeAdSMEC, 2023).

Thus, by the organization in macro areas, the educational process occurs through a structured system, as is seen in the following narratives.

Our planning is structured; it follows the guidelines from the department, and the teacher makes adaptations according to their reality, but they must stick to that structure. For instance, the teacher has eight days to work on the Portuguese language, that content. So, the teacher must cover that content within those eight days, and they need to adapt it for students with difficulties. If they cannot keep up, they need to implement these reading projects because they cannot keep pace (CPPp, 2022).

The municipal schools in Boa Vista follow a phonological or phonetic literacy method that greatly assists children once it is based on the sound of each letter, which makes it easier for children, even those with some speech issues. We use materials from the Alfa and Beto Institute (PRPp, 2022).

It is the structured teaching from the IAB. These books come from outside, for the local government, and are distributed to the students. Each student receives their kit, which includes five books: Portuguese, Mathematics, and Science. The mathematics kit includes Volumes 01 and 02. There is also a teacher's book and a Reading book. Each student gets their own kit (CPNc, 2023).

This structured planning is a didactic prerogative provided by the educational materials from the Alfa and Beto Institute³, additionally,

it includes support; it is not just the sale of materials but also offers support to the internal team and schools, which is one of the unique aspects of this program's team. If we look at the educational indexes of Boa Vista, there has been an increase in results with the use of this material, except in 2020, when the whole country suffered due to the pandemic. But it is a material that has been producing results. Initially, there was lots of resistance on the

³ This Institute is a non-governmental organization without economic purposes that excels the work for the improvement of education in Brazil. Founded in 2006 by professor João Batista Araújo e Oliveira. The material and the specifications can be found in the website: <https://www.alfaebeto.org.br/>.

teachers' side, but now I hear that if this material is removed, teachers wouldn't even know how to plan anymore (SeSMEC, 2023).

Along with structured teaching, there are projects organized by SMEC to meet the specific educational needs of the students. SeSMEC provides a list of all projects conducted by grade level. They are: Nursery and Preschool: Interactive PDDE, Family Education, Brazil Wi-fi, Camp PDDE; 1st and 2nd Kindergarten: PNLD - National Program of Books and Didactic Materials, Interactive PDDE, Family Education, Brazil Wi-fi, Camp PDDE, Time to Learn, Socioemotional Rythm, MIND Rythm, and Educational Robotics; 1st and 2nd grade: Structured Teaching IAB, PNLD - National Program of Books and Didactic Materials, Interactive PDDE, Family Education, Brazil Wi-fi, Camp PDDE, Time to Learn, BV Alphaliteracy, Resources Room, Connected Education, Socioemotional Rythm, Mind Rythm, Educational Robotics, and CGU: One for All and All for One; 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade: Structured Teaching IAB, PNLD - National Program of Books and Didactic Materials, Interactive PDDE, Family Education, Brazil Wi-fi, Camp PDDE, Time to Learn, BV Alphaliteracy, Resources Room, Connected Education, Socioemotional Rythm, MIND Rythm, Educational Robotics, CGU: One for All and All for One, Joca Newspaper, Tree, EDTECH Brazil.

Additionally, the CPNc highlights some of the most prominent projects, such as:

BV Alphaliteracy: a reinforcement project for literacy in the classroom for 1st and 2nd grades and during the opposite shift for 3rd and 4th grades. Time to Learn: a federal project by the Ministry of Education where a teacher withdraws students from the classroom for reinforcement lessons. Socioemotional Rythm and Mind Rythm: projects aimed at addressing the emotional issues of children. Tablets: provided to 1st and 2nd-grade classes. Initially, they were only for 1st grade, but now they are also available for 2nd grade (CPNc, 2023).

Therefore, there is didactic support through materials and projects to meet the school's demands. However, as CPPp indicates, the issue is that 'they want us to implement everything together, but it is impossible to execute everything at once. They should utilize these projects they offer us according to the needs of each class' (CPPp, 2022).

Perhaps the suggestion here is for a better distribution of projects throughout the school time. In the daily routine of teachers and students, there is a considerable workload. Usually, teachers have more than one 20-hour work contract, which, as PAPp points out, becomes 25 hours in total. Thus, the time allocated for organizing and implementing projects in the different classes does not always allow teachers and students to make the best use of the proposed actions in the school environment.

This operational prerogative of teachers becomes even more intense when considering the work with immigrant students, who, in addition to the regular demands faced by the professionals involved, require other specificities, as highlighted by the interviewees.

We start from the principle that every child is a child and has the right to education regardless of their nationality. So, at the beginning, I remember there was a lot of resistance from teachers, parents, and the entire school community [...]. It existed because parents would talk about it at home, and the children would bring it to school. It was the Venezuelans who were taking Brazilian's spots. There were some workshops with the students, and the Compasso

material itself which is a socio-emotional program in the network, helped a lot with empathy, welcoming the parents, and welcoming these students (SeSMEC, 2023).

Here, in our school, we have to [...] welcome the migrants because we are surrounded by shelters. It's difficult, the majority here are immigrants. So, we have to receive these students without having the language skills, as I don't know how to speak Spanish, and most teachers don't either. We have this difficulty that when the student arrives, we have to spend a month or two for them to adapt, to understand our language, and for us to understand them, but mostly, it's for them to understand, they have to speak our language. We don't put much effort into understanding them (CPPp, 2022).

When we did the reclassifying before, it was only in Portuguese. We reclassify students who are out of their age group and exceptional students who are migrants. [...] A Students could read in Spanish they were literate, but when they came to Portuguese, they couldn't because they didn't understand what they were reading. [...] Now we've reclassified them. SMEC proposed and provided us with a new reclassification, and now they have Portuguese with Spanish translation, which made it easier for them. Many can now achieve the reclassification to go to the appropriate grade level according to their age group (CPPp, 2022).

Actually, I continued with the same practice but added more resources. When I was only with Brazilians, it was easier because the book was already ready. [...] But with the arrival of Venezuelans, they didn't understand the reading, so we added different activities and followed isolated cases. In 2020 especially, when the pandemic started, it was online classes, and it was more difficult, so I included simpler activities for them. At that time, the goal was for them to learn to speak our language so that I could also bring all the students to the same learning level (PRNc, 2022).

You see, with the migration [...] the parents really wanted the students to study. The big problem was the language issue. So, if it was already challenging to teach a student, help them keep up with these classes in our language, our nation's language, imagine those who were arriving with the difficulty of the language (CPNc, 2023).

The presence of immigrant children in the classroom has required additional structures. However, it is relevant to emphasize that, in addition to this situation, the COVID-19 pandemic is frequently cited by education professionals as a factor that articulated the need for other pedagogical strategies.

While the presence of immigrants required an understanding of the Spanish language and the structuring of welcoming/reclassification/pedagogical structures, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified the existing demands within the municipal school system, particularly regarding school dropout rates. Concerning welcoming/reclassification and pedagogical structuring, the municipality adopted Normative Instruction No. 003/2007 (SMEC, 2007) and implemented Resolution/CME/BV/RR nº 12/2005 (SMEC, 2005), which establishes the norms for initial enrollment, transfer, and partial progression, academic credit, classification and reclassification, adaptation, equivalency, and validation of studies done abroad, and regularization of school records in the educational units of the municipal school system of Boa Vista/RR.

This Resolution establishes the methods for student admission, particularly immigrants, into the school environment. It highlights that the reclassification material is presented in Portuguese and Spanish, as mentioned by CPPp, and reinforced by SeSMEC, which states that this process has undergone changes that have facilitated and expanded the possibilities for integrating migrant students into the municipal school system. Accord SeSMEC (2023),

a significant advancement for the network. When students arrived, they went through a classification process. Previously, children were tested in five subjects: Portuguese, Mathematics, Science, Geography, and History. Imagine a child coming from a completely unknown country with a different language, being subjected to five assessments. They had to understand Brazilian history, geography and so on. Under the guidance and partnership with the Municipal Education Council, we requested and implemented testing only in Portuguese and Mathematics with translations into Spanish. In the first application, around 900 and 1000 children took the tests and passed the process. We managed to apply it across the entire network, which was an advancement for the children. Imagine, almost 1000 children were able to advance because of this. So, the strategy used in the network is this. And before the child enrolls, they already go through this classification process (SeSMEC, 2023).

However, the school dropout issue remains complex and demands an understanding of the immigration context. Some of the possible and likely factors for the increase in dropout rates relate to the Covid-19 pandemic due to economic, health, and psychological problems, but also involve the process of internal migration and the return of Venezuelan families to Venezuela. It is evident in CPNc's statement:

there is an increase in the rate because of language difficulties. These were children who disappeared. I don't know if they thought this way, and there was no commitment. It escalated, and immigration and the pandemic were aggravating factors. So, this resulted in a worsening situation. It was very difficult in our state (CPNc, 2023).

The issue of school dropout stems from complex migration situations that go beyond the efforts of including immigrant children. Despite seeking an inclusive perspective, as stated by Aranha (2004, p. 07): "An inclusive school ensures the quality of educational teaching to each of its students, recognizing and respecting diversity and responding to each according to their potential and needs" the CPPp report shows signs of prejudice and a lack of understanding of the immigrant's reality when it points out that "we don't make much effort to understand them (CPPp, 2022)" and the lack of motivation among the teaching staff for learning, claiming that "they have to speak our language" (CPPp, 2022). In other words, although there is an understanding of the context, prejudice, and language supremacy empower a discourse of superiority over others.

For immigrant children, learning the language is one of the necessary steps for their inclusion in the school environment. However, the solidarity, empathy, and collaborative spirit of the host society will ensure that they feel part of the group.

These issues also reflect in the category of *Relationship*, which becomes established *with the school/SMEC management* and the *relationship with the parents* of immigrant children, as highlighted by the interviewees below.

Yes, and we noticed, I was talking to the secretary, and he also noticed a situation. Many parents enroll their children just to receive their right to internal migration, which is one of the requirements – the child must be enrolled in school (CPPp, 2022).

And the migrant students' parents are difficult, they are not participative, and they don't care about their children's school activities. Exceptions are rare, maybe 3 out of 100 are participative. Some don't even have a contact phone, and when we manage to get in touch, they don't come. It's difficult (CPPp, 2022).

It doesn't make a difference! The parents, whether Brazilian or not, many don't come to school, not even to meet the regular classroom teacher (PAPp, 2022).

Yes. The Venezuelans are more involved than the Brazilians. There are Brazilian students whose parents are not very present (PRNc, 2022).

It is evident from the statements that some processes have emerged due to immigration, but there are situations that existed previously and persist, regardless of whether the children and parents are Brazilian or Venezuelan. The narratives from PRNc and PAPp emphasize that the lack of parental involvement in children's schooling is not specifically inherent to immigrant parents. It seems to be more related to the economic and social conditions of these parents, who often do not have a job or a home and thus spend time seeking the primary conditions for their family's survival.

The difficulty for some, if I'm not mistaken, from the Pricumã shelter [...] when it rains, they say it floods, and they don't come because of this situation. And when there are natural phenomena, like the strong wind that happened, they say everything got wet, that their shelter is fragile, and everything affects them. It's not an excuse; it's the reality [...] (CPPp, 2022).

The considerations regarding CPPp highlight the economic fragility when discussing the situations in the shelters and the parents not having cell phones for the school to contact them. Thus, it is not only the nationality that affects their participation in the children's school life, but also the economic conditions surrounding the immigrant.

This observation can be seen in the subcategory focusing on *the relationships between the children*. The interviewees mentioned that migrants always arrive scared, apprehensive, and hesitant to communicate. However, every child has a great ability to adapt and form friendships, "within a few days, they already feel comfortable with the others. Seeing their social development is wonderful; besides, we can't even tell who the Brazilians are. It's a very smooth relationship" (PRNc, 2022). Concurrently, CPNc (2023) clarifies:

I see this in other classes, the welcome they received when we returned from the pandemic, and the Venezuelans were already here. There was no difference. Some teachers would say in class, 'Wow, my class has more Venezuelans, and I have more difficulty because I have to work more on the language, learning to read and write.' That was the point, the difficulty of working with them because they came with a different language and didn't do the online activities because they didn't have internet access.

The empathetic relationship between children of different nationalities shows the importance of socialization in the school context, considering that this stage of development makes no distinction of nationality in the relationships established.

We notice a greater demonstration of prejudice in the relationships among adults, including education professionals and parents. One of the issues reported by CPNc is the lack of understanding from Brazilian parents regarding the availability of spots. Enrollment in the municipal schools of Boa Vista/RR happens through calls to the Central Enrollment Office, and the criterion for spots is the order in which the calls are received.

CPPp mentions that the parents of Venezuelan children have understood this process. They often act promptly and secure the spots, while Brazilian parents tend to delay and tend to lose the desired Enrollment spots for their children. This reality is relatively recent, as at the beginning of the immigration wave, there was a significant difficulty in understanding, organizing documentation, and assisting parents at the Central Enrollment Office to secure a spot. This context is described by Lacerda and Melchior (2021) when discussing discrimination and the lack of empathy with parents during the documentation reception and enrollment process at schools. However, through the years, the parents have adapted and become more attentive to these processes. According to CPPp, this situation still generates prejudiced remarks about immigrants, often seen as “the other” who “steals” my spot (Vasconcelos, 2018).

According to the Secretary of SMEC, this prejudice occurred at the beginning of immigration. However, currently, it is something more controlled and accepted, as corroborated by the SeSMEC interviewee (2023):

The great challenge was being caught off guard by such a large influx, and in such a short time, having to adapt, learn, and seek strategies. One of the strongest efforts was to combat prejudice. That was the big difference. I won't say it doesn't exist today; it does, but we managed to minimize it a lot. Whenever we identified it, we conducted workshops with the children and worked with the parents. We showed all parents that the children had the right to study. They are not here because they want to be. Put yourself in their shoes. They are here, but they would rather be in their own country. If the situation were reversed, if it were us. It was a huge effort to reduce this prejudice and increase acceptance. Today, I see it as more natural. The administrators are no longer as impacted. There are schools where more than half of the students are foreigners, but with the effort of all of us, the department, and the schools that are the ones facing these children and with these families, we have many productive stories. Everyone benefits, everyone grows stronger, and there are many lessons learned.

In the category concerning *Challenges*, we aim to present some *Issues* highlighted in schools with the immigration process. In this regard, a strong indication arises regarding the difficulty of understanding the language, as demonstrated in the following excerpts.

We even considered (Spanish language courses), but some teachers expressed that it's not our obligation to learn the language because we are in Brazil. So, we couldn't move forward with language training because the teachers themselves have this idea that they are the ones who need to make the adaptation, not us (CPPp, 2022).

Our biggest challenge will always be the language, but we also have the duty to help these children adapt and face many challenges in an unfamiliar land. So it's inevitable for me not to involve feelings. I learn from them and try to make them feel welcome (PRPp, 2022).

The language. And also, of course, the socioeconomic issue, which also affects Brazilians (PAPp, 2022).

Spanish language, initially yes, because after they learn to speak, we don't have that difficulty with their language once you get used to it because they sit with Brazilians and interact directly. So, when someone new arrives, you don't know who is Venezuelan and who is Brazilian (PRNc, 2022).

So the biggest challenge is concern with this pedagogical didactic, so that the Venezuelan student also has the same right (PRNc, 2022).

The main problem identified is the language variation, followed by economic issues and the pedagogical didactic to be worked on from this context. According to SeAdSMEC (2023) "the schools showed this, so did the reports from the managers and the teachers. So, there was an absurd concern at the beginning, and the process showed that communication was established. Today, it reassures us. The effort of the family, the contact with them, is very committed, they go to school, they participate, want to know, are integrated. And there is also support from UNHCR, UNICEF, which is a partner and makes these connections".

Regarding the language issue, SeSMEC (2023) highlights that hiring interpreters is still a major issue, but concerning Venezuelan students, since communication is already smoother, the interviewee mentions that it is not so complicated. Thus, the bigger problem encompasses indigenous Venezuelan students of the Warao ethnicity.

However, again, concerning Venezuelan children, the emphasis is on rapid integration with the children. Lemos (2020), in his studies, warns about how the "practice of using translanguaging" was crucial in the way Venezuelan immigrant children interacted, although Portuguese was the dominant language in the school and teachers' discourse. In line with this perspective, Guimarães *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that public schools can leverage translanguaging as a resource in introductory Portuguese language classes, thereby enhancing the insertion and adaptation of children in the school environment.

Suggestions were presented by the interviewees, aiming to address some issues more effectively, such as:

Training for Spanish language - Yes, it's interesting by the secretariat. When parents come with us, we need to understand the parents because they try, but they don't have the same ease of learning as the children. Children learn quickly. We have noticed that some children learn our language in 2 to 3 months and speak fluently better than us. (CPPp, 2022).

So, the issue of the reading project, and I would venture... not would venture, I will venture once again (PRNc, 2022).

There is concern about the communication and learning conditions of the children reinforced by the teachers. Thus, faced with the challenges that are becoming evident, actions are taken, or begin to be considered, to operationalize better literacy rates, approval, and school dropout. Still, another major challenge presented by SeSMEC (2023) is the enrollment of children. According to her,

these documents guide our work: the National Plan, the Municipal Education Plan, and the commitments that the mayor made to the population in the area of Education. So, these are the major goals for us to achieve, not only in terms of pedagogy but also in infrastructure. And one of the commitments that he had made was to deliver three daycare centers, increase 3,000 new daycare spots, and build 10 schools. Some units are being delivered, but that number that daily arrives in Boa Vista exceeds any planning.

Therefore, despite the existence of some challenges to be addressed, it is evident that the SMEC does not shy away from its commitments and has sought, together with the school community and in partnership with coordinators and monitors, to carry out various actions.

Management team's major remarks

From the perspective of understanding how the SMEC and public schools in Boa Vista/RR are responding to the literacy process, considering the entry of Venezuelan children into their classrooms, we enter the results of one of the most relevant stages of the ethnographic investigation in the municipal schools of Boa Vista/RR. The contact with the SMEC indicated two schools with significant numbers of migrant students, close to the immigrant reality, with families and shelters for immigrants.

Thus, based on the school's integration and interviews conducted with the SMEC, the management team, and the teachers of the schools, we present some data that are important for understanding the literacy process in the municipal education system in Boa Vista/RR.

After the interviews with eight professionals involved in school management, we developed analysis categories: training, performance, relationship, and challenges. These categories enabled us to understand the literacy process, considering the entry of Venezuelan children into their classrooms.

Regarding professional training, all subjects have qualifications according to their field of work and highlight various actions that SMEC has been offering for the children. However, there is no clear visualization of ongoing teacher training focused on the integration of immigrants, which is often done individually by the teacher. With the context of Venezuelan immigration and the COVID-19 pandemic, SMEC implemented the United Managers program, which has been a way to identify needs and to act on the training of administration professionals.

Related to professional performance, we observed that professionals have been committed to various actions deliberated by SMEC. However, there is a need for the family to be involved in this process, regardless of nationality, which consequently impacts the relationships established between different subjects (administration, parents, and children).

Although immigration has intensified some topics, the data obtained in this research make it clear that the aggravation and emergence of problems occurred not only due to immigration. The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic/vulnerable situation of the families appear as serious elements linked to the literacy process and the relationship established between the school, families, and children.

Therefore, the challenges encountered enable and lead to an understanding of structural problems deriving from various social factors, which due to their existence, are analyzed and sought alternatives to address the issues with SMEC. One of the problems highlighted regarding literacy, mentioned by the managers, continues to be the communication process, with the linguistic issue. However, there are other problems, such as the economic/vulnerable situation of the families, not only Venezuelan ones. Another fact highlighted is the perspective of increasing enrollment places for children, an issue that demands planning and structuring and the creation of new schools.

In conclusion, despite the issues, challenges, and difficulties encountered, it has to be highlighted that both SMEC and the investigated municipal schools are aware of the demands and are seeking alternatives to provide equal education conditions for all children, regardless of their nationality.

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